

OUR GOD IS GOD OF IMPOSSIBILITIES

SPIRIT OF CHALLENGING

In my oral exam, in the faculty of Arts, department of Philosophy and Psychology (University of Alexandria), the examiner asked me, “**How do you believe that God will marry you?**” For him the unity of the souls with God is impossible, because of his material point of view. We spent about an hour speaking of God of impossibilities who is interested in man, and offers his supernatural abilities for the glorification of man.

Ask a non-Christian, “Do you believe that God becomes Man for your sake? Do you accept that the Word of God is crucified for your salvation?” The answer will be, “**Impossible!**”

For a long time God in the mind of men was just an idea, an absolute Being who is far away from men. They believed that He created the world, and He is still isolated in His heaven, while man lives on earth. His infinite love towards man seems impossible, and unfit. Therefore, God prepared men for many centuries to discover His reality, through the prophecies and visions in the Old Testament. And in the last days the Word of God Himself descent to man to reveal that He is God of impossibilities, specially by sacrificing Himself on the cross, on behalf of the whole world. For the two main groups of mankind, the Jews and the Gentiles, the incarnation of the Word of God and His crucifixion are impossible! This belief is a kind of foolishness or it's a stumbling block. St Paul says,

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, **seen by angels**, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”* (1 Tim 3:16) *“For the message of the cross is **foolishness to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* (1 Cor 1:18)

*“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews **a stumbling block** and to the Greeks **foolishness**, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

(1 Cor 1:23-24) *“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, **the hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the ages for our glory.”* (1 Cor 2:7)

Even to the heavenly hosts these divine deeds were a mystery, as if these were impossible. *“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God **might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places**, according to the eternal purpose, which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Eph 3:10-11)

It is not haphazard that the Word of God became Man and was crucified. He is our Lord of impossibilities, who humbled Himself so that we may be united with Him and attain His energies that seems to us impossible. In Him we practice what seems impossible. Through His divine love He challenged nature, as He became Man, and challenged even death, so that we, who are united with Him might have the same

spirit. We have to challenge nature, fear, illness, evil circumstances, and at last death itself. We have His power of impossibilities.

1. CHALLENGING NATURE OF FIRE

The three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to worship the gold image, which Nebuchadnezzar set up (Dan.3). They could have some excuses to justify worshipping the image: They were young in age and captives of war, under the authority of a brutal king. They were required to worship only once, without forbidding them from worshipping God. All kinds of music were offered to stir them. By refusing to worship the idols, they lose every chance to do something to help their people. However, the king himself, who gave them to live in the luxury of the palace, threatened them, saying, “**And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?**”(Dan 3:15) They answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.**” They believed in God who granted them the power to challenge the nature of fire itself.

God didn't prevent them from being thrown in the furnace, but he changed the nature of fire. The king stood by the side door to see them thrown inside the furnace. What did he see?

First, the fire had purified them in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the king, so the One like the Son of God appeared to glorify them.

Second: The fire had loosened the iron chains, but did not affect their clothes.

Third: While some of the soldiers died because of the heat, the three youths were walking in the fiery furnace.

Fourth: The fire changed into dew, and probably the king wanted to enjoy what they were enjoying but he couldn't, so he called them to come out to him.

St. Cyprian said: [when they were locked inside the furnace, the flames escaped and the Lord was with them, assuring that no power can stand against His confessors and witnesses. No harm can touch those who depend on God, but they are always in a haven from all dangers¹.]

Sometimes we consider ourselves as if we are in a furnace of fire. We have to believe in God of impossibilities. He does not take off these circumstances, but changes their bitterness into sweetness. In Jesus Christ we challenge even the nature of fire. In Jesus Christ we never be afraid even of fire. We are accompanied with Him, and carry Him within us. Therefore, we feel that for us every thing is possible. St Paul says, “***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***” (Phil 4:13)

2. CHALLENGING NATURE OF WILD BEASTS

St. Paul witnesses to the power of faith in God of impossibilities that grants men what seems impossible. Men of God “through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, **stopped the mouths of lions**, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” (Heb 11:33-34)

Daniel was thrown in the lions' den. Darius, the king in his palace was upset; he did not eat until sunset and remained fasting until dawn. He couldn't meet any

¹ Epistle, 80:3.

body, even any of his wives; he couldn't sleep, while for Daniel the lion's den was changed as if it was a heaven.

*“Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, **has Your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?’**” (Dan 3: 19-20). Then Daniel said to the king, “My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also O king, I have done no wrong before you” (v. 22).*

God granted him to see His angels; He shut the mouths of the hungry lions so they would not devour him.

Sometimes we have the same feelings of St. Paul that we face wild beasts, but as we are in the hands of our God, who is God of impossibilities, He changes their brutality. He shut their mouths by sending guardian angels

3. CHALLENGING TIME

The problem of many is “time.” For them the past passed and it is impossible to return. The present will pass, and the future is dark, and unknown. The word of God, who is above time, became Man and subjected Himself to time and human history to grant us victory over time.

For the true believer, the past with all its good and bad events still serves him. He discovers the divine Hand that directs all past events for his edification. For example St. Paul discovered who His Savior changes his persecution to the church, his ignorance of the truth and even his blasphemy had been changed for the edification of the church, the kingdom of God. Therefore he said, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Rom 8:28)

We are not worry about the present as if it will pass, but we feel that the present is the happiest moment in our Life. Next moment will be the happiest. Therefore we enjoy the present, without any worry.

For the future it is not obscure, nor dark. Through hope we see the opened gates of heaven. We are we eager to see the glory, which our Beloved God had prepared for us.

In other words the past, present and the future for us are present always. We enjoy the past without grief that it had past, and the present as the most joyful moments, and the future is the attaining the meeting with God of impossibilities face to face.

4. CHALLENGING FEAR

5. CHALLENGING SUFFERING

6. CHALLENGING HUMAN NATURE

7. CHALLENGING OF DEATH

EXAMPLES OF HAPPY PERSONS

1. Moses the Prophet

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that *Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.* Exod 34:29

And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. Deut 34:6

So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.
Exod 33:11

2. St. Paul the Apostle.