

## **St. Samuel the Confessor**

### **Objectives**

To study the life of St. Samuel the Confessor and to learn about his contributions to the faith

### **References**

1. "The life of St. Samuel the Confessor" by Sagi Aziz
2. Synaxarium of the 8<sup>th</sup> of Kiahk
3. "Era of Ecumenical Councils" by Hegumen Kyrellos El Antony
4. "The Nature of Christ" by H.H. Pope Shenouda the 3<sup>rd</sup>

### **Scriptural Verses**

"I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." (Rev. 1: 17 - 18)

(The speaker here is the divine God and He said I was dead while death had no power over His divinity).

### **Lesson Guidelines**

#### **1. What is a Confessor?**

- A person who suffers for the sake of Christ and offers his life to protect his faith but is not martyred.
- A martyr is a person who actually gives up his life while defending the faith.
- A cross bearer struggles in his life to keep his faith and spiritualities undefiled.
- The church honors all her children who suffer in any way to keep their orthodox faith and the rank order is martyrs, confessors, cross bearers followed by all those who abide in the faith.

#### **2. Life of St. Samuel**

- St. Samuel was the only child of his righteous parents.
- His father was a priest and was told in a vision that he would have a son who would be entrusted with a large congregation and would be God's chosen all the days of his life.
- St. Samuel was pure from his youth, he learned the Holy Books, used to fast till sunset and served in the church after being ordained as an Ognostis (Reader).
- His heart was longing for the monastic life, he entered the monastery at the age of 22 after the departure of his parents into the heavens.
- An angel in the form of a monk guided him to Abba Agathon in the desert of Scete, and he stayed with him till Abba Agathon's departure.

#### **3. His struggle to keep the right faith**

- He was ordained a priest and was loved by the monks who sought his advice. He refused to sign Leo's Tome but destroyed it and cursed those who believed in it (the Tome of Leo was a letter written by Leo, Bishop of Rome declaring that Christ had two natures and endorsed by Emperor Marcian). St. Samuel wrote against this tome and

said: “Excommunicated is this tome and everyone who believes in it and cursed is everyone who might change the Orthodox faith of our holy fathers”

- He suffered greatly for the orthodox faith and lost one of his eyes by a soldier’s strike.
- The commander expelled him from the monastery with his disciples, who took him to a cave in the mountains.
- In the middle of the night, an Angel appeared to him, strengthened him and told him that God granted him a crown for his struggles and that there were 2 more crowns awaiting him.
- The saint was exceedingly glad and he and his disciples moved to the south of Fayoum.
- The saint lived for one year in this area in peace with his disciples until the Chalcedonian Governor El Moquakas came back to the monasteries searching for Pope Benjamin and came to Fayoum. St. Samuel knew about his arrival, he gathered his disciples (260 monks), strengthened them and taught them to keep the right faith and asked them to leave to avoid being forced to accept the resolutions of the Chalcedonian council.
- St. Samuel was captured by the soldiers and severely suffered while his faith was shining and his heart longing for the crown of martyrdom. El Moquakas was about to kill him but the elders of Fayoum interceded for him and they let him go where his disciples took him to another church.

#### **4. The Barbaric persecution**

- Some days after his stay in the church, the Barbarians invaded the church and desecrated it. They tied the saint to a tree when he refused to show them the sacred utensils, they beat him severely and then took him to their land where they sold him as a slave.
- In this same place, Abba Youannis the short (Hegumen of Scete) had been also sold as a slave. They prayed together and encouraged one another.
- His master wanted him to marry one of his slaves to bring slave children. The saint refused to break his vow to God so his master tied his leg to the leg of the maiden and sent them to tend to the camels in order to tempt St. Samuel to commit the sin with her.
- St. Samuel was very strong and resisted this temptation. It came to pass that the son of his master was sick to death but St. Samuel prayed for him and healed him. His reputation reached all the region and many sick people came to him asking for his prayer and he healed them in the name of the Lord Christ.
- The master and his wife confessed the right faith of the Lord Jesus Christ along with most of the city and later they let him go back to his monastery.

#### **5. His Final Days**

- The saint prayed in his monastery, thanking God who granted him the power to sustain the sufferings and to keep his faith. St. Mary appeared to him carrying in her hand a golden staff and measured the monastery from North to South, and East to West. She told him “this will be my place forever with my son Samuel for his purity and sufferings and with his spiritual sons who fear the Lord, and the Barbarians will never come back to this place”.

- St. Samuel with his disciples rebuilt the demolished parts of the monastery and he performed many miracles and raised a monk from the dead, who talked about the beauty of heaven and died again.
- He had many spiritual children and prophesied about things to come.
- Before his departure, he gathered his children and commanded them to be strong in the fear of God and to keep their right faith unblemished then he departed in peace while his face was shining and the aroma of incense filled the place. May his blessings be with us all.

### **Conclusion**

St. Samuel sets an example to all of us on how to remain steadfast in the faith of our church. He is also a great example of purity and chastity which is a virtue that we must struggle to preserve even to the point of death.

### **Activities/Discussion points**

1. Why it is so important to believe in the One Nature of Christ after the Union?

The belief in the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos is essential, necessary and fundamental for redemption. Redemption requires unlimited propitiation sufficient for the forgiveness of the unlimited sins of all the people through all ages. There was no solution than the incarnation of God the Logos (the unlimited) to offer this through His divine power.

2. St. Samuel led a life of struggles. In what ways were his struggles similar to ours today?

3. What can we learn from his endurance?