

t. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral Los Angeles
Fall 2021 Adult Study:
Orthodox Christian Faith and Practice

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Wednesdays: 7:15 to 8:30 p.m.
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TEXT: Hopko, Father Thomas. *The Orthodox Faith*. Four volumes. Revised and expanded by David C. Ford.

Available in print or online at [The Orthodox Faith - The Symbol of Faith - Orthodox Church in America \(oca.org\)](http://oca.org)

Zoom Link to Join: <https://tinyurl.com/SNC-O101-2021>

Zoom Video Recording and Outline Texts located at: www.stnicholasla.com/adulteducation.

Oct. 27 The Symbol of Faith (Vol. 1, pp. 40-107 new; Vol 1 pp. 86-117 old)
Redemption, Resurrection, Ascension, Judgement, Kingdom of God

NOTES:

“And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried.”

- **Redemption:** absolution and forgiveness of sin,
- Jesus died on a cross, suffered as humans do, truly died, and was laid in a tomb.
- He gave himself voluntarily, for the sake of our salvation.
- *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”* (Jn 1.29; Mat 3.17).
- Isaiah 53: A suffering servant of Yahweh-God (see excerpts below)
 - He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 - Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
 - But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.
 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he

opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

- Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.;
- Because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
- The words of prophet Isaiah were written centuries before the birth of Jesus.
- *“The death of Jesus came at the hands of the religious and political leaders, with the approval of the masses: when **Caiaphas** was high priest, “under Pontius Pilate.”*
- in order to be with us in our sufferings and death which we brought upon ourselves because of our sins: *“for the wages of sin are death”* (Rom 6.23)
- *“for our sake he (God the Father) made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”* (2 Cor 5.21).
- Christ has humiliated himself *“for us men and for our salvation.”*
- The doctrine of redemption is redeemed but with the great price of God’s blood (Act. 20.28)
- There are three aspects of salvation in Christ:
 1. Jesus the Perfect Image of human life
 2. Jesus the Reconciler of man with God
 3. Jesus the Destroyer of Death

“And He rose again from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures . . .”

- **Resurrection:** Christ is risen from the dead, the main proclamation of the Christian faith.
- If Christ did not rise, there would be no salvation!
- Jesus had the power to lay down his life and the power to take it up again.
- Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say. The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience. However, Jesus was **not** just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection (which is way in many accounts after the resurrection he wasn’t immediately recognized).
- Rejection of the bodily resurrection is a rejection of the foundation of Orthodox Christianity.

- The power of God and the power of Jesus, the life of God and the life of Jesus, are one and the same power and life.
- There is no competition between the two because they are one.
- The Gospel does not say that the angel moved the stone from the tomb in order to let Jesus out. The angel moved the stone to reveal that Jesus was not there (Mk 16; Mt 28).
- The resurrection of Christ is the first fruit of the resurrection of **ALL HUMANITY!**
- **St. Gregory the Theologian wrote this prayer:**

On Death and Resurrection in Christ

Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him.
 Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him.
 Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him.
 Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him.
 Yesterday I was buried with Him; today I am raised up with Him.
 Let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us . . . ourselves, the possession
 most precious to God and most proper.
 Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us.
 Let us become Divine for His sake, since for us He became Man.
 He assumed the worse that He might give us the better.
 He became poor that by His poverty we might become rich.
 He accepted the form of a servant that we might win back our freedom.
 He came down that we might be lifted up.
 He was tempted that through Him we might conquer.
 He was dishonored that He might glorify us.
 He died that He might save us.
 He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were thrown down through the fall
 of sin.
 Let us give all, offer all, to Him who gave Himself a Ransom and Reconciliation for us.
 We needed an incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live.
 We were put to death together with Him that we might be cleansed.
 We rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him.
 We were glorified with Him because we rose again with Him.
 A few drops of Blood recreate the whole of creation!

“ . . .and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father . . .”

- **Ascension:** the glorification of human nature, the reunion of man with God.
- “the heavens”: the immaterial kingdom of God
- “sitting at the right hand” of God: **Humanity** is at the right hand of the Father, Jesus reunited us with God as we were, Jesus and God have equal authority

“ . . . and He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead . . . ”

- These words of the angels are addressed to the apostles at the ascension of the Lord. Christ will come again in glory, “*not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him*” (Heb 9.28).
- “...with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4.16–17)
- coming of the Lord: **Judgment Day, Final Judgment**, there is no longer any excuse for ignorance and sin
- God takes no “pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezek 18.22). He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth” (1 Tim 2.4).
- salvation and eternal life would be available and possible for all.
- There is nothing more that God can do. Everything now depends on humanity.
- The Lord will honor the people that have accepted or refused Him because he gave us free will.
- Jesus is coming again to righteously judge the living and the dead. The creed says Jesus is coming; it does not say when or how, nor does it say to speculate on the date of his return.
- **All are raised from the dead into everlasting life:** “those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (Jn 5.29). In the end, God will be “all and in all” (1 Cor 15.28). For those who love God, resurrection from the dead and the presence of God will be paradise. For those who hate God, resurrection from the dead and the presence of God will be hell.

“ . . . And of His Kingdom, there will be no end . . . ”

- Jesus is the royal Son of David, of whom it was prophesied by the angel at His birth
- Through His sufferings as the Christ, Jesus achieved everlasting kingship and lordship over all creation. He has become “King of kings and Lord of lords,” sharing this title with God the Father Himself (Deut 10.17; Dan 2.47; Rev 19.16).
- **Christ came for no other reason than to bring God’s kingdom to us**
- In the sermons such as the Sermon on the Mount and the many parables, He told of the everlasting kingdom. (Mt 5-7)
- Christ’s kingdom is “not of this world” (Jn 18.31).
- His everlasting kingdom cannot be destroyed.

- The Church, which in popular Orthodox doctrine is called the Kingdom of God on earth, has already mysteriously been given this experience. In the Church, Christ is already acknowledged, glorified, and served, as the only King and Lord; and His Holy Spirit, whom the saints of the Church have identified with the Kingdom of God.
- For the Kingdom of God . . . means . . . peace and joy and righteousness in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14.17). The Kingdom of God as a spiritual, divine reality is given to men by Christ in the Church.
- the end of the ages when Christ comes in glory to fill all things with Himself by the Holy Spirit, that God might be “all and in all” (1 Cor 15.28).