

Great Lent: Sunday Bible Reading Week 1

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



As we begin the blessed period of Holy and Great Lent, our Metropolis offers the faithful, and those interested in learning about Orthodoxy, another unique spiritual initiative.

Last year, with the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Sotirios, our Metropolis developed and published a weekly “40 Day Challenge” (Down Complete eBook) article highlighting different virtues for every week during Great Lent, to promote Christian living and spirituality among the faithful.

We are building on this success and this year will be publishing a weekly article specific to the Great Lent Sunday Bible Readings. The Bible is the Book of Life. It is as relevant today, as it was when it was written. It is our rock, foundation, and guide in a turbulent world. The New Testament especially guides humanity to a new relationship with our God and Creator, Jesus Christ the Messiah. Similarly, Holy and Great Lent, the “arena of virtues,” guides humanity to a rebirth, to a new life,

to a new relationship with the Resurrected Lord.



As we wrote last year, the Church gives us many opportunities throughout the 40 Days, as well as Holy Week, to reorient our life towards the God-man (Theanthropos) Christ. These include the Pre-sanctified Divine Liturgies (on Wednesdays and Fridays), the Salutations to the Theotokos (on Friday evenings), together with the six Sundays of Great Lent, which are each dedicated to a specific celebration or saint.

We invite all Orthodox Christians this year, men and women, young and old, to enthusiastically follow and contemplate the Sunday Lenten Bible Readings in order to experience Great Lent so that when we gather on Holy Saturday evening to celebrate the Resurrection, we will joyfully chant the life changing hymn: “Christ is Risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life.”

Today’s Gospel (John 1:43-51, see sidebar), read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, but also on the Feast of the Holy Apostle Philip (celebrated November 14th), contains countless spiritual insights and pearls of wisdom, characteristic of all Holy Scripture. We will focus, however, on only five words, which have the potential to open a new pathway for each individual leading to a spiritual reawakening and

renewal.

After Christ found Philip, He said to him "Follow me." St. John Chrysostom, in his Homily XX on the Gospel of St. John, says: "Andrew was persuaded when he had heard from John, and Peter the same from Andrew, but Philip not having learned anything from any but Christ who said to him only this, "Follow me," straightway obeyed, and went not back, but even became a preacher to others."

Let us ask ourselves, do we follow Christ with the innocence and purity of Philip? Do we preach Christ to others, like Philip did initially to Nathanael? Is Christ the compass of our life, like He was for Philip?

Here we see, written in simple language by John the Theologian, the strong faith and resilience of a stranger (Philip) and his unswerving commitment to Christ. This is one of the many lessons found in today's Gospel.

Let us move from "Follow me," to "Come and see," the three words used by Philip to reply to Nathanael's question: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Nathanael questions the reference to "Nazareth" since he is aware, as John Chrysostom writes, "that Christ must come from Bethlehem..." But how does Nathanael react; does he reject and ignore Philip? No! He went to see; he went to examine who this "Jesus of Nazareth" was. And what happened thereafter? Nathanael confessed Christ! The Bible Reading records him saying: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Do we confess Christ? Do we follow in the footsteps of Philip and Nathanael who saw and obeyed Christ with a pure heart and became His disciples? Let each of us contemplate on this. What is the response that we receive if we are honest and forthright with ourselves?

As we Journey to Pascha, let us keep these questions in our mind and remember and, more importantly, put into action, the example of Philip and Nathanael and the power of five words: Follow me and Come and see.

Source: gometropolis.org