



"...The first was called Mary, the mother of Salome, the midwife who cared for the Virgin Mary during her virginal birth" (Synaxarium, Meshir 16).

The Coptic Synaxarium leaves no doubt as to the lineage of Salome, her role in the Lord Jesus Christ's holy birth, and who her relatives were.

"On this day the upright and righteous Elizabeth, mother of St. John the Baptist departed. This holy woman was born in Jerusalem to a righteous father called Matthan FROM THE TRIBE OF LEVI AND FROM THE HOUSE OF AARON THE PRIEST. Her mother's name was Sofia. Matthan had three daughters. The first called Mary, the mother of Salome, the MIDWIFE who cared for the Virgin St. Mary during her virginal birth. The name of the second daughter was Sofia, the mother of St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. The youngest daughter was St. Hannah, the mother of the Virgin St. Mary, the mother of the Savior. Therefore, Salome, Elizabeth, and the Virgin St. Mary were COUSINS." (Synaxarium, Meshir 16).

Salome's heritage was one of holy kinship. She would also beget holy lineage as her sons became one of the

original twelve disciples chosen and called out by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Most Biblical scholars concur that Salome married Zebedee, a fisherman. She did not marry a husband who was a priest, considering her father of the tribe of Levi; a man neither of great wealth nor a learned religious scholar. Salome was the mother of James and John who were in the boat mending fishing nets when the Lord Jesus Christ called them to "follow Him". Certainly the Lord Jesus Christ had the foreknowledge that their mother was Salome who received Him at His birth. It is widely accepted that James the Less is James the son of Alphaeus. Joses (Joseph) also must be the son of Alphaeus although we do not find him referenced in any other Holy Scripture.

Salome's husband Zebedee must have been a wise father and husband as he did not deny his sons the opportunity to immediately follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not think of the fishing nets that needed mending, nor the consequent loss of two experienced fishermen. Zebedee did not even consider the decrease of income or food for himself and his family. It can be assumed that Zebedee was a good and faithful man who most likely had heard the preaching of St. John the Baptist preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry.

Salome was a constant follower of the Lord Jesus Christ in His travels proclaiming the Holy Gospel. She must have cared for the Lord's needs as she did at His Holy Birth. Devotion, love and service abounded within her heart both for her Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and her sons St. James and St. John. Salome always remained constant in her devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and her sons.

"For Jesus Himself, our Master and Lord, when He sent out the twelve to make disciples of the people and of the nations, nowhere sent out women to preach—even though there was no lack of women available. For there were with Him the mother of our Lord and His sisters; Mary Magdalene; Mary the mother of James; Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus; Salome; and certain others..." (Apostolic Constitutions compiled c.390).

It should come as no surprise that Salome St. Mary's cousin who had witnessed the birth of the Infant Lord Jesus, would be one of the privileged women to follow Him, and would put forward a special request of having her two sons seated on each side of Him in the Kingdom of Heaven. The urge behind such a request was not arrogance-charged or of personal interest but definitely out of her overflowing love for both the Lord Jesus Christ and her sons and her familiarity with the family.

*"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, 'What do you wish?' She said to Him, 'Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your Kingdom'" (Matthew 20:20-21).*

Salome solemnly and courageously witnessed the Holy Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Along with her were other women who stood bravely and valiantly witnessing the whole scene of the crucifixion including the separation of the Temple veil. *"There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome"* (Mark 15:40).

Salome was also present at the sepulcher..."*Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen"* (Mark 16:1-2).

With great courage these women who loved the Lord Jesus Christ devotedly went to anoint the body of our Lord after the sorrowful Holy Crucifixion. For this they were given grace, and were the first

witnesses to the Glorious Resurrection. One would wonder, where were the scattered disciples?

Thus it can be said that through constancy, Salome was not only given the grace to be present at the Lord Jesus Christ's birth, but also a witness of His death, and amazing Resurrection.

There is not much written regarding Salome but what is known of her is that she did indeed witness the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Among the first to touch the Holy Infant, she would aspire to be one of the last to touch His Holy Body by anointing it with spices. As a witness and willing servant to the conception of Grace Itself, she remained a steady follower of the Lord from conception to resurrection.

It can be further said that Salome was the first servant chosen outside the Holy Family. As midwife to the Virgin St. Mary, she was among the first to bear witness of the miraculous Birth and to have been given the grace to recognize Jesus as the Christ. She was initially a believing midwife cognizant of the grace bestowed upon her, through the Glorious Nativity. This Grace would never elude the life of the blessed Salome. Rather it became her life, the life of her family, and the life of her apostolic sons.

"Labors that are endured and overcome all the way up until death, cannot fail to obtain a reward...And this reward can be nothing else but immortality" (Lactantius c. 304-313).

May we all look toward the constant service of Salome and desire the grace that avails it,

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