

# The Coptic Language

Fr. Jacob Nadian

## Lesson 7

ⲬⲈⲚ ⲫ̀ⲢⲀⲚ ⲙ̀Ⲣⲓⲱⲧ ⲚⲈⲘ ⲢⲱⲘⲓ ⲚⲈⲘ ⲢⲓⲡⲚⲈⲢⲙⲁ ⲈⲐⲐⲗⲀⲖ. ⲐⲣⲚⲐⲣⲧ Ⲛ̀ⲚⲐⲱⲧ. ⲗⲙⲘⲚ.

Ⲭ (horee): This is the twenty-ninth letter of the Coptic Alphabet, and it is conventionally pronounced as the English “H”.

ⲣⲐⲣⲗⲓ → evening مساء

ⲈⲗⲐⲐⲣ → day يوم

Ⲉⲗⲱⲣⲗ → night ليل

ⲣⲁⲕⲗⲓ → f. Embers, Fuel, coal شرارة فحم أو فحم

(ⲣⲱⲕⲗ → v. to burn, to blaze, be on fire; m. Firewood, burning fire, fervor) يحرق

(ⲣⲐⲕⲗ → to burn, to blaze, be on fire [pron. of ⲣⲱⲕⲗ]) يحترق

(ⲣⲐⲕⲗ → burned, ablaze, on fire [qual. of ⲣⲱⲕⲗ]) احترق

(ⲣⲐⲕⲗ → m. Firewood, burning fire, fervor [see also ⲣⲱⲕⲗ]) خشب للحريق

(ⲗⲈⲖⲐ → “m. coal, ⲗⲈⲖⲐ Ⲛ̀ⲗⲥⲣⲱⲘ m. Embers) شرارة فحم أو فحم

Ⲭ (jinja): This is the thirtieth letter of the Coptic Alphabet, and it can be pronounced as:

1. “J” (as in Judge); if it is followed by one of these letters: Ⲉ, ⲓ, ⲗ, ⲣ:

ⲗⲈ → that لكي

ⲕⲁⲗⲓ → speak يتكلم

ⲗⲓⲗⲈⲚ - ⲈⲗⲈⲚ” → on علي

2. “G” (as in Good), otherwise:

ⲁⲗⲡ → watch ساعة

ⲗⲁⲗⲓ → enemy عدو

ⲗⲱⲣⲓ → strong قوي

Ϯ (tcheema): This is the thirty-first letter of the Coptic Alphabet, and it is conventionally pronounced as the English “CH”.

ϮⲟⲓϮ → Lord or master سيد

Ϯⲓ → take خذ

ϮⲟϮⲓ → high عالي

**Nominal Sentence:** Coptic, like many of the languages of the Middle East, has full sentences that are constructed without the aid of a true verb. These sentences are characterized by the frequent use of a helping verb, sometimes called ‘copula.’ This helping verb follows the same format that we have seen in defining nouns in Coptic. In other words, it has a form for masculine singular ‘ⲡⲉ,’ a form for feminine singular ‘Ⲥⲉ,’ and a form for the plural ‘ⲛⲉ.’ In English, the meaning rendered for such helping verb is the appropriate form of verb ‘to be’.

**Two-member Nominal Sentence:** This type of sentence contains two parts. The first is a predicate noun, with a prefixed article, and the second is the helping verb, as follows:

ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲉ	he is my father	هذا أبي	ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲱ ⲡⲉ	he is a man	هذا رجل
ⲧⲁⲱⲁⲩⲥ ⲧⲉ	she is my mother	هذه أمي	ⲟⲩϮⲉⲗⲓⲱⲱ ⲧⲉ	she is a woman	هذه امرأة
ⲛⲁϮⲛⲏⲏⲟⲩⲥ ⲛⲉ	they are my brothers	هؤلاء اخوتي	ϮⲁⲛⲉϮⲏⲏⲟⲩⲥ ⲛⲉ	they are ships	هؤلاء سفن

**Three-member Nominal Sentence:** This is the more common form of the nominal sentence. It contains a subject noun and a predicate noun along with the helping verb. The position of the helping verb is dependent on the predicate. If indefinite, it is always followed by the helping verb regardless of its position in the sentence. When the predicate is definite, then the helping verb usually falls in between it and the subject. The position of the predicate and the subject is mostly dependent on style and emphasis, as follows:

ⲟⲩϮⲁϮ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲧ	my teacher is my father	هذا المعلم هو أبي
ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲧ ⲟⲩϮⲁϮ ⲡⲉ	my father is a teacher	أبي معلم
ⲡⲁⲓⲣⲱⲱ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲛϮⲁϮ	this man is our teacher	هذا الرجل هو معلمنا
ⲡⲉⲛϮⲁϮ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲓⲣⲱⲱ	our teacher is this man	معلمنا هو هذا الرجل

**Rules of Agreement:** The rules for choosing the gender and number of the helping verb are as follows:

**Two-member Nominal Sentence:** The helping verb agrees with the predicate noun in gender and number, as shown in the examples above.

**Three-member Nominal Sentence:** The rules here are more complex by virtue of having three parts in the sentence to contend with. These rules can be summarized as follows:

- a. The helping verb agrees in gender and number with both the subject and predicate if they in turn are nouns (or pronouns in the 3rd person) and in agreement with each other.
- b. If there is disagreement in gender or number, then the helping verb in the masculine singular form 'πε' is used.
- c. If The subject is a pronoun in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person then the masculine singular form 'πε' is usually used regardless of the gender and number of the predicate.

Examples:

τῷ πε παῖθρονος

the Heaven is my throne السماء هي عرشي

ἄνθο τε τῷγοτη

you (f) are the censer انتي هي المجرمة

ἄνθος τε ταματ

she is my mother هي أمي

### Doxology for the Apostles

#### ذكولوجية الرسل

Κυριος Ιησους Πιχριστος: αφρωπι  
ἠνεκαποστολος: ετε Πετρος νεμ  
Ανδρεας: Ιωαννης νεμ Ιακωβος.

Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
has chosen His apostles,  
who are Peter and Andrew,  
and John and James.

الرب يسوع المسيح، اختار  
رسله، وهم بطرس واندراوس،  
ويوحنا ويعقوب.

Λοιπον Φιλιππος νεμ Αατθος:  
Βαρθολομεος νεμ Θωμας: Ιακωβος  
ἠτε Αλφειος: νεμ Σιμων πικαναneos.

Philip and Matthew,  
Bartholomew and Thomas,  
James the son of Alphaeus,  
and Simon the Canaanite.

وفيلبس ومتى، وبرثولماوس  
وتوما، ويعقوب بن حلفي،  
وسمعان القانوي.

Θαδδεος νεμ Ααθθιας: Πατλος  
νεμ Ααρκος νεμ Λοκας: νεμ πσεπι  
ἠτε Νιμαθητης: Νηεταμοωι ἠσα  
Πενσωτηρ.

Thaddaeus and  
Matthias, Paul Mark and  
Luke, and the rest of  
disciples, who followed our  
Savior.

وتداوس ومتياس، وبولس  
ومرقس ولوقا، وبقيّة التلاميذ  
الذين تبعوا مخلصنا.

Ααθθιας φηεταρωπι: ἠτρωεβιω  
ἠλοτλας: νεμ πχωκ εβωλ νεμ πσεπι:  
Νηεταμοωι ἠσα Δεσποτα.

Matthias was chosen,  
instead of Judas, and was  
counted with the rest, who  
followed the Master.

متياس الذي صار، عوضاً عن  
يهودا، مع الكمال والبقية، الذين  
تبعوا السيد.

Ἀποῦδρωτ ὡεναϭ ἔβoλ: εἰϭεν  
ἔρο ἠἔκαρι τηρϭ: οὔοε νοὔραϭι  
αὔφοε: ὡα αὔρηϭ ἠἔοικοὔμενη.

Ἰωβε ἠἔβοιϭ ἔρρη ἔϭων: ὦ  
ναβοιϭ ἠιοἔ ἠἔποστολοϭ: νεμ πιὔβε  
ἔναὔ ἠμαἔηηϭ: ἠτεϭα νεμνοβι ναἠ  
ἔβoλ.

Their voices went forth,  
onto the face of the whole  
earth, and their words have  
reached, the ends of the  
world.

Pray to the Lord on our  
behalf, my masters and  
fathers the apostles, and the  
seventy-two disciples, that  
He may forgive us our sins.

خرجت أصواتهم، إلى وجه  
الأرض كلها، وبلغ كلامهم، إلى  
أقطار المسكونة.

اطلبوا من الرب عنا، يا سادتي  
الآباء الرسل، والاثنتان والسبعون  
تلميذاً، ليغفر لنا خطايانا.

Κεριοϭ (the Lord) Ἰηϭοϭ (Jesus) ΠιḄριϭοϭ (Christ). αᣑωἔπι (has chosen) ἠνεϭἔποστολοϭ  
(His apostles). ἔτε (they are) Πεἔροϭ νεμ Δηδρεαϭ. ἰωδηηηϭ νεμ ἰακωβοϭ.

Λοιπἠ (also *or* then) Φιλιπποϭ νεμ ἠαἔθεοϭ. Βαρθoλομεοϭ νεμ ἔωμαϭ. ἰακωβοϭ ἠτε  
Δλφεοϭ. νεμ ϭιωων πικαἠαἠεοϭ.

ἔαδδεοϭ νεμ ἠαἔθιαϭ. Παὔλοϭ νεμ ἠαρκοϭ νεμ ἠοὔκαϭ. νεμ ἠᣑεπι (the rest) ἠτε (of)  
ἠιμαἔηηϭ (the disciples). ἠη (who) ἔἔαὔμoὔἠ (followed) ἠᣑα Πενϭωἔηρ (our Savior).

ἠαἔθιαϭ φἠ (was) ἔἔαᣑὔἠ (chosen). ἠἔὔεβιω (instead) ἠἠοὔδαϭ. νεμ ἠᣑωκ ἔβoλ (was  
counted *or* numbered with) νεμ ἠᣑεπι (the rest). ἠη (who) ἔἔαὔμoὔἠ (followed) ἠᣑα Δεϭποἔα  
(the Master).

Ἀποῦδρωτ (their voices) ὡεναϭ (went) ἔβoλ (outside *or* forth). εἰϭεν (on or into) ἔρο (face)  
ἠἔκαρι (the earth) τηρϭ (all). οὔοε νοὔραϭι (their words) αὔφοε (reach). ὡα (to) αὔρηϭϭ  
(countries) ἠἔοικοὔμενη (of the world).

Ἰωβε (ask) ἠἔβοιϭ (the Lord) ἔρρη ἔϭων (on our behalf). ὦ ναβοιϭ (our lords) ἠιοἔ (the  
fathers) ἠἔποστολοϭ (the apostles). νεμ πιὔβε ἔναὔ (seventy two) ἠμαἔηηϭ (disciples).  
ἠτεϭ (that He) Ḅα νεμνοβι (our sins) ναἠ (for us) ἔβoλ (Ḅα ἔβoλ = forgive).