A very long time ago there lived a great man named St. John Chrysostom. The word ‘Chrysostom’ means ‘golden mouthed.’ This name was given to him after he died because all his sermons were eloquent and very lovely to hear.

St. John was born in Antioch in the fourth century. During that time Antioch was a very wealthy nation. As a matter of fact, it was the second wealthiest nation in the entire world. There were great palaces and theaters. In the market place you could buy silks that came from China and furs that came from Russia. There was one broad street four miles long, which was paved with marble, and had pure gold statues lining the avenue.

Antioch was also blessed with natural beauty. There was a beautiful, pale green river called Orontes which watered a forest called the ‘Groves of Daphne’. People used to say that living in the forest of Daphne was close to living in Paradise.

St. John’s father was a rich pagan, an idol worshiper who did not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. His father was a very important man who was the General in command of...
In Jerusalem, Simon and his two sons, Rufus and Alexander, could not find an empty room in any inn, as there were about two million Jews coming to Jerusalem to offer the Passover lamb.

Rufus said, “I’ll buy the Passover lamb this year. You, Alexander, bought it last year, and Dad bought it the year before. Now, it is my turn to buy it and obtain this blessing. No one seems to disagree with Rufus’ offer. Simon the father was deep in thought, unaware of what was happening around him.

Alexander said, “What are you thinking of, Dad? I have noticed you keeping solemnly quiet these last two days.”

Very quietly and in a soft voice his father said, “I am thinking of all that is happening around me. I hear you discussing who will buy the Passover lamb, but I feel that I am thinking often of the Lord Jesus Christ. I find Him a very spiritual person and I am overwhelmed by His Words and deeds. I am seriously thinking of remaining here in Jerusalem to follow Him and not to return to Cyrene.”

Rufus answered, “It’s true, father, that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed great and wonderful and we are all eager to follow Him, but...”

“Why are you sighing, Rufus?” Alexander asked.

“I have heard disturbing news,” Rufus answered. “Herod...”
FAMOUS MEN

1. What man did God make out of dust?

2. What prophet told about the Lord Jesus Christ’s birth before it happened? (Hint: His name is also the name of a Holy Book in the Holy Bible.)

3. Who was made blind on the road to Damascus?

4. What man laughed when God told him he would have a son in his old age?

5. Who tried to walk on the water to reach the Lord Jesus Christ?

6. Who built an ark to save his family and the animals from the flood?

7. What famous man led the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt and was called a “friend of God”?

8. Who owned a colorful coat as a boy and eventually became a ruler?

9. Who was the evil giant who lost a battle to a boy?

10. What short man climbed a tree to see the Lord Jesus Christ?

St. John went out to the mountains and began to live a life of self-discipline in the company of an old Syrian named Hesychius (which means quietness). St. John wanted to follow his closest friend from college, St. Basil the Great. For a few years he lived the monastic way, in prayer and reading the Holy Bible.

But the life of a hermit was hard, especially in the caves of Antioch where it gets very cold. Eventually St. John’s health deteriorated and he went back to the Archbishop who sent him directly to a doctor. Because his health became poor he was unable to go back and live as a hermit. But he never forgot the peaceful life of the hermits. He would say that ‘The monks in the monasteries live lives that belong in Heaven. They are like the angels without any quarrels or troubles.’

For six years St. John was a deacon under the Archbishop, St. Melatius, but when he died, the new Archbishop, St. Flavian, ordained St. John as a priest and St. John’s active work began. For twenty years he wrote sermons and books, many of which are still with us today. He preached to the people and gave them the Holy Sacraments. His one real desire was that everyone in Antioch would know the love of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

When the Archbishop of Constantinople died in 397 AD, the people wanted St. John to become Pope in his place. However, St. John hated any form of power and did not want to become Pope. In order to ordain him, the people tricked...
One day, St Verena, became very sick to the point of death. Our beloved St Mary, along with some angels, appeared to St Verena and took her pure soul up to Heaven to her Heavenly Bridegroom. A fragrant aroma of incense filled her room as she left behind this earthly life. She departed in the year 344 AD.

May the prayers of St Verena be with us all.
The Roman governor was very sick with a high fever so his assistants recommended that perhaps he should ask for the help of St Verena. She prayed for the pagan Roman governor and right away, he became well. He was very pleased and thanked her. To repay her for her kindness and good deed, he asked that she be released from prison.

After St Verena’s release from prison, she lived with her friends in a cave. One day, they ran completely out of food. They prayed to God asking for his help. God answered their prayers and someone delivered them forty barrels of wheat.

Next, St Verena lived in a house by the Church, where she taught the people hygiene, that is, how to care for their bodies by showering and combing their hair daily. She taught them cleanliness and how to have physical fitness. As she cared for others, she always taught them the Christian faith and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. She loved to visit the sick and provide for all those needing care.

For three months the saint endured this suffering. They lodged outside of a city called Comana, at a shrine of a martyr. That night, St. John had a dream that Basilicus, Bishop of Comana, who was martyred under Maximinian, and Lucian, a priest of the Church of Antioch, who also had passed away, appeared to him and said: “Be of good cheer, brother. Tomorrow we shall be together.” St. John knew this was a warning. The next day he asked his guards to remain at the shrine until eleven o’clock but they refused. They had walked only about 30 yards when the saint became so ill that they had to return to the shrine.

Back at the shrine, St. John asked for white garments. He removed his old clothes and gave them away to those around him. Then he dressed himself in the white garments from head to feet, still fasting, he prayed to the Lord one final time. He closed his prayer with the words, “Glory be to God for all things,” and then crossed himself at the last ‘Amen’. He stretched out his feet and fell asleep, waking up in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ whom he loved so much.

On September 14, 407, St. John of Antioch, known as St. John Chrysostom died. It was only after his death that the people began to honor the man who lived to bring others to Christ Jesus by his words and actions. In the year 438 AD, the relics of St. John were moved to Constantinople. The people of Constantinople gathered in close-packed boats lit with torches at the mouth of the river to see his coming back home. He was put to rest in the Church of the Apostles. The new emperor laid his head on the coffin and begged forgiveness before God for the wrongs committed by his mother and father (they were the ones who exiled St. John). After him the Emperor’s sisters, the four princesses Flacilla, Pulcheria, Arcadia and Marina prayed. There in the decorated tomb the saint remained until 1204 when the Crusades began.
St. John was a man of courage and inner strength. He was a man who loved God so much that nothing else mattered. He had a love for his people that allowed him to fight for them even against the kings. St. John was a man of beautiful words. He was man who used all his talent for the service and glory of God.

May the prayers of St. John the Golden-mouth be with us all.

Doxology of Saint Mena

(to be said on Hatoor 15 and Baounah 15)

What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul, this would be the life of vanity.

The Saint Abba Mena, heard the Divine Voice, and has forsaken the whole world, and its corrupt glory.

He gave his soul unto death, and his flesh to the fire, and received great sufferings, for the Son of the Living God.

Therefore our Savior, lifted him to His Kingdom, and granted him the good things, which an eye has not seen.

Hail to you, O Martyr, Hail to the courageous hero, Hail to the struggle-mantled, the Saint Abba Mena.

Pray to the Lord on our behalf, O struggled-mantled martyr, the Saint Abba Mena, that He may forgive us our sins.

a young nurse to help care for the wounded soldiers.

The wicked emperor Diocletian wanted St Moritz to worship the idols. But St Moritz loved the Lord Jesus and refused to worship the idols. The emperor became furious and ordered the soldiers to behead St Moritz and every tenth soldier in the army as well. St Verena strengthened the believers so they would not deny their faith.

Upon learning of her zealouosity, the emperor ordered that St Verena be put into prison. She continued to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ and read the Holy Bible. In the middle of the night, St Moritz accompanied by some angels, appeared to her and encouraged her.