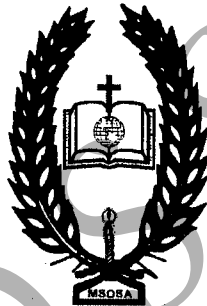


**MALANKARA SYRIAN  
ORTHODOX SUNDAY SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NORTH AMERICA**



**TEXT BOOK CLASS - X**

**2003**

## PREFACE

We are thankful to our Lord Almighty for helping us and guiding us through the work of preparing these Sunday school books. These books are the translations of the "Padamanjari" published by Malankara Jacobite Syrian Sunday School Association Head Quartered at Puthencruz, India.

These books are being published with the guidance of His Eminence Mor Ivanios Mathews, President M.S.O.S.A. and Archbishop of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church of North America under the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church.

A number of persons contributed to this noble cause. We take this opportunity to thank them all. Let God bless every person who contributed to make these books available to His children. We are happy to submit these books in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Syrian Orthodox Sunday School students all over the world.

Carteret, NJ  
07-11-2003

Director  
M.S.O.S.A. North America

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\* **God is our Creator**

\* **God is our Father**

\* **God loves us**

\* **Bow before God**

\* **Love God**

\* **Jesus is our Saviour**

\* **Jesus was born for us**

\* **Jesus Died for us**

\* **Jesus loves us**

\* **Live with Jesus**

LESSON 1

PRAYER

MORNING PRAYER

QAUMO

Holy art Thou, O God,...

*Psalms 51*

Have mercy upon me,...

O merciful God! be gracious to us in Your mercy. Moriyo...

*Psalms 63*

O God, You are my God and I will wait for You.

Like a dry and thirsty land longing for water, my spirit thirsts for You and my body longs for You.

I truly looked up to You, to behold Your power and glory.

Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.

Thus I will praise You while I am alive and I will raise my hands in Your name.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fat and my mouth shall sing Your glory with joyful lips.

I remember You as I lie on my bed. All night long. I think of You and meditate.

Because You have been my help, I will be protected under the shadow of Your wings.

My soul follows You and Your right hand keeps me safe.

Those that seek to destroy my soul shall go into the depths of the earth.

They shall fall by the sword and their bodies eaten by wolves. But the king shall rejoice in God.

Everyone that swears by him shall be glorified. But the mouth of the liars shall be shut.

To You belongs the praise, O God. Barekmore.

KARUNAYULLA DHEIVAME! NINTE KARUNAYAAL NJANGALODU KARUNA CHEYENAME.

MORIYORAHM...

PSALMS 63

ENTE DHEIVAME! NEE ENTE DHEIVAMAKUNNU; NJAN NINAKKAI KAATHIRIKUM.

DAHICHUM VARANDUM VELLATHINAYI AGRAHIKUNNA BHOOMIPOLE, ENTE ALMAVUM NINNE KURICHU DAHICHIRIKYUNNU. ENTE JEDAVUM NINAKKAI KAATHIRIKYUNNU.

NINTE BALAVUM NINTE BEHUMANAVUM KANMAN IPRAKARAM SATHYAMAYITTU NJAN NINNE NOKKI.

ENTHENNAL NINTE KARUNA JEEVANEKAAL NALLATHAKUNNU; ENTE ADARANGAL NINNE STHUTHIKYUM.

NJAN JEEVANODIRIKYUMBOL IPRAKARAM NJAN NINNE VAAZTHUKAYUM, NINTE NAMATHIL ENTE KAIKAL UYARTHUKAYUM CHEYUM.

ENTE ALMAVU KOZHUPUM MEDASSAM KONDENNAPOLE PUSHTIYAAKUM; ENTE VAYI STHUTHIYULLA ADARANGALKONDU NINNE MAHATHWAPEDUTHUKAYUM CHEYUM.

ENTE KIDAKAMEL NJAN NINNE ORTHU; RAATHRI KAALANGALIL NJAN NINNE DHYANIKYUKAYUM CHEYTHU.

ENTHENNAL NEE ENIKU SAHAYAKARANAYI THEERNU. NINTE CHIRAKUKALUDE NIZHALIL NJAN MARAYKAPEDUM.

ENTE ALMAVU NINNE PINTHUDARNU: NINTE VALATHU KAI ENNE THAANGUKAYUM CHEYTHU.

ENTE ALMAVINE NASHIPIPAAN ANWESHIKYUNNAVAR BHOOMIYUDE AZHANGALILEKU PRAVESHIKYUM.

AVAR VAALINU ELPIKYAPEDUKAYUM, KURUNARIKALKU BHAKSHANAMAYI THEERUKAYUM CHEYUM; RAJAVU DHEIVATHIL SANTHOSHIKYUM.

AVANE KONDU AANAYIDUNNA EVANUM PUKAZHCHA YUNDAKUM: ENTHENNAL ASATHYAM PARAYUNNAVARUDE VAYI ADAYKYAPEDUM.

DHEIVAME! STHUTHI NINAKKU YOGYAMAKUNNU - BAREKMOR.

O heavenly King, in the morning I come in Your presence and bow before Your throne. Pardon all the sins that I committed against you.

Gracious and compassionate Lord, I plead and long for your mercy. Pardon all the sins that I committed against you.

The one who is light and lives in light, make me worthy of Your light that does not succumb to darkness. Barekmore.

I praise the Lord whose name is being glorified in the heaven above by the heavenly beings and by the people on the earth. Amen.

SWARGASTHANAAYA RAAJAVE! PRABHATHA SAMAYATHU NJAN NINTE ADUKKAL VANNU NINTE SIMHAASANATHIN MUNPAKE VANNICHU. NINAKKU VIRODHAMAAYI NJAAN CHEYTHA SAKALA PAAPANGALUM ENNODU KSHAMIKKENAME.

UTHAMANUM DAYAALUVAYULLVANE! NJAN NINNODU APEKSHIKKUKAYUM NINTE KARUNAKKAYI AAGRAHIKKUKAYUM CHEYYUNNU. NINAKKU VIRODHAMAAYI NJAAN CHEYTHA SAKALA PAAPANGALEYUM ENNODU KSHAMIKKENAME.

PRAKASHATHIL VASICHU KONDIRIKKUNNAVANUM PRAKAASHAM AAYIRIKKUNNAVANUME! ANTHAKAARATHAAL AAKRAMIKKAPPEDAATHA PRAKAASHATHINU ENNE YOGYANAKKENAME. BAREKMORE.

SWARGATHILUM, BHOOMIYILUM MAHATHWAMULLAVANUM SWARGA VAASIKALUM BHOOVASIKALUM THANTE NAAMATHE MAHATHWAPPEDUTHU NNAVANUMAAYA KARTHAAVE! NINAKKU STHUTHI. AMEN.

### Psalms 113

Praise the Lord, the creator of light. Praise Him, you servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord.

May the name of the Lord be blessed from the beginning and for ever. From the rising of the sun to its setting great is the name of the Lord.

The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory is above the heavens. Who is like the Lord, our God? He dwells in the heights above and yet He looks upon the depths.

He raises up the poor from the dust and make them sit with princes. He makes the barren women to be a joyful mother of children and he grants her a home.

To you belongs the praise, O God. Barekmore.

PRAKASHATHINTE SRISHTAVINU STHUTHI; KARTHAVINTE BRUTHYANMARE! STHUTHI  
PAADUVIN; NINGAL KARTHAVINTE NAMATHE STHUTHIPIN.

KARTHAVINTE NAMAM ADIMUTHAL ENNEKUM VAAZHTHAPETTATHAYI  
IRIKATTE.

SURYANTE UDAYAM MUTHAL ATHINTE ASTHAMANAM VAREYUM KARTHAVINTE  
NAMAM VALIYATHAKUNNU.

KARTHAVU SAKALA JATHIKALKUM MEL UNNATHANUM THANTE MAHATHWAM  
AKASHANGALKU MEETHEYUM AKUNNU.

UYARATHIL VASIKYUKAYUM, AAZHATHIL NOKKUKAYUM CHEYUNNA  
NAMMUDE DHEIVAMAYA KARTHAVINODU SADRASHAN AKASHATHILUM BHOOMIYILUM  
AARULLU?

AVAN ELIYAVANE JANATHINTE PRABHUKANMARODU KOODE IRUTHENDATHINU  
KUPPAYIL NINNUM UYARTHUNNU. AVAN MACHIYAYI AVALE MAKALUDE  
SANTHOSHAMULLA MATHAVAYI BHAVANATHIL VASIKYU MARAKUKAYUM CHEYUNNU.

Psalms 148, 149, 150

Praise Him all His angels. Praise Him all His heavenly armies.

By His word everything was made, for He commanded and they were  
created. He set them in their places for ever and gave them a law which shall  
not pass away.

Praise the Lord, all mountains and hills, all fruit trees and cedars, all  
bees and cattle, all creeping things and birds that fly.

For His name alone is exalted, His glory is on earth and in heaven. He  
also exalts the horn of His people, all His saints; even of the children of Israel,  
a people of His own.

Let them praise His name with tambourines and drums, and sing to Him  
with their harps. The Lord is delighted in His people. He gives salvation to the  
poor.

His saints have the honor, with a two-edged sword in their hands, to  
execute vengeance upon the heathen and bring punishments upon the people,  
to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron and to  
execute upon them the written judgement.

Praise Him for His powerful deeds. Praise Him for His Infinite great-  
ness. Praise Him with the sound of horn. Praise Him with the sound of the  
flute and harp.



Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise Him all you peoples. For great is His goodness toward us. Truly, He is the Lord for ever.

To you belongs the praise, O God. Barekhmore.

PSALMS 148

AKASHITHIL NINNU KARTHAVINE STHUTHIPIN. UNNATHANGALIL AVANE STHUTHIPIN.

AVANTE SAKALA DOOTHANMARUME! AVANE STHUTHIPIN. AVANTE SAKALA SAINYANGALUME! AVANE STHUTHIPIN.

ADITHYA CHANDRANMARE! AVANE STHUTHIPIN. PRAKASHAMULLA SAKALA NAKSHATHRANGALUME! AVANE STHUTHIPIN. AKASHANGALUDE AKASHANGALUM, AKASHANGALKU MEETHEYUMULLA VELLANGALUME! AVANE STHUTHIPIN; AVA KARTHAVINTE NAMATHE STHUTHIKATTE.

ENTHENNAL AVAN PARANJU; AVA UNDAYI AVAN KALPICHU; AVA SRISHTIKYAPETTU. AVAN AVAYE ENNEKUMAYI STHIRAPEDUTHI, NIYAMAM NISCHAYICHU; ATHU AZHIYUNNATHUMALLA.

BHOOMIYIL NINNU MAHA SARPANGALUM, ELLA AZHANGALUM, AGNIYUM, KAL MAZHAYUM, URACHA VELLAVUM, HIMAVUM, AVANTE VACHANA PRAVARTHIYAYA KAATUKALUM, KODUNKAATUKALUME! (KARTHAVINE STHUTHIPIN.)

PARVATHANGALUM, SAKALA KUNNUKALUM, PHALA VRUKSHANGALUM, SAKALA KAARAKILUKALUM, MRUGANGALUM, SAKALA KANUKALIKALUM, IZHAJANTHUKALUM, PAKSHIKALUM, PARAVAKALUME! (KARTHAVINE STHUTHIPIN.)

BHOOMIYILE RAJAKANMARUM, SAKALA JANANGALUM, BHOOMIYILE PRABHUKTHANMARUM, SAKALA NYAYDIPANMARUM, SHISHUKALUM, KANYAKAMARUM, VRUDHANMARUM, YOUVANAKARUM, KARTHAVINTE NAMATHE STHUTHIKATTE.

ENTHENNAL AVANTE NAAMAM MATHRAM VALIYATHAKUNNU. AVANTE MAHATHWAM BHOOMIYILUM, AKASHATHILUMUNDA. AVAN THANTE JANATHINTE KOMBUM, THANTE SAKALA NEETHIMANMARKUM, THANIKADUTHA JANAMAYA ISRAYEL MAKKALKUM MAHATHWAVUM UYARTHUNNU.

PSALMS 149

KARTHAVINU PUTHIYA PAATUM, NEETHIMANMARUDE SABHAYIL STHUTHIYUM PAADUVIN. ISRAYEL THANTE SRISHTAVIL SANTHOSHIKAYUM, SEHIYONTE PUTHRANMAR THANGALUDE RAJAVIL ANANDIKAYUM CHEYATTE.

AVAR THAPPUKALALUM, CHATHURA THAPPUKALALUM AVANTE NAMATHE  
STHUTHIKYUKAYUM, VEENAKALAL AVANU PAADUKAYUM CHEYATTE. ENTHENNAL  
KARTHAVU THANTE JANATHIL ISHTAPEDUNNU. AVAN DARIDRANMARKU REKSHA  
KODUKUKAYUM CHEYUNNU.

NEETHIMANMAR BEHUMANATHIL BELAPEDUM; AVAR THANGALUDE  
KATILUKALINMEL AVANE STHUTHIKYUKAYUM, THANGALUDE KANDANGALKONDU  
DHEIVATHE PUKAZHTHUKAYUM CHEYUM.

PURAJATHIKALKU PRATHIKRIYAYUM, JANATHINU SHASANAYUM KODUPANUM,  
AVARUDE RAJAKANMARE AALATHUKAL KONNUM, AVARUDE MANYANMARE IRUMBU  
CHANGALAKAL KONNUM BENDIPAANUM, EZHUTHAPETTIRIKYUNNA NYAYA VIDHI  
AVARUDEMEL NADATHUVANUM, AVANTE SAKALA NEETHIMANMARKUM MAHATHWAM  
UNDAKUVANUM AVARUDE KAIKALIL IRUMUNAVAAL UNDU.

PSALMS 150

KARTHAVINE AVANTE SHUDHA STALATHU STHUTHIPIN. AVANTE SHAKTHIYUDE  
AKASHATHATTIL AVANE STHUTHIPIN.

AVANTE VALLABHATHWATHIL AVANE STHUTHIPIN. AVANTE SRESHTATHAYUDE  
BEHUTHWATHIL AVANE STHUTHIPIN. KOMBINTE SHABDATHAL AVANE STHUTHIPIN.  
THAMBURUKALALUM VEENAKALALUM AVANE STHUTHIPIN.

THAPPUKALALUM CHATHURA THAPPUKALALUM AVANE STHUTHIPIN.  
MAADURYAMULLA KAMBIKALAL AVANE STHUTHIPIN. NAADAMULLA  
KAITHALANGALAL AVANE STHUTHIPIN. SHABDATHALUM AARPUVILIALUM AVANE  
STHUTHIPIN. ELLASHWASAVUM KARTHAVINE STHUTHIKATTE.

SAKALA JATHIKALUME KARTHAVINE STHUTHIPEEN, SAKALA JANANGALUME  
AVANE STHUTHIPEEN. ENTHENNAL AVANTE KRUPA NAMMUDE MEL BELAPETTIRIKUNNU;  
AVAN SATHYAMAYITTU ENNEKUM KARTHAVAKUNNU.

DHEIVAME! STHUTHI NINAKKU YOGYAMAKUNNU - BAREKMOR.

SAKALA JATHIKALUME KARTHAVINE STHUTHIPEEN, SAKALA JANANGALUME AVANE  
STHUTHIPEEN. ENTHENNAL AVANTE KRUPA NAMMUDE MEL BELAPETTIRIKUNNU; AVAN  
SATHYAMAYITTU ENNEKUM KARTHAVAKUNNU.

DHEIVAME! STHUTHI NINAKKU YOGYAMAKUNNU - BAREKMOR.

*Eqbo*

God help us. The whirls and waves of sins that we committed are encircling us. You be the port of peace for us that we may not sink in the sea of sins. We are waiting to repent. As You extended Your hand to Peter, extend Your hand to us and help us. Sthoumen...

DHEIVAME! NJANGALKKU SAHAAYIKKENAME. NJANGAL CHEYTHA PAAPANGALUDE THIRAMAALAKALUM CHUZHALIKALUM CHUTTIYIRIKKUNNU. NJANGAL PAAPA SAMIDRATHIL MUNGI POKAATHIRIPPANAAYITTU NEE NJANGALKKU SAMAADANATHINTE THURAMUKA MAAYIRIKKENAME. NJANGAL ANUTHAAPATHINAAYITTU KAATHIRIKKUNNU. PATHROSINU ENNA POLE NJANGALKKU NINTE KAYI NEETTITHANNU NJANGALODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME. STHOUMEN...

### *Qolo*

O Christ, our Lord, You offered Yourself as a pleasing incense before God the Father. Because of You, we may be a pleasing incense before God. Though our prayers and offerings are abominable and foul smelling, touch and purify us with Your holy hand which cleansed the leper to make our prayers and offerings sweet smelling fragrances. Barekmore.

SUGANDA VAASANAYAYITTU PITHAAVAYA DAIVATHINU THANNE TNANNE KAAZHCHA YANACHA MESHHA THAMPURANE NEE MOOLAM NJANGAL DAIVATHINKAL SUGANDA VAASANA AAYI THEERUMAARAKENAME. NJANGALUDE NAMASKAARANGALUM SHUSROOSAKALUM NEE NIRASSIKKATHAKKAVANNAM DURGANTHANGALAAL NIRANJIRIKKUNNU. ENKILUM ASHIDHANAAYA KUSHTA ROGIYE THOTTU VEDIPPAKKIYA NINTE KAYI KONDU NJANAGLEYUM NJANGALUDE NAMASKAARANGALEYUM SHUSROOSAKALEYUM THOTTU VEDIPPAKKI SUGANDA VAASANA VEESHUNNA SUGANDA VARGANGAL AAKKI THEERKKENAME. BAREKMOR.

### *For the Intercession of Mother of God*

God our Lord, by Your presence You jolted Mount Zion. While You were bearing the heights and the depths, You willed that Virgin Mary conceive You without marriage and bring You forth beyond description. May Your mother's name be glorified and help us by her prayers.

DAIVAMAAYA KARTAAVE! NINTE SANNIDIYAAL SEENAYI PARVATHATHE ILAKKIYAVANUM UYARATHEYUM AAZHATHEYUM VAHICHIRIKKUNNAVANUM NEE AAYIRIKKE KANYAKA MARIYAAM NINNE VAHIKKUNNAVANUM AVAL PURUSHA SAMBADHAM KODATHE NINNE GARBHAM DARICHU AVARNANEYAMAAYA VITHATHIL PRASAVIKKUNNAVANUM THIRUVISHTAM UNDAYATHU POLE NINTE MAATHAVINTE ORMAYE NEE MAHATHWAPPEDUTHUKAYUM AVALUDE PRARTHANAKALAAL NJANGALE SAHAAYIKKUKAYUM CHEYYANAME.

### *For the Intercession of Saints*

Martyrs pray for us that He may have mercy on us by His grace and save us from the punishment of the last day. Pray for us that we may be made worthy to see you when you receive the victorious crowns.

SAHADENMAARE DAIVAM THANTE KARUNAYAAL NJANGAL ELLAVARODUM  
KRIPA CHEYYUVAANUM AVASANA NAALILE SHIKSHA VIDHIYIL NINNU NJANGALE  
RAKSHPIIAANUM JAYATHINTE KIREEDANGAL NINGAL PRAAPIKKUNNA SAMAYATHU  
NJANGAL NINGALE KANMMAN IDAVARUVAAN AAYITTU NJANGAKKU VENDI  
APEKSHIKKENAME.

### *For the Intercession of the Patron Saint*

(St. Thomas), those who are in distress seek your help, May your prayer be a fortress and refuge for us. By your prayers, may our petitions be granted, sick people be healed and those who are being tempted by satan be liberated.

EKA PARISHUDHANODU

(MAR THOMA SLEEHA) NJERUKKATHIL IRIKKUNNA ELLAVARUM NINTE  
SAHAAYATHE ANWESHIKKUNNU. NINTE PRAARTHANA NJANGALKKU KOTTAYUM  
ABHAYASTHAANAVUM AYIRIKKENAME. NINTE PRARTHANAYAAL NJANGALUDE  
YAACHANAKAL NALKAPPEDUKAYUM NJANGALUDE ROGICAL SUKHA PPEKAYUM  
PISHACHUKALAAL PAREEKSHAKKAPEDUNNAVAR SWATHANTHYA PPEKAYUM  
CHEYYUMAARAKATTE.

### *For Repentance*

O God, You do not deny Your mercy to the sinners who call upon You. By Your compassion spare us from punishments and the rods of wrath. To praise You for Your mercy, grant us joyful months and prosperous years. By glorious sign of Your cross guard us from the evil.

Lord, may we not be silent from praising you and withdrawn from glorifying You. Lord, do not judge us according to Your righteousness. We confess that we are sinners. If You judge us according to our sins; we cannot hope eternal life and cannot plead before You and shall inherit fiery-hell. Therefore, according to Your mercy pardon and forgive our sins.

Lord, when You judge us, let our sins not conceal us. When the righteous garb in glory, may we not be naked at the judgement. We confess that we have fallen in sin, extend Your hand unto us that we may stand again. O compassionate one, who opens the door to all those who repent, have mercy on us as you forgave the thief on Cross at Your side.

THANNE VILIKKUNNA PAAPIKALKKU THANTE KARUNAYE VIRODHICKATHA VANAAYA DAIVAME ! NINTE KARUNAYAAL SHIKSHAKALEYUM KRODHATHINTE VADIKALEYUM NJANGALIL NINNU VILAKKI NEEKKIKALAYENAME. NINTE KRIPAKKU VENDI NINNE STHOTHRAM CHEYYUVAANAYITTU SANTHOSHAMULLA MAASANGALEYUM AISWARYAMULLA SAMVALSARANGALEYUM NJANGALKKU THARENAME. NINTE SLEEBAAYUDE MAHATHWAMERIYA ADAYAALATHAAL DUSHTANE NJANGALIL NINNU VIRODHICKENAME.

KARTHAVE! NINNE STHUTHIKKUNNATHIL NINNU MAUNA MAAYIRIPPAAN NINNE PUKAZHTHUNNATHIL NINNU OZHINJIRIPANUM NJANGALKKU IDAYA AKARUTHE. KARTHAVE! NEETHIYIN PRAKAARAM NJANGALE NEE VIDIKKARUTHE. NJANGAL KUTTAKKAR AAKUNNUVENNU NJANGALKKU THANNE BODHYAM AAKUNNU. NJANGALUDE KUTTANGALKKU NEE PAKARAM CHODIKKUNNENKIL NITHYA JEEVANTE SHARANAM ILLATHEYUM NINNODU APEKSHIKKUVAN NIVARTHI ILLATHEYUM AGNI NAGARAM AVAKAASHI KENDIYAVAR NJANGAL AAYI THEERUMALLO. AAKAYAAL NINTE KARUNA MOOLAM NJANGALUDE PAAPANGALKKU PARIHAARAM NALKENAME.

KARTHAVE! NEE NJANGALE NYAYAM VIDHIKKUMBOL NJANGALUDE MALINATHAKAL NJANGALE MOODI KALAYARUTHE. NEETHIMAANMAR MAHATHWAM DHARIKKUMBOL NYAYASANATHINKAL NJANGAL NAGNARAAYI THEERARUTHE. NJANGAL THETTI PAAPATHIL VEENU POYI IRIKKUNNU. EZHUNNELPPANAYITTU NINTE VALATHU KAYI NJANGALKKU NEETTI THRENAME. ANUTHAAPAKKARKKU VAATHIL THURANNITTIRIKKUVANAYI PAAPIKALODU KARUNAYULLAVANE! SKEEPAAYIL Vechu KALLANODU CHEYTHA PRAKAARAM NJANGALODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME.

### *For the Departed*

Lord, grant peace and good memory to our departed fathers and brothers. Include them in the company of saints and in their ranks. When you sit at the throne for judgement and to separate the righteous from the evil, may they receive Your compassion. When You appear in Your grace, may they stand on Your right side. Moriyo ...

### *MARICHAVARKKU VENDI*

NINDRA PRAAPICHAVARAAYA NJANGALUDE PITHAACKANMAARKKU SAHORANMAARKKU AASWASAVUM NALLA ORMAYUM NEE NALKENAME. KARTHAVE! NINTE AARADAKARE VISHUDHANMAARUDE SANGAMNGALILUM NIRAKALILUM CHERKKENAME. NEE NINTE SIMHASANATHINMEL IRIKKAYUM NALLAVARE DHUSHTANMAARIL NINNU VERTHIRIKKUKAYUM CHEYYUNNA SAMAYATHU NYAYASANANGAL AVRKKU NINTE KARUNA LABHIKKU MAARAKENAME. NINTE MAHATHWAM VELIPPEDUNNA NAALIL AVAR NINTE VALATHU BHAAGATHU NILKKUKAYUM CHEYYUMAARAKENAME. MORIYO...

## *Concluding Prayer*

Lord, it is good to give thanks to You and to sing praise to Your exalted name, to proclaim Your goodness in the morning and Your faithfulness in the night. Lord, hear my voice in the morning. May I be seen ready before You in the morning.

Lord, have compassion on Your people. Lord, pardon and forgive all our sins. Holy One. Let Your right hand overshadow us and Your name heal our weaknesses.

### *PRARTHANA*

KARTHAVE! NINAKKU STHOTHRAM CEYUNNATHUM UNNATHAPPETTA NINTE NAAMATHINU PAADUNNATHUM PRABHATHA KALATHU NINTE KRIPAYEYUM RAATHRI KAALANGALIL NINTE VISWASATHEYUM ARIYIKKUNNATHUM ETHRA NALLATHAAKUNNU. KARTHAVE! PRABHATHA SAMAYATHU ENTE SHABDAM NEE KELKKENAME. PRABHATHA SAMAYATHU NJAAN ORUNGI NINAKKU KANAPPEDUMAARAKENAME.

KARTHAVE! NINTE JANANGALODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME. KARTHAVE! NJANGAL ELLAVARUDEYUM PAAPANGALE PARIHARICHU KSHAMIKKENAME. PARISHUDHANAAYULLAVANE! NINTE VALATHU KAYI NJANGAL MEL AAVASIPPICHU NINTE THIRUNAMAM NIMITHAM NJANGALUDE ROGANGALILI NINNU NJANGALE SUKAPPEDUTHENAME.

# THE OLD TESTAMENT

## LESSON 2

### YAHWEH THE TRUE GOD

*Objective* : To understand that Yahweh is the true God and that everything happens according to his wish.

Israel is God's chosen people. Their history starts with Abraham "Father of the faithful." "Go to the land I want to show you" was God's order to Abraham. According to that, he started out from Haran, crossed River Euphrates, turned west and reached Canaan. First he stayed at Shechem and later lived in the land between Bethel and Ai and worshipped God.

God tested Abraham's faith. He was ready to sacrifice his only son. When Abraham was coming down Mount Moriah with his son, he heard God's message, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen 22:18). Because of Joseph, who was Pharaoh's minister, Jacob and his sons came to Egypt and settled in Goshon. They became a strong clan in Egypt but were persecuted and harassed by the Egyptians in many ways. To liberate them from slavery, God chose Moses who grew up in the palace. When God's wrath came upon Egypt and the Pharaoh, the people were punished with various types of plagues, and the Israelites were liberated. The huge crowd of people, which started for Canaan, included adult males numbering more than 600,000. God parted the red Sea and led them to the other shore. They traveled for about 40 years through the deserts. God fed them with Manna and Quails and gave them water from rock. When his death was nearing, Moses called all the people and gave them the last message, which was not to forget the true God. At the age of 120, Moses climbed Mount Nebo and standing on Pisgah Peak, saw the Promised Land and died. Then Joshua became the leader. In the same way Moses crossed the Red Sea, Joshua and the Israelites crossed River Jordan and put up tents at Gilgal. After capturing Jericho, they captured the town of Ai, south and North of Canaan. At Mount Ebal God's commandments were written on stone and he made them strong and steadfast in the faith of God.

After Joshua, judges were appointed to lead Israelites. Including Deborah, the prophetess, 15 judges took up leadership of Israelites. When they started living in Palestine, their unity was lost. Forgetting the true God, they started

worshipping Baal of the heathens. They lost their moral values also. Lack of strong leadership was evident. This led to the rule of kings.

### **Reign of the Kings (B.C. 1050 – 586)**

Saul belonging to the tribe of Benjamin was ordained as the first king of Israel by Samuel. He was able to instill a sense of unity into people and made Israel a powerful nation. After Saul's death, David became King of Israel (BC 1010 –970) He expanded the empire. He wanted to build a beautiful temple in Jerusalem. For that, he brought the ark of the Covenant from Baalah in Judah and kept it in the tent that David had set up for it. David's immoral act of marrying Uriah's wife Bathsheba angered God. But prophet Nathan made him understand the depth of his sins and David repented and wrote Psalm 51. He chose Solomon as his successor. Solomon's reign was a period of prosperity (970 – 930). In 7 year's time; he built the beautiful temple at Jerusalem. Solomon initially trusted in the true God but later forgot him. He made altars for his many wives to worship their many heathen gods. . As a result, after the wise King Solomon's death, Israel was divided into two. The northern part known as Israel came to be ruled by 10 tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam. The Southern part known as Judah was ruled by Rehoboam, son of Solomon. Israel's capital was Samaria and Judea's capital was Jerusalem.

### **Kings of Israel**

19 kings belonging to various tribes ruled Israel. Most of them were weak rulers and idol worshippers. They were acting against the commandments given to Moses from God. During the reign of King Ahab, prophet Elijah proved who the true God was. Israel was attacked by the Assyrian Empire several times and majority of the people were taken as prisoners to Assyria. As a result, Israel became nonexistent. Foreigners started living in Samaria. Children of their descendants and the local residents are known as Samartians.

### **Judah**

After the fall of the northern region, Judah existed for about 150 years more. 20 kings ruled Judah one after the other. All of them were from David's tribe. Prophet Isaiah urged people to depend on God instead of foreign powers. Still, kings gave tribute to enemy kings and continued as puppet kings. During the reign of Zedekiah, in the war with Nebuchadnezzar, Judea was defeated



badly in BC 586. The king and a good number of Jews were taken as slaves to Babylon. The temple at Jerusalem was destroyed completely. All the silver and gold utensils were taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem and the land of Judah, which was once ruled by mighty kings, became nearly non-existent in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

### Questions:

1. How did God miraculously look after the Israelites during their journey through the desert?
2. Explain the circumstances by which the rule of kings started in Israel.
3. Explain the circumstances by which David wrote Psalms 51.
4. How did Jerusalem and Judea come into non-existence by 6<sup>th</sup> century BC?

### Fill in the blanks:

1. Capital of Israel was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Capital of Judea was \_\_\_\_\_.

### Memory Verse:

*Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

### LESSON 3

## **YAHWEH THE TRUE GOD (CONTINUATION) PERIOD OF EXILE (BC 586-516)**

Most of the people who were taken as prisoners by the enemy kings from the land of Canaan to Babylon engaged themselves in farming and business. One group of people was attracted to idol worship and they rejected the true faith. Few people like Daniel were favored by the king and held offices in the government. Most of the people lived a life of unhappiness and despair. Prophet Ezekiel lived amongst such people comforting and encouraging them to lead a pious life. Under the shade of trees and riverbanks, they used to get together to worship and pray.

In the history of the Babylonian empire, the rule of king Nebuchadnezzar is known as the golden period. But his successors were not efficient or strong like him. So, Persian king Cyrus invaded Babylon in 538 BC by defeating them. That was the end of Babylon Empire and beginning of Persian Empire. He allowed the Jews to go back to Palestine and to re-establish the Jerusalem temple. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Most of the exiled people returned to Judah. King Cyrus allowed them to take back the sacred vessels of the temple.

After returning to Palestine, they started rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. By asking "My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while God's Temple lies in ruins?" Prophet Haggai revived them. Another prophet who encouraged them was Zechariah. Despite the protests from Samaritans, in B.C. 516, they renovated the temple of Jerusalem and held the big festival of Passover there. Arrangements were also made for regular worship. Thus, the 70 years of exile which prophet Jeremiah prophesized was fulfilled.

In BC 458, under the leadership of priest Ezra, and in BC 445, under the leadership of Nehemiah, the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes, exiled people returned to Palestine from Babylon. Nehemiah gave leadership to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Along with Ezra, Nehemiah abolished many evil practices among the Jews. They re started the practice of observing the Sabbath Day. They also tried to bring up the social status of the poor people.

### **Reign of the Greeks - BC 333**

Emperor Alexander the Great conquered countries like Persia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt in BC 333. Therefore, Greek language and Greek culture spread to these countries. Alexander was kind to the Jews. When he died in BC 323, his empire was divided amongst his army leaders. Egypt and Palestine came to be ruled by Ptolemy and Syria under Seleucus Nicator. Ptolemy II translated Septuagint Old Testament into Greek language. One of the successors of Seleucus called Antiochus III defeated Ptolemy in BC 198. Thus, land of Canaan came to be ruled by Antiochus. Greek culture spread to Jerusalem also. In BC 168, Antiochus IV invaded the temple of Jerusalem, made it unholy and installed a Greek God in it. He persecuted the Jews. The family who protested strongly against this persecution belonged to Mathathias. Later they came to be known as Macabees.

## **Macabees ( B. C. 167 –63)**

When Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanus forced the worship of idol gods, the family which preferred martyrdom belonged to Marthashmuni. Priest Mathathias protested against the Syrian government and destroyed the alters of heathen gods and encouraged his own people. When he died in BC 166, his son Judah maccabi became the leader. From him the clan name Macabees originated.

Judah Maccabi defeated the Greeks. In BC 165 he consecrated the temple and restarted worship. Festival of the Dedication of the Temple was celebrated. When he died, brothers Jonathan and Simon ruled successively. Simon was a strong ruler. Later his third son, John Hirkanus, son of John Hirkanus, Aristobulus, brother of Aristobulus, Alexander Janius, respectively took up leadership.

Sons of Alexander Janius, Aristobulus and Hirkanus, had arguments regarding right to the throne. That time, both asked the help of Roman General, Pompeii, who was ruling Damascus to intervene. In BC 63, Pompeii conquered Jerusalem. He made Hirkanus Governor and chief Priest. He sent Aristobulus the other son of Alexander Janius in exile to Rome. Thus, the Jews, who were free for many years, came to be ruled by the Roman Empire due to their own civil wars and riots.

### **Roman reign B.C. 63**

Hirkanus was a namesake ruler. The country was really ruled by an Edomian called Antipather. He was the governor of Judea. He was assassinated by the Jews in B.C. 43. With the help of Roman government, Herod son of Antipather became the ruler of Judea in B.C. 37. He tried to please the Jews. Building the temple of Jerusalem was his great achievement. Ruins of the wall he built still exist in Jerusalem and is known as the Wailing Wall. Though he respected Jewish rituals Herod was hard hearted. History calls him Herod the Great. During his reign Jesus Christ savior of the world was born in Bethlehem. Related to the birth of Jesus Christ he got many children killed in and around Bethlehem [Matthew 2-16]. Herod died in B.C. 4.

Due to internal riots and fights Jews were ridiculed among others. When they forgot the true god, and disobeyed his commandments, God's chosen people had to live as exiles. When they were ridiculed and mocked at, they

called upon God and heard the comforting voice, "Jacob, I will not forsake you." They repented and turned towards God. They returned to their own land and restarted worshiping Yahweh. The Jews had always lived anticipating the birth of a Savior. Living under Roman leadership, they were unable to recognize the arrival of that Savior. Their eyes were on palaces of kings and mansions of lords for him. But the sound of salvation was first heard by the poor and humble shepherds. The redeemer of sinners, the Savior of the world, thus came into the hearts of people.

### **Questions:**

1. Which Persian king allowed the Jews to return to Palestine?
2. Name the prophets who encouraged the people to build the temple of Jerusalem.
3. What service was done by Mathathias the priest? How did his clan get the name Macabees?
4. Describe how Jews came under Roman rule.
5. Herod the Great was hard-hearted. What was the evidence for that?

### **Memory Verse:**

**Titus 2:11** – .

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

## **LESSON 4**

### **YAHWEH THE TRUE GOD –CONTINUATION**

After the death of Herod, Palestine was divided into three and ruled by his sons. Judea was ruled by Archelaus (Matthew 2:22). He was ousted in AD 6 and Judea came under the direct rule of the Roman Governor. The Territory of Iturea and Traconitis that lay on the northeast of Sea of Galilee came under the rule of Philip (Luke 3: 1). Caesarea Philippi is the capital, which he built.

Herod Antipas ruler of Galilee was keeping his brother's wife Herodias as his wife. (Mat 14:3). He beheaded John the Baptist who objected to this (Matthew 14.6-12). Jesus referred to Herod Antipas as 'fox'. Pilate sent bounded Jesus, to this Herod for trial (Luke 23:6). Herod was exiled in AD

39. Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the great ruled from AD 37-54. He persecuted the Christians to please the Jews (Acts 12:1-19). He executed Apostle James (Mar Yacoob) and imprisoned Apostle Peter. God punished him with severe death penalty. (Acts 12:21-24). His son Agrippa II was also kind to the Jews. Along with governor Festus he was at the trial of Apostle Paul (Acts 25: 13-26).

Jesus was born during the reign of Emperor Augustus (Octavious) (BC 27-AD 14). Tiberius reigned later (AD 14-37). During his reign Jesus was crucified. Caligula, Claudius and Nero were the succeeding rulers. Emperor Nero persecuted Christians very brutally. Rome was burned down during Emperor Nero's reign. The first Jewish revolt also took place during Nero's reign.

In Judea, governor was the ruler and commander in chief of army. Caesarea was the headquarters of the governor and also that of the army. Only the governor had the authority to instate death penalty. In the Jewish community the council (Sannidrim council) ruled rest of the departments. Pontius Pilate who ordered Jesus to be crucified was the 5th governor of Judea. Forgetting justice and longing to please Jews he ordered Jesus to be crucified. When the Jews shouted, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar", he got frightened (John 19:12). Pilate was soon called back to Rome. Later Felix and Festus became governors.

The Jewish opposition to the Roman rule was the basic reason for the Jewish revolt. The establishment of shops by the Greeks in Caesarea, by closing the road to synagogue and the removal of 17 tolas of gold from the temple of Jerusalem, were the reasons for the outbreak of the revolt. People fought with the army. The famous historian Josephus Flavus was the leader of the Jewish revolt in Galilee.

The Roman lieutenant Wespesian defeated the people who revolted in Galilee. Later when he became the Emperor, his son Titus suppressed the revolt and conquered Jerusalem. Roman soldiers looted the temple, stole the golden lamp stand and the table for the bread offered to God. The temple was burnt and destroyed. There was mass genocide of the Jews. In AD 70 the town was destroyed completely. The second Jewish revolt that took place from AD 132-135 was also suppressed. The Jews live with the hope that the temple will be renovated and that Jerusalem will be the center of their religion and country.

For the Jewish people, in 1948 the independent state of Israel came into existence in Canaan but the place where the temple stood is not included in the state. In the war of AD 1967, which lasted 6 days, the region of Jerusalem came completely under the control of Israel.

### Questions

1. Which ruler was called 'fox' by Jesus?
2. Name the Emperor who ruled at the time of Jesus birth.
3. Name the Roman Emperor at the time of crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
4. Pilate forgot justice in the case of Jesus Christ. Why?
5. What was the basic reason for the Jewish revolt? What provoked their anger?
6. When was the country of Israel established? When did Jerusalem come under the control of Israel?

### Memory Verse

**Revelation 1:7** “ Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen”

## LESSON 5

### LAND OF PALESTINE

*Objective:* To learn that God sustained the promised land as the land of flowing milk and honey for His people.

Land of Palestine is known by many names such as Land of Canaan, Holy land and Israel, is a land located on the eastern side of Mediterranean Sea and is 120 miles in length. Romans gave the name Palestine to the Land of Canaan. The name Palestine is not found in the Bible. Jews always referred to this land as Canaan. Palestine means the land belonging to the Palestinian (Felistine) people. Borders of this land are on the north Lebanon and Hermon Mountains, on the south the stream of Misraim, On the east Basan land and Arabian Desert and Mediterranean Sea on the west. But for a long time the land of Palestine was not controlled by the Jews.

Geographically the land can be divided into: 1. Coastal plains 2. Middle mountainous land 3. Valley of Jordan 4. Mountainous land beyond Jordan

### **Coastal Plains**

The plateaus of Phoenicia, Sharon and Palestine are situated on the coastal region of Mediterranean Sea. Ancient traders of Phoenicia lived in the Phoenician plateau. Sor and Sidon were their important cities. Jesus heals the daughter of a lady (Canaanite) from this region. (Mat.15:21-28). Plateau of Palestine is quite broad. Palestinians originally came from the island of Crete. They entered Palestine plateau and settled on the eastern side. Their cities were secured with forts around. Israelites and Palestinians were enemies. Acron; Gath, Gaza, Asthod and Askalon are the five Palestinian cities.

Plateau of Sharon extends from Joppa to Carmel. Length of this land is about 50 miles. The land is beautiful with olive and oak trees and other flourishing plants. The rose of Sharon is famous. (Song of Songs 2:1) On the western coast lying between Sharon plateau and Phoenicia is Mount Carmel an elevated land. This is the place where Prophet Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal and the fire from heaven came down and burnt Elijah's offering

### **Middle mountainous land**

Cities of Galilee, Samaria and Judea constitute the middle mountainous land. Mountains of Lebanon and Hermon lie towards the north of Galilee. River Jordan originates from the western slope of mount Hermon. Lebanon is famous for its cedar wood (Jeremiah 22:23). When King Solomon built the temple, King Hiram sent cedar wood from Lebanon (1King5:9). In the valley of this mountain, grapes, olives and figs grow in abundance. The name Lebanon comes from the whiteness of snow.

### **Mount Hermon**

It lies parallel to Lebanon on the east. In psalms 133:3 it is written about the Hermon dew which falls on mount Zion. Hermon valley is suitable for agriculture. Rivers Abana and Pharppar which flow eastwards from this mountain make Syria fertile. Town of Caesarea Philippi is situated on the south of this mountain.

## **Galilee**

This country is full of mountains and hills. Through the southern side of the Esdralon Plain, river Kishon flows north westerly and falls into the Mediterranean Sea. Lake Galilee is on the eastern side. Mount Carmel lies on south western side and mount Gilboa on southern side. Jesus spent his youth in Nazareth of Galilee. Mount Tabor lies on southeastern side. On the hill slopes people do sheep rearing and agriculture.

## **Sea of Galilee**

It is also known as Sea of Kinnereth (Numbers 34:11), Lake Gannesaret (Luke 5:1) and Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). It is really a backwater lake. River Jordan falls into it from northern side and then flows towards south. Since it is surrounded by mountains and hills there are chances of strong winds (Mark 6:48-52). For people living in the coastal region fishing is the means of livelihood. Towns of Capernaum, Korasin, Bethsaida, Magdala, and Tiberias are situated on its shores. The coastal regions are one of the most fertile regions of Palestine. The region is densely populated. It is a health resort too.

## **Land of Samaria**

It lies between Galilee and Judea. Rain is scanty here. In the valleys wheat, maize, grapes and olives grow in abundance. Shechem and Samaria are important towns. Shechem is situated on the western side of Samaria, between the hills of Gerizem and Ebal. Shechem is the place where Abraham settled first in Canaan (Genesis 12:6). It is the name of the place where Jacob also lived. (Genesis 33:18-19). Moses carried the bones of Joseph with him when he left Egypt and Joshua buried them in Shechem. Sychar where Jacob's well is situated is near Shechem. Samaria was the most beautiful capital city of Israel. Shiloh, Shechem and Bethel were places of worship. Bethel means house of God. Jacob had heavenly vision here.

Samaria was conquered by many foreigners. In 8th century BC Emperor of Asshur attacked it and took people as prisoners. Instead they brought people from Asshur to live there. Descendents of the mixed blood of Israelites and people of Asshur later came to be known as the Samaritans. They worshipped at mount Gerizim. They had no contact with the Jews. But Jesus Christ was quite friendly with them. The incident where Jesus Christ asks water from the Samaritan lady takes place at the city of Sychar in Samaria (John 4:4-42).



## Land of Judea

It is a plateau famous for its hills and valleys. Rain is scanty here. On the western side lies the plateau of Palestine and the Dead Sea on the eastern side. Valleys are fertile. Lemon, grapes, wheat, maize and corn are cultivated here. Many of the cities are built on hills. Jerusalem the capital is built on the highest hill. Mount Zion and Mount Moriah are also situated at a higher altitude. Moriah is the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22:2) Later King Solomon built the temple here (2 Chronicles 3:1). It is believed that Salem where Melchizedek ruled is Jerusalem. (Genesis 14:18) This city has witnessed many historical events. This is the holy city where our Lord was crucified resurrected and ascended into heaven. Mount Calvary where Jesus Christ was crucified is on the northwestern side of Jerusalem.

Mount Olives and stream of Kidron are on the eastern side of this town. Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven from Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). Gethsemane is situated on the western slope of this mountain. On the southern side Jehosafath valley, Hinnom valley and Bethlehem are situated. About 6 miles southward from Jerusalem is the town of Bethlehem. *Bethlehem means house of food.* Rachel was buried and David was anointed here (Genesis 35:16-19, 1 Samuel 16:11-13). Bethlehem is also famous as *David's town.* Initially it was known as *Ephrath.* Bethlehem is very beautiful. Fields where shepherds lived tending their flocks of sheep at night are a common sight here (Luke 2:8). World famous Christian church of nativity is situated on top of mount Bethlehem.

Bethphage and Bethany are two villages on south eastern side of Bethlehem. Bethphage means house of figs and Bethany means shore. House of Lazarus who was raised from death by Jesus was in Bethany. Village of Emmaus is on northern side of Jerusalem. Jesus after the resurrection appeared to disciples who were going to Emmaus (Luke 24:13). Jericho is one of the important towns of Judea. The incidents described in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) takes place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. For travelers Jericho was a place of comfort and rest. Jericho is the first fort and town which Israelites captured at Canaan. Tax collector Zacchaeus and blind man Bartimaeus were from this place.

Hebron is an important town in south Judea. Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 25:9), which Abraham bought is situated here. David's first capital was Hebron. One very old oak tree is still seen in Hebron. It is believed that Abraham entertained the angels in the shades of this tree.

### **Beersheba**

In the Holy Bible, in several places it is written that Beersheba which is on the southern most side of Judea is the border of the land of Canaan. At the time of Jesus Christ, Jerusalem was under the control of the Roman Empire. In the 7th century AD Muslims conquered Jerusalem. Now a mosque is situated where the old temple was. Jerusalem is under the control of Israel now. The government is trying to shift the capital of Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

### **Questions**

1. What is the meaning of the word Palestine? What are the other names of that land?
2. Name the cities of the land of Palestine?
3. Name the lands that constitute the middle mountainous land. What is the importance of this land in relation to the Holy Bible?
4. Fill up the blanks Rivers flowing eastwards from mountain make the land of Syria fertile.

### **Memory verse**

*Acts 1:8- But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae, and in Sa-ma'ri-a, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

## LAND OF PALESTINE (CONTINUATION)

### Valley of Jordan

River Jordan is situated in this land. Lake Galilee and Dead Sea are also in this land. Many rivers and streams flow and reach here from the highlands. The land between Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea is known as 'Thickets' (big forest) (Jeremiah 12:5). The Jordan valley is agriculturally important, is densely populated and is very fertile (Genesis 13:10 Joshua 3:15)

### Dead Sea

The other names for Dead Sea are the Salt Sea and Sea of Arabah (Deuteronomy 3:17, Joshua 3:16) and Eastern Sea (Ezekiel 47:18). It is known as the Salt Sea because the density of salt in it is very high. Since any kind of life is not possible due to the high salt and mineral content it is called Dead Sea. The name East Sea is given since it is situated on the eastern side of the land of Judea. Dead sea is situated 1312 meters below sea level. It is 47 miles long and 9 miles wide. The evaporation of the water instead of flowing and the depth of the sea lead to the high salt content of the Dead Sea. Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea. Apart from some thorny plants and shrubs there is no vegetation on the shores. People cannot bathe in the Dead Sea due to the high salt content. It is the lowest point on earth below sea level. On the east side of the sea is the fort called Makheres where John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded. The Valley of Siddim where Sodom and Gomorrah were situated is on the southern side of Dead Sea. On the western side in the middle is the caves called En-Gedi where David hid himself from Saul (1Samuel 23:29). Massada, the historically famous fort is situated near the Dead Sea. Qumran cave is situated 7 km away on the northern border of the Dead Sea. It is in this cave that the Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947 by our late Yeshu Mar Athenatious Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America..

### Damascus

Situated 120 miles north easterly from Jerusalem is the ancient beautiful city of Damascus. It is the capital of Syria. Rivers Abana and Pharppar make the plateau fertile. Surrounding Damascus are gardens, fields and agricultural lands. It is a place of comfort, rest, and stopover for merchants. Damascus silk is famous.

Damascus holds an important place in the history of Bible. The Arameans of Damascus and Israelites were enemies. Abraham pursued the enemy kings who attacked Lot, as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. (Genesis 14:15) David captured this city (2 Samuel 8:5) Naaman the leper was from Damascus. Apostle Paul was converted on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-31). From AD 1<sup>st</sup> century to the 7th century Damascus was under Roman rule. Later Muslims captured the city and is still under their rule. The headquarters of Patriarch of Antioch, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox church is in Damascus. There is a beautiful church and Patriarchal mansion here.

### **Mountainous land beyond Jordan**

This is the land on the eastern side of Jordan valley. Moab, Gilead and Bashan are the places in this valley. Bashan is famous for its wheat grains and cattle. (Deuteronomy 32:14). In Ruth 1:1 we read about the crop in Moab at the time of the famine. The perfume plants and timber of Gilead are famous. Mount Nebo is situated on the northeastern side of Dead Sea. Standing on top of the Pisgah peak of Mount Nebo Moses saw the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:1).

Decapolis is on the northeastern side of Gilead. Decapolis means land of ten cities. Jesus heals the two demonized people in Gadara one of the important town of Decapolis. (Matthew 8:28 Mark 5:1-14). Caesarea Philippi is on the northern side of Decapolis. It is here that Peter declared Jesus is the son of God (Matthew 16:13-21). At here Jesus Christ predicts about his death. (Matthew 16:21-28). Town of Bethesda is near to this place and it is in Bethesda that Jesus Christ miraculously feeds five thousand people with five loaves of bread.

### **Climate and vegetation**

Winter with plenty of rain and a dry summer is the climate characteristic of Palestine. People wait for the rain to wet the land dry and broken due to the summer heat. Early rains come in October. The rain in April and May help to ripen the crops (Joel 2:23, Amos 4:7). Mist is common here. The eastern wind which blows often is dry and causes a lot of damage (Isaiah 27:8, Ezekiel 17:10). Since the wind which blows at noon is fiery hot as it comes from the hot sand, it is common for the people in Palestine to pray to save them from that wind (Luke 12:54). Palestine is rich in a variety of vegetation. Large forests are

found in Palestine. Shrubs and meadows are seen in plenty. The land is rich in grassland for the cattle. Desert land is also found in Palestine. Fruits and grains are exported. Export of flowers is another source of income. Farming and cattle rearing are the main occupations.

### Questions

1. What are the other names of the Dead Sea?
2. In the history of Christianity and church Damascus has an important place. Explain.
3. Where is mount Nebo situated? What is the importance of this mountain?
4. Early rains and late rains are in which months? How does it help the crop?

### Memory Verse

*Psalms 91: 5* Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

## LESSON 7

### THE JEWISH FAMILY

*Objective:-* To learn about the social customs, education system and occupations of the Jewish society.

Ancestors of the Jews lived in tents. They were nomads shifting from one place to the other with their cattle and sheep. Abraham and his family did the same. They wore clothes made from the fur of sheep or camel. Their diet consisted of milk, fruits, vegetables and meat. Later, the Jews residing in Egypt made houses of brick and lived in them. They started cultivating agricultural crops. They also became experts in art and craft, mathematics, architecture, astronomy and metal works.

In the course of time the Jews were freed from their slavery in Egypt and reached Canaan. They defeated the local people and started living there permanently. They built stone houses. The houses were constructed with terrace and attics where one could pray. The Jews had a joint family system where father mother and children lived together. Father was the head of the family. In the early days father was the priest too and offered sacrifices. Different families

constituted a clan. Chiefs of the clans were known as elders. Different clans constituted a tribe. Polygamy was not considered as a sin. Initially everyone had only one wife e.g. Noah, Adam. But later polygamy came into practice and this caused many problems. Birth of a baby especially that of a boy was a time of happiness. Responsibility to look after the family and to carry on the traditions was entrusted to the boys. The eldest son got the right to two thirds of the father's property. This is called 'right of the firstborn' (Deuteronomy 21:17). First born males were considered special to God and were given important place in the family.

Circumcision of the male baby on the eighth day was a special holy occasion. By circumcision they believed that they were entering into a special pact with the true God. The baby becomes member of the Jewish community after circumcision. Girls were cared for in the Jewish society. They learnt the art of cooking and home management from their mothers.

### **Education**

In the early days children studied at home. Parents taught children religious stories and recited the psalms. Later Rabbis taught children. Synagogues were schools also. Children were taught to read and write. The Jews gave importance to religious studies. Schooling started at the age of six. The age to obey laws was 13 and age of marriage 18.

With Greek influence schools were established all over in Palestine. A Jewish boy had to study the mother tongue Syriac (Aramaic) and the biblical language Hebrew. Greek was the popular language of literature. Only those who knew Hebrew and Greek were considered educated during that times. Gamaliel, who was the teacher of St. Paul, was the grandson of the famous teacher Hillel. Scribes explained the laws and did copy-writing of the biblical verses.

### **Occupation**

A Jewish boy was required to learn at least one profession/trade. Jesus was a carpenter. St. Paul was a tent maker. Agriculture, sheep and cattle rearing, and commercial trading were the main occupations of the people. Since water was not available in plenty everywhere, women were mainly responsible to fetch water from faraway streams and wells in pots or leather bags. Fishing was the main occupation of the people who lived in the coastal regions

## **Marriage and marriage customs**

Marriage was looked upon with respect and dignity in the Jewish community. Marriageable age was 18 for man and 12 for girls. Relationship between a husband and wife was considered sacred and an occasion to love and serve each other. Adultery was a punishable offence. It was forbidden to marry from another caste.

Betrothal (Engagement) was given lot of importance. It was considered equal to marriage. Engaged couple were not allowed to separate. Mary who was just pledged to be married to Joseph is called as his wife in the scriptures (Matthew 1:18-21). Dowry system was prevalent. Man used to give dowry to the girl. Sometimes ornaments were given as dowry. We read in Genesis 24:53 that on behalf of Abraham, Eliazar gives clothes gold and silver ornaments to Rebecca in her father's house when she was engaged to Isaac. Engagement is sealed with a written deal or a gift. Usually marriage takes place within one year of the betrothal.

Marriage functions usually last for a week. On the evening of the marriage the bride is taken to the groom's house with lot of celebration. The girl wearing wedding dress and decked with ornaments is accompanied by the friends and relatives of the groom and bride. Special music and lights add glamour to the occasion. When the marriage procession is nearing the groom's house they are welcomed by young virgin girls with oil in their lamps. When everyone enters the house door is closed. Then the banquet follows. All the invited guests will participate in the feast. White dress is worn for the feast. If needed white dress is given to the guest. The uninvited are thrown out. The master of the banquet was in charge of all the activities related to the feast. Marriage was indeed a sacred occasion for the Jews.

### **Dress of the Jews**

In early days the Jews wore leather dress and later clothes made of sheep fur and jute. In the severely cold winter woolen dresses were worn. They wore dress covering the whole body. An over cloak also was part of the dress. They tied a girdle (sash) over the inside long dress. The poor would tie a rope instead (Isiah 3:24). The skillfully woven girdle of the priests was decorated with gold blue purple and scarlet yarn (Exodus 28:8). The soldiers decided to draw lot for the garment Jesus wore (John 19:23-24). Sandals were popular in those

days. Men and women wore headdress covering the head. Men wore caps or turbans sometimes. It was common for the ladies to wear veils (Isiah3:23)

### **Food of the Jews**

Wheat and maize were the favorite grains. They ate bread with soup, wine, figs and olives. Main meals were lunch and supper. Jews liked fish and meat. Of animals birds and fish, only the clean ones (kosher) were eaten (Leviticus 11:23, Deuteronomy 14:11). Milk butter and eggs were consumed in plenty. Great care was taken to wash hands before meals (Mark 7:3). In earlier days they used to sit down on the floor for meals. Later tables were used. Praises to God was said before meals. For the invited important guests servants will pour water to wash their feet. Perfumed oil was provided to be put on hair. Mariam poured perfumed oil on the head of Jesus (Matthew 26:7) Guests will come wearing special dress (Matthew 22:11) Place of honor was provided for the special guests at the banquet hall (Matthew23:6)

### **Questions**

1. Write about the changes, life in Egypt made in the lifestyle of the Jews.
2. What is right of the first born?
3. What is the importance of circumcision?
4. Amongst Jews betrothal was sealed with a deal or a gift. Write an example to prove this.
5. Marriage was a sacred occasion for the Jews. Write about the customs associated with marriage.
6. Write short notes on: A). Dress of the Jews B). Food habits of the Jews

### **Memory Verse**

#### **Hebrews 3:4**

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.



## LESSON 8

### THE JEWISH FAMILY (CONTINUATION)

*Objective:*- Learn about the religious rituals, death and life after death, and judiciary.

#### **Religious customs and rituals of the Jews**

Religion is the breath of life for the Jews. Religious education is given from early childhood. Boys are circumcised on the eighth day. On the 40th day they are offered at the temple. With these rituals, the relationship between God religion and society is made strong. Later religious education is given. Individual as well as group prayers had an important place in the Jewish society. Jews used to pray two times in a day. There were people who prayed three times in a day also. (Daniel 6:10 Psalms 55:17). They prayed kneeling down (Daniel 6:10, Acts 7:60) and while in distress falling facedown (Matthew 26:39). Some prayed looking up and holding hands stretched upwards. They prayed after washing hands. It was to signify that sins are washed away.

In the temple they prayed and offered sacrifices. With the destruction of the temple sacrifices were not possible and so they prayed, meditated and read religious verses in the synagogues. Psalms was the religious book used for daily prayers. One of the most important rituals was fasting. It was done to show grief also. They did fasting to avert Gods anger, to cleanse oneself and to get nearer to God. Fasting was done individually and as a society. Moses received the laws from God after fasting for forty days (Exodus 34:28). David prayed fasting for his child (2 Samuel 12:16). Nehemiah fasted and prayed for the sins of Israelites (Nehemiah 1:4). Daniel fasted and prayed for the people (Daniel 9:3). Esther, maids and all the Jews prayed for three days with fasting (Esther 4:16). Fasting of the Nineveh people is also famous. In many places the word fasting is used to mean humble one self. David talks about humbling himself with fasting (Psalms 35:13). On the Day of Atonement it was the law that all the Israelites should fast. That day they were required to spend the whole day in fasting and prayer and not to work (Leviticus 16:29-31, 23:21-32).

Moses enforced the fasting which is to be observed once in a year. Apart from this they fasted another four days in memory of historical events. In

(Zechariah 7:5,8:19) In the fourth month it was in remembrance of the Babylonian army entering the city for the first time, (Jeremiah 52) In the 5th month it was for the remembrance of the destruction of the city and temple (Jeremiah 52:12-13). In memory of the murder of Gedaliah and the Jews with him they fasted in the 7th month (Jeremiah 41). In remembrance of the sanctions against Jerusalem (Jeremiah 41) fasting was practiced in the 10th month. All these were days of grief.

The Pharisees fasted two days in a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (Luke 18:12). Monday was to remember the day Moses went to get the laws from Mount Sinai and Thursday was to remember the day he returned. They did not eat any food till evening on days of fast. In later years they were mere acts of show (Isiah 58:4, Joel 2: 12). Jesus has criticized the mere acts of fast of the Pharisees.

### **Death and Life after Death**

Long life was considered as a fortune by the Jews. Old people were well respected. Pharisees, one group of the Jews believed that life does not end with death, soul is forever and that there is resurrection after death. But Sadducees another group of Jews rejected all these beliefs. (Acts 23:8). This belief became stronger from the prophetic times. In Daniel 12:2 we read that "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt". We read in Ezekiel 37:1-14 that 'I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life'. Hosea 13:14 says, "I will redeem them from death". They believed that the good people have victory over death and hell and that bad people have sufferings in this world and in the other world too. Martha says about Lazarus "I know he will rise again in the resurrection" (John 11:24).

They believed that the evil souls went to hell. Psalm 16:10 says "Because you will not abandon me to the grave". But some believed that the dead people are silent for ever and unable to do anything. But this was not the popular belief. Sadducees did not believe that there was life after death and that the soul is eternal, but the common belief was that there is life after death, that the souls of the departed can help the living ones and those souls had the ability to think and act. In 1 Samuel 28 we see that the spirit of Samuel was called as wanted by Saul. The Psalmist says, "You do show your wonders to the dead? Do those who are dead rise up and praise you"? (Psalm 88:10).

## **Rituals After death**

The Jews described death as sleep, journey, rest, and to be with the fathers. When a person died his eyelids were closed and the near and dear ones kissed him. This is saying goodbye for the last time. Then the body is washed and laid. The body is covered in burial cloth and anointed with perfume. Body and head are covered in separate clothes. St. Peter saw the cloth which was used to cover the head of our lord Jesus Christ. The dead body is buried within 24 hours after death. Bodies were buried either in ground or in caves. Sometimes tombs were cut out in rocks. There were family tombs. Specially made tombs were also there. The body of Jesus was buried in a special tomb. Jews had the practice of fasting for the souls of the dead person (1 Samuel 31:13). When Moses died (Deuteronomy 34:8 and Aaron died (Numbers 20:29) Israelites grieved for 30 days. For Jacob the Egyptians mourned for 70 days (Genesis 50:3)

## **Law Enforcement**

The Jews were very strict about law enforcement. Public prosecution was done in front of elders and the guilty were punished. An Eye for an eye and tooth for tooth was the law. The affected ones had the right to take revenge even without trial. But in the case of murder there were cities of refuge where the accused could seek protection. This was to avoid revenge without trial. If it was proved that the murder was committed unintentionally the accused could live in the cities of refuge till the death of the high priest and then could go free to his house. But for intentional murder, punishment was given even if one entered the cities of refuge. Punishments varied from penalty with money, whip beatings, imprisonment, and death by stoning, beheading and crucifixion, depending on the severity of the crime. For crimes of public importance the council conducted the trial and decided the punishment. But the council did not have the authority for death penalty. Roman law insisted that the trial should not be conducted at night and that more than one witness is needed to prove anybody guilty. It was against the law to finish the trial in one day and to pronounce judgment. All these rules were not followed in the case of Jesus Christ.

## Cities of refuge

Joshua designated the 6 cities of refuge in different parts of Israel as instructed by God so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood. They were Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and Hebron in the hill country of Judah. On the east side of the Jordan of Jericho they designated Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead and Golan in Bashan. The accused were safe as long as they lived in the cities of refuge (Numbers 35:10-15, Joshua 20:1-9, Deuteronomy 19:1-6).

## Days and Time

The Jews calculated days from one evening to next evening. But hours were calculated from 6 a.m. When they say 3rd hour it means 9 am. It is written that there was darkness between the 6th and 9th hours when our lord Jesus Christ was crucified. That is from 12noon to 3pm. (Matthew 27:45). 1st day of the week was Sunday. Saturday, the 7th day was the Sabbath day.

## Questions

1. The Jews prayed after washing their hands. What is the meaning of this?
2. Why did the jews fast? Write down the occasions when fasting was for the community.
3. What were the occasions of grief and fasting?
4. About life after death which group had a separate view? What was the common belief?
5. What were the rituals after death?
6. These rules regarding trial were not followed in the case of Jesus Christ. What were they?
7. What is meant by cities of refuge? Name them.

## Memory verse

**Acts 5:31**

*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

## LESSON 9

### TEMPLE OF GOD

*Objective:-* To learn how the tabernacle became the temple of God.

Rescued from the slavery in Egypt, the Israelites crossed the red sea and under the leadership of Moses and Aaron traveled towards the Promised Land. God guided them through the journey as the cloud which protected them from the heat of the sun during day time, and as the pillar of fire giving light at night time. During the course of the journey Lord called their leader Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments.

God wanted Israel, to be his own people. He wanted them to worship him the only true God. So through Moses, God let the people know his wish that he wanted to live amongst his people. "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). God ordered Moses to make a tent which can be carried from place to place. This tent is called the tabernacle.

Tabernacle was the beautiful tent set up in the middle of the people for the purpose of worship. When the Israelites reached Canaan the tabernacle was kept at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). After the Philistines confiscated the Ark of the Covenant, till the reign of Solomon the tabernacle was at Gibeon (1 chronicles 16:39, 2 chronicles 1:13). David made a tent at Jerusalem to keep the ark of covenant (2 Samuel 6:17). With great celebration, the Ark was later kept in the temple which Solomon built (1 Kings 8:4).

Moses had specific instructions regarding the details of the making of the tabernacle. It was instructed that all the materials needed will be given at free will by the people and that the people themselves had to build the tabernacle. Bezalel and Oholiab two godly people were chosen to give training to the others to build the Ark artistically and beautifully (Exodus 31:1-16). People cooperated wholeheartedly in the building of the tabernacle. Things were brought in abundance and Moses had to stop them finally from giving. They brought gold, silver, jewels, wood and fine woven cloth. Ladies participated in artistically weaving the carpets, curtains and other upholstery of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was built with wooden planks, cloth and leather. So it was easy to be carried from place to place. There was clear instruction about the things that should be in the tabernacle, how they should be made and where they should be kept.

The tabernacle was placed in the middle of the settlement in the east west direction. Men from the Levi tribe were chosen to serve at the tabernacle. Moses and Aaron had their abodes on the eastern side of the tabernacle at the entrance. Arrangements were made so that three tribes were living on each side of the tabernacle. The tabernacle had three places called (1) most holy place (2) holy place and (3) courtyard. The courtyard was all around the tabernacle. From east to west it was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. All four sides were covered with curtains. Standing here, the common people participated in the service. Door for the tabernacle was on the eastern side of the tabernacle. This door had a 30 feet long curtain covering it. This curtain was made with blue purple scarlet and white threads and had artistic work on it. Blue color is for divinity of Christ, purple for his human nature, scarlet for his royalty and redemption and white the purity of life. In 1 Peter:18-19, it is written that, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect"

#### **Bronze Altar (Exodus 27:1-8, 38:1-7)**

At the entrance of the courtyard there was the altar of burnt offering. It was a square box made of acacia wood, five cubits long five cubits wide and three cubits high and easy to be transported from one place to the other. The box was covered with bronze to make it fireproof. There were horns at each corner. These horns were to tie the sacrificial animals. These horns denote the human nature, slavery, royalty and divine natures of Christ. The altar had poles and handles for easy transportation.

#### **The Bronze Basin (Exodus 30:17-21, 38:8)**

Water was kept in this basin so that the priests could wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle. This was kept in between the tabernacle and the altar. The priests washed their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle and before offering sacrifice. So we have to infer that the Jews taught the importance of cleanliness and purity before approaching God. In Exodus 30:20-21 we read "Whenever they enter the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water so that they will not die".

## **Holy Place**

This was 30 feet long. It was situated east westerly. The western end was 10 feet long and called 'Holy of Holies' and the rest 'Holy Place'. A curtain separated both the places. On the eastern end of the holy place was the entrance. This was covered with curtain.

### **Objects at the holy place**

#### **1. The altar of incense**

This was a table covered with gold. (Exodus 30:1) Incense was burnt here everyday morning and evening

#### **2. The Golden Lamp stand**

The lamp stand was made of pure gold. It was built in such a way that in the centre stalk there was a single lamp and 3 lamps each on right and left side branches. It was placed on the southern side of the altar of incense. Olive oil was used in the lamp. The lamp was kept burning day and night (Exodus 25:31-40) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

#### **3. Table to keep showbread (Bread of the Presence)**

This was kept on the northern side of the altar of incense. This is a small table covered with gold. 12 loaves of unleavened bread were kept in two rows on it. On each Sabbath day new bread was kept and old ones were eaten by the priests (Exodus 25:23-30). "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:36).

#### **4. Holy of Holies**

This is the holiest place. The high priest entered there once in an year to repent and offer sacrifice for himself and the people (Hebrews 9:7).

### **Things kept at Holy of Holies**

#### **1. The ark of the covenant**

This was two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide and one and a half cubits high. It was covered with pure gold. Inside the ark the two slabs where the ten commandments were written, the golden plate where manna was kept and the "budded rod" of Aaron was kept (Exodus 25:10-16).

## 2. The mercy seat on top of the ark

This shows God's presence. It was made of pure gold. It was covered with the clouds and in the clouds God used to talk to Moses (Exodus 25:17-22).

## 3. Cherubim on the mercy seat

The two cherubim were facing each other and with the wings spread upwards covered the mercy seat. Their faces were towards the mercy seat. Standing in the midst of the cherubim God spoke to Moses (Exodus 25:18). When the tabernacle was placed in the middle of the Israeli settlement, God's grace was on it. During day time the pillar of cloud and at night the pillar of fire was on the tabernacle. The people saw it and felt the presence of God amongst them. "" (John 1:14).

" And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

### Questions

1. What is tabernacle?
2. What are the parts of the tabernacle?
3. What are the objects in the Holy place? Pertaining to Jesus what is the significance?
4. What were the objects kept at the most holy place?
5. How did the people know that God lived amongst them?

### Memory verse

**John 14:6**

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*



## LESSON 10

### THE TABERNACLE

*Objective:-* To learn about the similarities and differences between the Jerusalem temple and the churches of today.

The Jerusalem temple was constructed on Mount Moriah which is on the northern side of the mountain situated on the eastern side of Jerusalem. David planned to build the temple on mount Moriah where God revealed himself to David, but his son Solomon built the first temple. Everyone participated in the construction of the temple. When the construction finished the consecration ceremony was conducted with great pomp and the ark of covenant was brought from Zion with great respect and was placed in the temple. The temple was constructed in the same model as the tabernacle but length and breadth were double. Like the tabernacle it was divided into two. Apart from that, there were three halls, one for the priests, one for the Israelites and one for the gentiles. There were two courtyards. Everybody could enter the outside courtyard but the inside one was restricted to the priests.

#### **Daily worship in the church**

The priests woke up early morning daily, took bath, wore official garments and put lots to assign people for daily chores. At sunrise the doors of the temple are opened and the sacrificial goats are killed and the altar of incense is kept ready. Then incense is burnt, the slaughtered goats are offered as sacrifice and prayers are said. When the people are kneeling down and praying, the appointed priest will enter the holy place through the door at the front hall carrying the incense burner. After the prayer he will come to the front door of the hall and bless the people. Then the sacrificed animals are burnt at the bronze altar. Then the singers belonging to the Levi tribe sing the psalms assigned for each day. That time two priests will blow the horn. This time people will kneel down and pray. Public prayer finishes with the singing of the psalms.

Then people who have come to offer sacrifice for personal reasons do it. Every evening at 4PM the same worship is repeated. In BC588 King Babel destroyed the Jerusalem temple. In BC 536 the Israelites came back from exile under the leadership of Zerubabel and put foundation for the temple in BC 536 and finished the construction in BC 516. This temple lasted for about 400 years.

In BC 20 King Herod built the third temple of Jerusalem. This was the temple present during the time of Jesus Christ. In AD 70 Titus, the Roman military leader destroyed it. Today, at the site of the ancient Jerusalem Temple a big mosque (Omar's mosque) is situated.

### **The church and its parts**

For the Jewish church which was the shadow of the Christian church, according to the instructions from God, the temple which Solomon built is the model of all the present churches. Like that temple, our churches also have courtyard, Holy Place and Most Holy Place. The center is similar to the golden incense burner of old times. The prayer of the faithful is the burning incense. At the most holy place i.e. madbaha, instead of Aaron's budded rod is the cross, the Qurbana which is in essence the manna, as completion of laws the Bible, and brightly burning lamps signify the cherubim. Old Testament sacrifice was conducted in the Holy Place but the New Testament one is conducted in the Holiest of Holy place. Madbaha means place of sacrifice.

God's blessed presence was always there in between the cherubim at the ark of covenant. In the same way, in a church built in the name of a blessed person, anointed with oil and consecrated by the bishop, who is rightly ordained in apostolic succession, God's divine presence will be always there. Instead of the lamp stand with seven branches in our church there are the seven sacraments which shine divine light. All the believers spread the light from Jesus. From the verse "I am the light of the world and let your light be shown in front of others", it is understood that Jesus is the main trunk of the lamp stand and the believers are the branches. If any branch is away from Christ it cannot produce good result and cannot shine.

In place of the table where bread was kept in tabernacle, there is the 'throne' in our church and instead of the basin for purification the stone basin for baptism. After baptism one becomes God's child. In Jerusalem temple only the priests had the right to eat the bread. Since priestly status is given to everyone in church, we have the right to eat the bread and to enter the holy place (1 Peter 2:9).

## Questions

1. What were the differences between Jerusalem temple and the tabernacle?
2. Describe the daily service at the temple.
3. Write a short history of the Jerusalem temple. What is the status of the temple now?
4. Temple of Jerusalem is the model of the present church. How?

## Memory verse

### *1 Peter 2:9*

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:*

## LESSON 11

### WORSHIP IN THE TEMPLE

*Objective:* To understand the greatness of the sacrifice Jesus did.

The most important part of the Jewish worship was the offering made or the sacrifice. We see that from the early days the Jewish people offered sacrifices to God individually or as head of the family. God accepted the offering of Abel and rejected that of Cain (Genesis 4:3-5, Hebrews 11:4). Tribal heads like Noah, Abraham and Jacob offered sacrifices to God (Genesis 8:21). Sacrifice became the most important part of the worship at the time of Moses. The positions of high priest, priest and Levi came into existence during that time. Special places were designated at the tabernacle for the sacrifice. Moses arranged everything according to the instructions from God (Exodus 40).

## Important Offerings

### 1. Whole burnt offering

Sheep, goat, calf, bull, dove or young pigeons were used for whole burnt offering. It was important that these were without any defect. If goat or a calf, it was brought to the entrance of the tabernacle, the person making the offering would place his hands on the head and pray and then kill the animal. The priest

will sprinkle the blood on the table and the animal will be burnt as a whole. If the offering is a dove or a young pigeon, the priest himself will kill it and burn it. Priests would do offering in the morning and evening (Leviticus 1, Genesis 29). Burnt offerings were done for individuals and for the congregation. Whole burnt offering cleans them out of any impurity. It further proclaimed complete submission.

## **2. Sin Offerings**

This was done for unintentional sins. For a priest a calf, for a lord a goat, for the church a calf and for an ordinary person a lamb had to be sacrificed. All animals had to be without defect. For a very poor person a pigeon was enough. The rituals were similar to that of the whole burnt offerings. The person bringing the offering will bring the calf to the door of the temple, place his hands on the head of the animal and pray, then kill it. The priest will take the blood and sprinkle it in front of the curtain seven times, smear some blood on the horns of the bronze altar and pour rest of the blood at the foot of the altar. All the fat is burnt at the altar. The priest will pray for the sinner and the remains of the animal are taken outside the settlement and burnt. One portion of it belongs to the priest (Leviticus 4, 5:1-13). Then his sins are forgiven. Sin offering signifies the state where the sinner seeks deliverance from God.

## **3. Peace offering**

Peace offerings were of three kinds: thanksgiving, vows and offerings out of self will. Thanksgiving was to remember God's blessings. Vows and offerings out of self will were in anticipation of blessings. Articles of offerings were similar to that of whole burnt offerings. One portion of the offering is burnt. One portion is for the priest and one for the person offering it (Leviticus 7:11-12). After the reconciliation between man and God, the state of living with a heart full of gratitude is denoted by the peace offering.

## **4. Trespass Offering**

If unknowingly involved in mistakes related to religious matters, doing things forbidden by God, committing sins in the dealings with others, as penance trespass offering is done. One ram is the article of offering. Rest of the rituals are similar to those of the peace offering. Since trespass offering is a penalty for taking undeserved things, in addition to giving back the undeserved things, one fifth of the price has to be given in addition (Leviticus 5:14, 6:7).

## **5. Meal Offerings**

Diluted batter, unleavened cakes and unleavened wafers were used for this. It was forbidden to add honey or yeast to this. One portion of the offering was burnt and the rest were given to the priest (Leviticus 2). It was used along with whole burnt offering and peace offering (Numbers 15:8-9, Leviticus 7:11-13). This was as a symbol of offering agricultural products to God.

## **6. Drink Offerings**

Oil and wine were used for drink offerings. This, like the meal offering was offered along with the other offerings (Numbers 15:1-10). All the Old Testament offerings were forerunners and shadows of the self offering of Jesus Christ for once and for all. The blessings which were incomplete as the result of Old Testament offerings became complete as a result of the death of Jesus Christ. We can know from Numbers 15:31 that there is no offering for deliberately committed sins. Too many rituals are not appreciated by God (Isaiah 1:16). God says, "Wash you, make you clean;". Through the offering of Jesus Christ, with the blood that was flowing at Calvary the whole world is cleansed. According to New Testament the faithful have to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5).

The faithful should offer:

1. Their bodies (Romans 12:1)
2. People who repented because of them. (Romans 15:15- 16)
3. Prayers and thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15)
4. Good deeds. (Hebrew 13:16)
5. Offerings (Philippians 4:18)
6. Faith and service (Philippians 2:17)

## Questions

1. What was the most important part in the worship?
2. What were the Old Testament offerings? Write about the importance of each one.
3. What was the sacrifice for the purification of the whole world?
4. According to the New Testament what should be offered to God?

## Memory Verse

*Isaiah 1:16-Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;*

## LESSON 12

### FEASTS OF THE JEWS – BIG FEASTS

*Objective:* Get to know Jesus by celebrating the feasts.

For Jews feasts were occasions of happiness and celebration. Feasts were celebrated with great pomp and gaiety.

#### 1. Passover Feast (Exodus 12:21-27)

Pass over was the most important feast of the Jews. Initially it was a spring festival. To surrender the firstborns to God was the most important ritual. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, the Lord passed through to smite the Egyptians (the firstborn in the Egyptian families got killed) and then the Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to go free. It is to remember this incident that the pass over festival was celebrated every year. All the Jews used to gather at Jerusalem for the festival. It was also known as the feast of the unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6).

The Passover festival is for seven days from April 14th. On the first day of the feast all the leavened batter is removed from all houses. For the next seven days it is forbidden to eat leavened bread. A lamb is slaughtered at the temple. The priest will sprinkle the blood down the alter. The fat is burnt. At about 10 pm the Passover feast is eaten in houses. The celebrations included eating the meat of the slaughtered lamb with unleavened bread and bitter spinach.

drinking wine and singing psalms. (Psalms 113-118). The Jews remember with gratitude how God redeemed them and celebrate this festival. When Jesus was having the feast with his disciples he instituted the Eucharist (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:7-26, Luke 22:14-20). Instead of the Passover feast Christians follow the Eucharist. Jesus Christ is the Passover lamb slaughtered for us (1 Cori 5:7-8).

## **2. The Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16)**

Pentecost means 50th. It is celebrated 50 days after the Passover. It is celebrated either end of May or beginning of June. Other names are 'Feast of Weeks' (Exodus 34:22) 'Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 34:22) and 'Harvest Festival' (Exodus 23:16). Pentecost was an occasion of happiness celebration and praises. Special offerings were done that day. (Leviticus 23:18). For the meal offering leavened bread with fresh flour was used. (Leviticus 23:15-21).

Since the Holy Spirit came on the disciples on Pentecost, it is a feast for Christians also. Since 3000 people became Christians it is a harvest festival for the New Testament church also.

## **3. Feast of Tabernacle (Leviticus 23:34-36, Deuteronomy 16:13, John 7:37)**

It was celebrated for 8 days from 15-22 of Thisri (month kanni in Malayalam ) month. It is at the end of September or October beginning. It is also known as the feast of vegetables and fruits. It was celebrated after collecting wine, oil and varieties of fruits and vegetables. Remembering how the almighty God guided the Jews for forty years in the desert and how they lived in tents during their journey through desert, they used to live in small houses made of branches of trees outside their houses for seven days. Feast of the tabernacle was a time of happiness. They offered whole burnt offerings and meal offerings. Songs, love feast and exchanging gifts were part of the celebrations. Ladies bringing water from the Shiloh pond and pouring it at the foot of the alter was a ritual associated with this feast. Based on this ritual Jesus Christ says "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:37-38). During the festival period, in the hall of the ladies, 4 lighted golden lamps were kept. Looking at this Jesus said that he is the light of the world. (John 8:12)

## Questions

1. Describe how the Jews celebrated pass over?
2. Who is the Passover lamb slaughtered for us?
3. Pentecost became a harvest festival for the Christians. How?
4. Which was the ritual Jesus was referring to when he said "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink".

## Memory verse

*Revelation 21:6 "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*

## LESSON 13

### FEASTS OF THE JEWS –CONTINUATION

#### The Small feasts

#### 1. Day of Repentance

This was a day of fasting. Church gathering was done that day. It was celebrated on September 30th. There were large scale celebrations. It was a day of forgiveness of sins. After the morning offerings, preparations were done. Two rams were brought, lots were cast and the one for sacrifice was decided. Bull was also kept ready for the offering.

The chief priest will enter the most holy place with the censer with burning coal and incense and fill the whole place with smoke. He will re enter with the blood of the sacrificed bull and sprinkle it twice on the mercy seat and seven times on the ark of covenant. Then he purifies the holy place, alter and the whole temple with the blood of the bull and ram.

Next is the purification of the people. The remaining lamb is sent to the forest for Azazel. Israelites considered Azazel as the evil in the jungle. To put the sins of the people on Azazel, that the lamb was sent. The high priest will put his hand on the head of the lamb and will confess the sins of the people. One person will be entrusted with the lamb that is carrying all the sins of the



world. He will leave it in the uninhabited jungle. There was a specific order for the confession of sins by the High priest. During New Testament times the Jews would take the lamb to a sloping hill 12 miles away from Jerusalem and push it down and killed it. The high priest would take bath, and offer whole burnt offerings for himself and the people. The body of the sacrificial animals are taken away and burnt. The words of John about Jesus that he is the lamb carrying the sins of the whole world are really full of meaning.

## **2. Purim**

It is one of the smaller feasts celebrated by the Jews. When Haman wanted to destroy the Jewish tribe, Mordecai and Esther saved them (Esther 9:25). Purim feast is to remember this incident. This feast was celebrated with great pomp on 14th and 15th of the 12th month called Odor. These days the story of Esther will be read. Mordecai would be praised. When mentioning about Haman, people will stamp the ground with their feet and produce a groaning sound. Faith in the working of God's unseen hand behind human events is shown by this festival.

## **3. Feast of Dedication (John 10:12)**

Jerusalem temple which was made unholy by the pagan king Epiphanies in BC168. It was made clean and worship restarted in BC165 by Judah Maccaabi. To remember this incident feast of dedication is celebrated every year for 8 days from 25th of the Jewish month of kisleb (December). People would have feast in the house and go to the temple holding tender palm leaves and singing psalms of praise (Psalms 113-118). Houses and the temple would be decorated with lights. So this was also called festival of lights. December 25th which the Jews celebrated as Feast of Dedication is celebrated as Christmas the birthday of our lord Jesus Christ by us.

## **4. Feast of wood offering (Nehemiah 10:34, 13:31)**

It was customary to take firewood nine days in a year to the church for offering. The most important of these days was 15th of Abib month. So this was the day of the feast of wood offering. When the temple was destroyed this feast came to an end.

## 5. **Feast of trumpets** (Numbers 29:16, Leviticus 23:23-32)

The feast of trumpets was celebrated on the 1st of the seventh month. That day, from sunrise to sunset trumpets are blown. This feast is to remember the incident when God gave the ten laws to Moses at Mount Sinai. Many offerings are done at the temple. To prepare oneself for the sin repentance day which would come after nine days and to wake oneself up from spiritual slumber, this day is used.

## 6. **Harvest Festival** (Leviticus 23:9-14)

This is the time of barley harvest. When the barley is ready for harvesting some men will go to the fields with the priests and the barley is harvested as sheaves. With great pleasure the sheaves are taken to the temple and given to the priests. Until the first sheaf is offered to God, nobody would eat of the harvested barley.

## 7. **Sabbath** (Exodus 16:23-30, Exodus 20:8)

Sabbath was very important for the Jews. This is celebrated every week. It is celebrated on the seventh day. God took rest from all the creative activity on the seventh day. So God blessed and made the day seventh day pure. The number seven as considered holy. To observe Sabbath is one of the ten laws. Sabbath is the day of rest from mental and physical activities, but the day is not for selfishness and idleness but to worship God. Those who desecrated Sabbath were given death penalty (Exodus 31: 14-15). Jesus criticized the Jewish mentality where people were satisfied just by observing laws but had no kindness in their hearts. Jesus did kind deeds on Sabbath day and proved that he is the Lord of the Sabbath and that doing good things is the right attitude needed for mental purification on Sabbath day. In the Christian church Sabbath is considered as the Lord's day and is celebrated on Sundays.

### **Related to Sabbath**

First day of the month was important for the Jews. Special burnt offerings and meal offerings were done on that day (Numbers 28:11-15). Relatives would get together and have love feast that day. First day of the seventh month was celebrated as the 'Feast of the Trumpets'. Seventh year (Sabbath year) was celebrated as 'Freedom Year'. For people and slaves and earth it was a year of rest. The slaves would get freedom and debts would be reduced. 50th year was

celebrated as 'Jobel Year'. The land and fields were not cultivated. It was necessary to get back all the pledged articles. There were arrangements to reduce debt amount and to give freedom for slaves. The Israelites believed that the Jobel Year indicated the prosperous time when the kingdom of God will be established.

### **Questions**

1. Which are the small feasts of the Jews?
2. 'Lamb that holds the sins of the world' - Write how these words are related to Jesus
3. Write about the feast which the Jews celebrated on 25th December, the day we celebrate as birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. How did Jesus prove that he is the Lord of Sabbath also?

### **Memory Verse**

#### **John 8:12**

*" Then spake Jesus again unto them , saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

# **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

## **LESSON 14**

### **THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

*Objective:* To understand the contents and nobleness of the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew chapters 5, 6, 7 and Luke 6:20-49)

On Mount Sinai, Moses received the Ten Commandments from God and gave it to the people. From a mountainside, Jesus Christ uttered words of wisdom, which is called the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of all the teachings of Jesus Christ. The moral and ethical Christian life is pictured here. Theologians, philosophers and other great people have seen, accepted and praised the goodness of these teachings. Great personalities like Abraham Lincoln, Tolstoy, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa absorbed the greatness of these teachings and showed its goodness in their own lives. The Sermon on the Mount also influenced people like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

The moral and ethical responsibilities of Christian life are detailed in the Sermon on the Mount. We can make it practical in our own life only if we are close to our comforting God. It touches the conscious, subconscious levels and all other important aspects of life. Like Apostle Paul said, "Its no longer me but Christ living in me", it is the new vision of a Christian who is born again in Jesus Christ.

Jesus gave importance not to the enforcement of laws and rituals but for good deeds and the attitude behind it. The Pharisee appreciated this Christian viewpoint and called Him "good teacher".

Contents of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 1-7, 7:29)

Who are the blessed (5:1-12)

Role of the disciples (5:13-16)

New laws that are the fulfillment of the old ones (5:17-48)

New dimensions to old rituals (6:1-18)

Path towards purity (6:19, 7:29)

## **Who are the blessed? (5:1-12)**

In the beginning Jesus tells a list of the blessed. By worldly standards people who are wealthy, beautiful, educated and capable are considered blessed. Our savior's view is quite different. The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted because of righteousness are blessed according to Him. He continues to say, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.. (Matthew 5:11-12)

## **Role of the disciples (5:13-16)**

Jesus gives the example of salt and light to the place of disciples in society. "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world", Jesus told about the disciples. Salt enhances the taste of food and is a preservative to keep meat and fish from going stale. Likewise, the followers of Jesus should set a good example in life as well as work hard to keep up the moral status of society.

The lamp's duty is to give light. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the disciples of Christ to spread the light from Jesus, who is the lamp for the whole world (John 9:5). A lighted lamp is kept on a lamp stand and not under a bowl. Then it gives light to everyone in the house (Matthew 5:15). Obstacles like our wealth, greed, selfishness and comforts of life should not cover the light, which is our Christian life. That should always be kept at a high place. "Let Your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Our good Christian life should be an example to others. The lives of many of the dedicated Christians is like the lamp kept on the lamp stand. Receiving light from the true light of the world that is Jesus Christ, we must try to spread spiritual light in the society.

## **New laws that are the fulfillment of the old ones (5:17-48)**

Jews criticized Jesus Christ and his disciples for ignoring the teachings of Moses and other prophets. As a reply to that, Jesus says, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass

from the law, till all is fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18). Jesus Christ came into this world to show the real messages of Old Testament and to reveal that it is being fulfilled through Him so that the world can be saved.

“ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20). From the above verse, it is clear that the morality of a Christian should be above that of others. This morality is Christian love, ability to love enemies and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. The Old Testament laws and the laws of the world allow punishment but Jesus advised not to take revenge. Since killing is the result of revenge, Jesus taught that even the thought of taking revenge is equal to murder. “But now I tell you: if you are angry with your brother you will be brought to trial, if you call your brother ‘You good-for-nothing!’ you will be brought before the council, and if you call your brother a worthless fool, you will be in danger of going to the fire of hell” (Matthew 5:22). If eyes and hands lead anybody towards sin, it should be controlled and directed towards good deeds. Jesus teaches not to use any vow when making a promise and also not to swear. Though the Old Testament law allows to hate enemies, Jesus told his disciples, “But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too. And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well” (Matthew 5:39-40). “But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). Jesus gave the above new laws to his disciples to make the world a better place to live in. The Hindu vision “Loka samastha sukino bhavanthu” is worth mentioning here. Like the above prayer, which wishes happiness for everyone, the Sermon on the Mount attracts and influences everybody as an excellent example of morals and principles.

### **New dimensions to old rituals (6:1-18)**

Jews believed that giving alms, praying and fasting increased their faith. They gave a lot of importance to the above rituals. Jesus Christ explained how to carry these out properly. Jesus taught that religious practices should not be done to gain appreciation from man, but it should be done to please God. The aim of fasting, praying and donating to charity should also be to please God. Jesus advised to refrain from boasting about charitable acts. “When you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know

about it. Then it will be a private matter. And your father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you” (Matthew 6:3-4). The love and Christian care for the poor and helpless people should be our aim through charitable deeds.

Individual prayer and group prayer are equally important. Jesus Christ tells to forgive each other in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4). The condition for God to forgive us is that we should forgive each other. “If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).

Lent and fasting hold an important place in a Christian’s life. They should help in self-control and repentance. Devotion with a pure heart is needed.

### **Things to be taken care of in the path towards purity**

“The eyes are like a lamp for the body. If your eyes are sound, your whole body will be full of light”. When Jesus said so He meant that to act properly a correct outlook and vision is needed. (Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-36)

“You cannot be a slave of two masters: you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24). Anybody who is a slave to wealth cannot live a life pleasing to both man and God. Followers of Jesus should not be of a worrying and anxious nature. “Do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body” (Matthew 6:25). Our heavenly father looks after the birds too. “Look at the birds. They do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in the barns; yet your father in heaven takes care of them. It is God who clothes the wild grass, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Be concerned above everything else with the kingdom of God and he will provide you with all these other things. So do not worry about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:33-34). Deep and complete faith in God takes away anxiety and worry.

“First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eyes” (Matthew 7:5). Here, Jesus talks about people who forget about their big mistakes and talk about the small mistakes of other people.

Three things are important in prayer. “Ask and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be open to you” (Matthew 7:7). “Do for

others what you want them to do for you” (Matthew 7:12). This message which Jesus gives the whole world has the essence of the Sermon on the Mount. It includes all the laws and prophecies.

**1. Two ways (Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24)**

One path leads to destruction and the other towards eternal life. The first one is easier to travel. More number of people choose this one. The second path is narrow and filled with obstacles. This leads towards eternal life. This path is Jesus himself. Jesus told us that He is the way, the truth and the life.

**2. Two kinds of prophets (Matthew 7:15-20, Luke 6:43-44)**

By looking at the words and deeds, we can find out if a prophet is real or false. The false prophets are compared to wild wolves (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

**3. Words and actions**

It's not the lip service of calling “Lord, Lord”, but to carry out the work of our Heavenly Father that is pleasing to Him. “Not everyone who calls me “Lord, Lord” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do what my Father in Heaven wants them to do” (Matthew 7:21-23).

**4. The foolish man and the wise man (Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:47-49)**

A life with its foundation on Jesus, the strong rock, will survive the obstacles of life. A person who listens to the words of Jesus is a clever man. One who does not listen and obeys the words of Jesus Christ is a foolish man. When Jesus said these words, the crowd was amazed. “He wasn't like the teachers of the law; instead he taught with authority” (Matthew 7:28-29).

**Questions:**

1. Name three famous people who practiced the messages of the Sermon on the Mount in their own lives.
2. Who are the blessed?
3. What are the duties of the disciples of Jesus?
4. What is the new law that Jesus Christ gave his disciples?



5. In the path towards purity, what are the things we should be careful about?
6. What contains the laws and all the prophecies?

**Memory verse:**

*Matthew 7:12 - Do for others what you want them to do for you.*

## LESSON 15

### CHRIST

**Objective:** To learn about the incarnation and relationship between the New and Old Testaments

The New Testament is the completion of the Old Testament. Adam and Eve became the slaves of Satan due to their sins. The New Testament is the explanation of God's plan to release Adam and Eve and their children i.e. the entire humankind from Satan's slavery.

In Isaiah 7:14 it is written, "Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Immanuel." In Genesis 3:15 we read, "Her offspring and yours will be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head and you will bite their heel."

The above portions are predictions about the New Testament in the Old Testament. "I have made my servant David king by anointing him with Holy oil" (Psalms 89:19-20). So the predictions of prophets came true with the passage of time.

God the Father decided to save the humans who were deep into sin and death. Some one who is sinless has to die for redeeming the sins of the Human race. He sent His own Son into the earth for this. The Son, who is the second one in the Trinity, became man through virgin Mary and arrived on earth. Angel Gabriel told Virgin Mary the good news that she will bear and deliver a son. The everlasting God was born as man in a manger in Bethlehem. This incident which is beyond human thinking is called Incarnation.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). At the age of thirty, Jesus Christ started his public ministry. He chose the Apostles and gave them all the authority and established His church.

On the day of Pentecost all the disciples had gathered in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky, which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which touched each person there. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages to the believers gathered, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. 3000 people believed in Christ and received baptism on that day. This was the first stage in the growth of the early church.

In the New Testament we read about the birth of Jesus Christ, his miracles, public ministry, crucifixion and resurrection. Now He is with the Father Almighty and pleading for mercy for the whole world. It is also written that once the gospel has reached every corner of the earth, He will come again. Then all the dead will be resurrected and all the living will be transfigured. Every one has to face judgment according to their deeds. Good people will be taken to a life of eternity in heaven and the evil ones will be thrown into hell for eternal suffering.

Only the Father knows when the second coming of Jesus will take place. So now is the time to repent and wait for His second coming. Further explanations about this will be given in the lessons ahead.

Several names are given to Jesus Christ in the Bible. Jesus means - one who will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:22).

1) **Immanuel**

“A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel which means God is with us” (Matthew 1: 21).

2) **Savior**

Since Jesus was born to release the world from the bondage of sin, He is the savior. “With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people” (Luke 2: 30-31).

3) **Lamb**

In the Old Testament times, lambs used to be sacrificed in the Jerusalem temple as the penalty for sins. Jesus was sacrificed at Golgotha for the sins of the whole world. That’s how He is referred to as the lamb. The next day John

saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). In Revelations 5:6 it is written, “Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb appeared to have been killed.”

#### 4) **Son of David**

Jesus was born in the line of descent from David. “A new king will arise from among David’s descendants” (Isaiah 11:1). Born as a son into David’s family, Jesus Christ died and was resurrected. He will live as a king in the hearts of people forever.

#### 5) **Redeemer**

“I will come to Jerusalem to defend you and to save all of you that turn from your sins” (Isaiah 59:20). “By him we are put right with God; we become God’s holy people and are set free” (1 Corinthians 1: 30). “Turn to me now and be saved, people all over the world! I am the only God there is” (Isaiah 59: 20).

The Incarnation took place to redeem humanity who had become slaves of Satan due to the sins of Adam and Eve. To compensate the sin of mankind, he was crucified at Golgotha, shed his blood and died. He was resurrected later. The Son of God shed his blood to release man from the bondage of Satan and to lead him towards the path of salvation. People who lead good lives according to the rule of the Lord will be taken into a life of blissful eternity. Then His work of redemption will be complete.

#### **Questions:**

1. What is Incarnation?
2. What is the aim of the Lord’s second coming?
3. Write down the names Jesus is referred to in the Bible.
4. When will His work of redemption be complete?

## LESSON 16

### PROPHESIES ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

*Objective:* To understand that all prophecies about incarnation have been fulfilled and that all the prophecies about his second coming will be fulfilled in the future.

Prophets have prophesied about incarnation and the events that follow centuries ago:

1. Jesus Christ will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). A virgin will deliver a son (Isaiah 7:14) He will be born as a Jew in the house of David.
2. Wise men will bring gifts (Isaiah 60: 3-6, Psalms 72: 12-15)
3. Related to the birth of Jesus, boys under the age of two will be killed. (Jeremiah 31: 15)
4. Prophets have mentioned that Joseph and Mary will be forced to go to Egypt with baby Jesus. Later they will return and live in Nazareth.
5. It has been foretold about the public ministry of Jesus (Isaiah 61:1-4). Jesus reads out the above portion to people in the temple. Isaiah 9:1-7 is the verses of prophecy about the public ministry of Jesus Christ at Galilee.
6. Miracles of Jesus were also foretold (Isaiah 35:5, 53: 4), the blind will see, the deaf will hear and the dumb will speak.
7. There are prophecies also about the sufferings of Jesus. The prophecy that Jesus will ride a donkey is in Zechariah 9:9. Betrayal by a friend is mentioned in Psalms 41:9. "Even my best friend, the one I trusted most, the one who shared my food, has turned against me." The trial of Jesus is mentioned in Isaiah 53:7-9. "He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be shorn, He never said a word."
8. Like these, there are many prophecies especially about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In Psalms 35:11, we read about false testimony and in Isaiah 50:6 about the persecutions Jesus has to undergo, like getting slapped and being spat on the face. In Psalms 22:16 it is written about the crucifixion and in Psalms 69:21 about drinking vinegar. Zechariah 12:10

talks about getting pierced in the chest. Zechariah 12:10 says, “I will fill the descendants of David and the other people of Jerusalem with the spirit of mercy and the spirit of prayer. They will look at the one they stabbed to death.” In Amos 8:9 it is prophesied that when Jesus Christ is crucified the sun will go down at midday. “The time is coming when I will make the sun go down at midday and the earth grow dark during the day.”

9. Psalms 16:10 mentions the resurrection of Jesus Christ. “You protect me from the power of death. And you will not abandon me to the world of the dead.” Apostle Peter quotes this portion and starts his speech on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:31). Like this there are many other prophesies. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ was prophesied centuries ago. All prophesies were fulfilled. So we can believe that all prophesies about his second coming will also come true. Jesus himself promised us that He would come again.

#### **Questions:**

1. What are the main prophesies about the birth of Jesus Christ? Which prophet foretold about the birthplace of Jesus?
2. Who prophesied about the killing of infants? Write the verse.
3. Write the verses of prophesy about the public ministry of Jesus Christ. which is the verse that Jesus read in the temple.
4. Who prophesied that Jesus would ride a donkey? Write the verse.
5. Who prophesied that Jesus Christ will be pierced in the chest and that blood and water would flow? Write the verse.
6. Write atleast four prophesies about the persecutions of Jesus with supporting verses.

## THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

*Objective:* To learn that the second coming of Jesus is a certainty.

The risen Christ promised us that He will come again. In John 21:22 the risen Christ tells Peter, "If I want him to live until I come, what is that to you?" . In Matthew 24:14 Jesus says, "And this good news about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all people; and the end will come." In Matthew 24:27 He says, "For the Son of Man will come like the lightning which flashes across the sky from the east to the west." Like these, Jesus told about his second coming many times to his disciples and to the people who listened to Him. Nobody, not even the Son of God can predict the exact day or time of the second coming of Jesus. Only God the Father knows it (Matthew 24:36). But there will be signs of His second coming according to the Bible and the prophets.

### **What are the signs?**

Matthew 24:29-31 says, "Soon after the trouble of those days, the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky; and all the peoples of earth will weep as they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The great trumpet will sound, and he will send out his angels to the four corners of the earth, and they will gather his chosen people from one end of the world to the other."

Prophet Joel had prophesized in Joel 2:28-32 - "Afterwards I will pour out my Spirit on every one: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions. At that time I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women. I will give warnings of that day in the sky and on the earth; there will be bloodshed, fire, and clouds of smoke. The sun will be darkened, and the moon will turn red as blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. But all who ask the Lord for help will be saved. As the Lord has said, 'Some in Jerusalem will escape; those whom I chose will survive.'"

Acts 2:17-21 says the same things. Repeated earthquakes are signs of the end. 2 Peter 3:9-13 says, "The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins. But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day, the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come soon – the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home."

In Revelations 20:11-15 there is a description about His second coming and the judgment day – "Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sits on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence and were seen no more. And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded by the books. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done. Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. (This lake of fire is the second death.) Those who did not have their name written in the book of the living were thrown into the lake of fire." From the above verse it is certain that He will come again and that there will be a day of judgment. So while alive we should do good things and live a life pleasing to the Lord. Eternal bliss is the reward for those who lead good lives and eternal hell for the evil ones.

In the prayer 'Anugrahangal nirangirikunnavene' we pray for blessings for the ones who died in the faith of the Lord and who were looking forward to His second coming. During the holy Qurbana when the priest comes towards the west holding the paten and chalice (Kasa and Peelasa) he says, "From Your atoning altar, may atonement descend upon Your servants, O Son of God, Who came for our salvation and will come for our resurrection and the restoration of our kind, forever." Here great importance is given to the hope for the second coming of Jesus Christ. In our prayers in many places we pray, "We look forward to your second coming." We have to give importance to the fact that He is coming to save all who are looking forward to His second coming.

Therefore, the church and all Christians have the duty to spread the message of repentance and salvation so that the whole humankind will become a community that awaits the second coming of the Lord.

### Questions:

1. What did Jesus Christ say about His second coming?
2. According to the Gospel of Matthew, what are the signs of the second coming of the Lord?
3. What is the prophecy of prophet Joel about the Lord's second coming?
4. Give a description of Judgment Day according to the book of Revelations.
5. Since the second coming of the Lord will happen soon, what are we supposed to do?

## LESSON 18

### PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

*Objective:* To learn about judgment and redemption, which will happen at the second coming of Jesus.

The incarnation of Jesus took place to save the whole humankind, who had become slaves to Satan due to the sins of Adam and Eve. That was his first coming. Christ who shed his blood on the cross and died for the sins of the whole world is right now in heaven and is continuously pleading mercy for us to God the Father.

Jesus saved humanity from the clutches of slavery from Satan and gave the right to salvation. But to achieve salvation, we should live a life pleasing to God, do good things and become one in Jesus Christ through the holy sacrament of Qurbana. It is the objective of the church to help people achieve this.

With His second coming, all the living and the resurrected dead will be judged and given eternal heaven or eternal hell according to their deeds. *The plan of redemption of Jesus Christ is to separate the deserving and reward them with eternal bliss in heaven forever.* For this, Jesus will appear in the sky with his angels blowing the trumpet. Just before this the sign of the cross will appear in the sky. Revelation 20:11-15 says that the good people who are



dead will be transfigured and taken into the clouds along with the living good people who will be transformed. All this will happen in a matter of seconds. The verse that one of the two women at the mill will be taken away (Matthew 24: 41) is to stress the fact that everything will happen very quickly.

Jesus will live on the earth again with his angels and the selected people at his second coming. This is the new earth and heaven, which John sees in his vision. Revelation 21:1-5 says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne; "Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain.

The old things have disappeared." Then the one who sits on the throne said "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." It is difficult to predict how long we will live in this world. At the last judgment day the good and evil ones will be separated. The evil ones will be pushed down to hell and the good people will be selected to be with Him. They will partake in the heavenly life. So let us look forward to his second coming with humbleness. So let us pledge to know Jesus, repent and live a life pleasing to Him and wait for His second coming.

As written in Revelation 22:20, "He who gives his testimony to all this says, "Yes indeed! I am coming soon!""

### **Questions:**

1. Explain the plan of salvation by our Lord.
2. When the Lord comes again, what will be the changes to the living and the dead?
3. At his second coming, what shall we do to be among his chosen people on the judgment day?

## LESSON 19

### THE SALVATION THEORY

*Objective* : To learn in detail how to achieve salvation.

Revelation 7:10 says, "They called out in a loud voice 'salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb.'" God gives salvation only to those who deserve it. So what shall we do to make ourselves eligible for salvation?

#### 1) **Through Holy baptism**

Through the holy baptism we are granted the right to be God's children. All the sins are washed away through Baptism. Baptism is done with water and spirit. Matthew 28:19 says, "Go then to peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Acts 2: 38 says that sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is granted through baptism.

#### 2) **Through strong faith**

Acts (16:31) says, "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your family." All those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He shed his blood on the cross to save us from the slavery of Satan to grant us the right to salvation, that he died and was resurrected and is sitting on the right hand of God the Father, that he will come again at the time designated by God the father, and will redeem us, will be saved. "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved" (Romans 10: 9).

#### 3) **By living a life pleasing to God, obeying His laws.**

"For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds" (Matthew 16:27). In Matthew 19: 16-22 we read about the advice Jesus Christ gives a man about the things one must do to receive eternal life.

**4) Through the holy sacrament of Qurbana we live in Christ and Christ lives in us.**

In 1 Corinthians 10:16 we read, "The cup we use in the Lord's Supper and for which we give thanks to God: when we drink from it, we are sharing in the blood of Christ. And the bread we break: when we eat it, we are sharing in the body of Christ. Because there is the one loaf of bread, all of us, though many, are one body, for we all share the same loaf." Luke 22: 17-21 clearly states that in the Holy Qurbana, the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. Participating in the holy sacrament of Qurbana makes us eligible for salvation. Read John 6: 53-54: "I am telling you the truth; if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them to life on the last day."

**5) True remorse**

The sorrow about evilness and to live away from sin and also the desire for withdrawal from sin after confession is remorse. In the gospel of St. Mathew (3:7,8) we read like this ' You brood of vipers! who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance'. People of Nineveh kept away from God and lived in the path of sin. God told them through prophet Jonah that He would destroy them. Then they prayed to God in fasting and tears. Their repentance saved them from their destruction.

We should understand as St. Paul says in the letter to Romans (3:10) ' There is no one who is righteous, not even one'. So repentance is always needed to us for our salvation. We should try our best to lead a just and pious life. So that we could say as St. Pauls says 'I have fought the good fight , I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness.' For this purpose the church has introduced confession. For salvation we have to practice all these in our life. But, still salvation is the gift of God.

While Christ was at Capernaum, a centurian came to him requesting to heal his servant, who was miserably paralysed. Christ agreed to go to his house to heal the sick. But the centurian who had very strong faith in Christ told him to say a word and that would be enough for his servant to be healed. When Christ said as he wished the servant got healed. Then Christ said ' Truly I tell

you no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you many will come from east and west and will eat with Araham , Issac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven' Mathew 8: 5 - 13.

The thief who was crucified along with Jesus on his right side was taken to paradise due to his deep faith. Jesus gifted salvation to him. All those who receive salvation will live in heaven with all heavenly comforts.

### **What is heavenly experience?**

In heaven, there is Father, Son, Holy Spirit, angels and the faithful. With them we will be able to live eternally, singing praises to God the Father. It is written in Revelation 21: 4 - "He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain."

"But nothing that is impure will enter the city, nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will enter the city" Revelation 21: 27. "They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads." Revelation 22: 4. Matthew 5:8 refers to the same thing.

By the holy sacrament of baptism, one becomes member of the church. He gets nearer to God through the holy sacrament of Qurbana. Anybody who is close to God will be leading a life of prayer, will love his neighbor as himself, will be caring for the poor and needy and will respect priesthood. We will prove ourselves worthy of the gift of salvation by doing the above things.

### **Questions:**

1. How can we achieve salvation?
2. What shall we do to get the gift of salvation from God?
3. What is heavenly experience?
4. Quote Bible verses and describe how we can achieve salvation through the Holy Sacrament of Qurbana.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*Objective:* To learn in detail what is meant by Kingdom of God.

A place where God is the king or God is in authority is the Kingdom of God. A society where God's wishes are fulfilled can be called God's Kingdom. In a broad sense, a society faithful to God, a home true to his words and hearts of people leading sacrificial lives pleasing to God are all Kingdoms of God. During His sermon Jesus himself says that the Kingdom of God is amongst you. In John 3: 3 Jesus tells Nicodemus, "I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again." John 3:5 says, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit." From the phrases 'see the Kingdom of God' and 'enter the Kingdom of God' we understand that Kingdom of God is a special place or a specific way of existence. In John 14: 2, Jesus says that there are many rooms in His Father's house. Here rooms mean Kingdom of God.

Let us examine what Apostle Paul has to say about this. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 we read, "For we know that when this tent we live in -our body here on earth - is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last for ever." In Romans 14:17 we read, "For god's kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of the righteousness, peace, and joy which the Holy Spirit gives."

In Jesus' sermon he refers to the 'Good News about the Kingdom'. In Matthew 24:14 we read, "And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all people; and then the end will come." Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." It means praying for heavenly presence and rule on earth.

The Kingdom of God has no geographical limits. God's Kingdom cannot be seen with naked eyes. Each one of us is a visible form of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is an ever-growing phenomenon. Theologians have different opinions about the subject on whether heaven and God's Kingdom are the same or not.

Heaven is the place where God resides. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in heaven. Angels are also there praising the Lord continuously.

Revelations 4: 2-11 describes the heaven John saw in his vision. “There in heaven was a throne with someone sitting on it. His face gleamed like such precious stones as jasper and carnelian.” “Day and night they never stop singing: ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.’ “ Similar descriptions about heaven is given in Revelations 19: 1-10. After the second coming of Jesus and judgment, the deserving selected will live in heaven with God. In Revelation chapter 21 we can read the description about the new heaven and the new earth. The New Jerusalem will come down from heaven, God’s home will be with people and he will live with them. Here we have to understand that after the second coming of Jesus, God’s kingdom and heaven will be the same and it will be on earth.

To have the right to enter this kingdom of God while on earth, we should repent, do good deeds and try to live as true Christians.

### **Questions:**

1. What is meant by the Kingdom of God?
2. What is the view of Apostle Paul about the Kingdom of God?
3. What is the meaning of ‘Good news about the Kingdom’?
4. What is heavenly Kingdom?

## **LESSON 21**

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Objective:* To learn more about the Holy Spirit, which is one of the Holy Trinity.

In Godliness there are three personalities or entities called the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The three together constitute the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son. In the Nicene Creed it is written about the Holy Spirit as follows - ‘We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life to all, Who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the Prophets and Apostles.’ From chapters of the Acts of the Apostles we know that the Holy Spirit is one of the entities of the Holy Trinity. Describing the form of the Holy Spirit, it is referred to as ‘He’ in the gospel of St. John (John chapters 14, 15 and 16). When Jesus was baptized in river Jordan, the Holy Spirit came

down in the form of a dove. On Pentecostal day the Holy Spirit came down in the form of tongues of fire. The Holy Spirit is the same as the Father and the Son in terms of behavior, characteristics, glory and authority.

John 15: 26 says, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything.” John 16:14 says, “He will give me glory, because he will take what I say and tell it to you.” All the Holy sacraments of the church are blessed and fulfilled when the Holy Spirit dwells on them

### **Descriptions of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Bible**

1. The Holy Spirit is eternal - Hebrews 9:14
2. The Holy Spirit is everywhere – Psalms 139: 7-13
3. The Holy Spirit knows everything – 1 Corinthians 2: 10 and is powerful – Luke 1: 35, Romans 15: 19
4. The Holy Spirit is glorious - 1 Peter 4: 14
5. The Holy Spirit is creator – Genesis 1: 26-27
6. The Holy Spirit is the Lord of being born again - John (3:5-7)
7. The Holy Spirit is the controller of prophetic messages –(, Acts 19:11) 2 Peter 1: 20-21
8. The Holy Spirit appoints Gospel workers – Acts 13: 2-4, Matthew 9:38
9. The Holy Spirit decides the place where the gospel should be preached, Acts (16:6-10)
10. The Holy Spirit helps - 2 Corinthians 1:3
11. The Holy Spirit gives life to everything - Romans 8:11
12. The Holy Spirit speaks through the prophets - Luke 1:67, Acts 1:16
13. The Holy Spirit enlightens the world about sin, righteousness and judgment - John 16:8
14. The Holy Spirit lives with righteous people - John 14: 17

15. The Holy Spirit lives in the church and in the bodies of holy people - 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19
16. The Holy Spirit has given priests the authority to forgive sins - John 20:22

### **What is the Holy Spirit compared to?**

1. Water that cleans the dirt, rejuvenates and is given free of cost - John 7:38-39.
2. Fire which purifies and shines - Matthew 3:11
3. Powerful wind – Acts 2:2
4. Oil which is soothing – Psalms 23: 5, 45: 7
5. Dove which is gentle and innocent - Matthew 3:16
6. Inner voice-which speaks and knows the way – ( )Acts 16: 6-7
7. Stamp-mark of truth and guarantee – Ephesians 1: 13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22
8. Tongues of fire – Acts 2:3, 6:11

The spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control.

### **Sins against the Holy Spirit**

Sins against the Holy Spirit are very serious and difficult to be forgiven. They are:

To test the Holy Spirit – Acts 5:9

To lie to the Holy Spirit, to protest against it, to ignore the gifts given, to make it sad - Ephesians 4:30

To say evil things against the Holy Spirit - Matthew 12: 31-32

Such sins will not be forgiven. As written in Matthew 12: 31-32, “And so I tell you that people can be forgiven any sin and any evil thing they say but whoever says evil things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who says something against the Son of Man can be forgiven; but whoever says



something against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven - now or ever." The Holy Spirit makes us aware of sins. The sins, which are not repented, become sins against the Spirit and will not be forgiven.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man, and died on the cross for the sins of the whole humankind. He was buried and the third day He was resurrected. He ascended into heaven and is now pleading to God the Father for our sake. As promised, He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort us. Since then, the major force working on earth till the second coming of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. When His second coming is nearing, the Holy Spirit will be very active and powerful.

With the power of the Holy Spirit, being aware of sins and repenting for it, let us live as a big community looking and working towards the second coming of Jesus.

### **Questions:**

34. What is written in the Nicene Creed about The Holy spirit?
35. What is the Holy Trinity?
36. In the Holy Bible, how is the Holy Sprit described?
37. What is the Holy Spirit compared to?
38. What are the sins against the Holy Spirit?

## ***HISTORY OF THE CHURCH***

### **LESSON 22**

## **THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

*Objective* :To Learn about the early stages of the Christian church.

AD 30-70 which is the early stage in the church can be called the 'apostolic period'. Luke writes history of the church at this stage in the book, 'The acts of the Apostles'. Initially the Roman Government and the gentiles considered the early Christian church as a modified form of the Jewish religion. Even after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, the Apostles and other believers used to go to the temple of Jerusalem for prayers (Acts 3:1). But

after Stephen became a martyr, Christians came to be known as a separate group. As we know resurrection of Jesus Christ was the driving force behind Christianity. For the same reason, Sadducees who did not believe in resurrection became enemies of the Christians. During this period the gospel was preached amongst the gentiles too. Saul of Tarsus who was strongly against the Christians was converted into Christianity and later came to be known as Paul. He did a lot of gospel work among the gentiles. Decisions taken at the Jerusalem council in AD 51 encouraged the gospel work and growth of the church.

In AD 70 Romans destroyed the temple of Jerusalem completely. A large number of people were killed. Remaining people fled to distant places to save their lives. The period from AD 70-110 can be called 'the apostolic disciples period'. The followers who learnt directly from the apostles led the church during this time. Most of the books of the New Testament were prevalent during this time. With the downfall of Jerusalem town the Jewish Christians were no more important. The largest cities in the world that time were Rome, Antioch and Alexandria. These three cities became the important centers of the Christian church. These cities are in the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa respectively.

The roman people used to worship idols and the emperors who ruled the country from time to time. The Christians who refused to do this were branded as atheists. The Christians who were denied the right to worship used to get together in secret places and worship at night. From AD 55 when Emperor Nero was the ruler till AD 313 till the rule of Diocletian, for two and a half centuries the Christian church was persecuted continuously. The Christians who protested against slaves fighting against animals for the sake of entertainment for the Romans were persecuted. Christian ladies were given the status of slaves amongst the gentiles. Since the Christian church was a prohibited establishment, it did not enjoy the freedom of expression and worship. To be a Christian was a crime in itself. The Roman people used to hate the Christians. During this period of persecution many Christians were murdered and others subjected to various persecutions and humiliations. In spite of all this the church was growing daily. Since membership in the church was a disadvantage financially, only the faithful were members of church.

After the death of Emperor Diocletian the Roman Empire was divided. Constantine who was chief of the army became ruler of one part of the empire.

While the war was raging, Constantine saw the sign of cross in the sky in a vision while crossing Melvishan Bridge and heard the voice, "With this you will win". Constantine believed in the vision and got the sign of cross marked on all weapons and on the flags. He won the war that followed. Later he became the emperor of the whole of Roman Empire. Emperor Constantine removed all the restrictions imposed on Christians by his predecessors and made a decree in the town of Milan in Italy. This historically important 'Edict of Milan in AD 313' declared complete religious freedom to all the people in the country. All Sundays were declared public holidays. Following this, Christians started their worship during daytime on Sundays.

Later Emperor Constantine became a Christian and the great thing he did for the growth of the church was to conduct the first universal synod in AD 325 in the city of Nicea in Asia Minor. From various parts of the world 318 bishops attended the various meetings of the council Mar Osthathos, Patriarch of Antioch was the president for most of the meetings. The heresy of Arius that questioned the divinity of Jesus Christ was declared as cursed at the Nicea council. The council established the doctrine that God the father and God the son are equal and of the same essence. It was decided that the baptism of the heretics will not be accepted and that resurrection will be celebrated only on Sundays even if dates are not corresponding.

Under the leadership of Queen Helene, mother of Emperor Constantine, a group of people went to Jerusalem and searched for the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified and found it. Church celebrates the remembrance of this event on September 14<sup>th</sup> as 'Sleeba perunnal'.

Emperor Constantine renovated the ancient city of Byzantium, which is situated in southeastern Europe on the eastern shore of Bosferus. To make his name part of history; he renamed the city Constantinople and made it his capital. The Christian church grew there also. This city is now known as Istanbul.

Makadonius, the bishop of Constantinople started teaching that though Jesus Christ son of God, is same as God the Father in divinity, the Holy Sprit is not equal to father and son. The aim of the 2<sup>nd</sup> council at Constantinople in AD 381 was to officially rebuke this heresy of Makadonius. The convener of this council was Emperor Theodosius, who was the ruler that time and the president was the Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Milithios. Since a regional council was going

on at Rome at the same time, the Bishops from that region did not attend the Constantinople council. But the Pope in Rome later accepted the decisions taken at the council. While the council was in progress, Mar Milithios who was the president passed away and the rest of the meetings were conducted with St. Nakhtarios as the president. The wrong teachings of Makadonius were rejected as heresy and the true faith about the Holy Spirit was added on to the Nicene Creed. The Cappadoccean fathers have written in details about the explanations of the true faith.

Another heresy started in the church in the later years. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius who rejected the heresy of Arius and Makadonius, started the trouble this time. He taught that Jesus had the personalities and characteristics of both man and God in him and that the sufferings were undertaken by the human personality of Jesus. He also said that Mother Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ for his human nature and personality only and so it is wrong to call her mother of God. The most important person who raised his voice against this heresy was St. Koorilose, (Cyril) the Patriarch of Alexandria. It was to oppose this heresy, that a universal synod was held at Ephesus in AD 431. Mar Koorilose was the president of the council. It was declared at this council that Jesus Christ, son of god had a single complete personality combining both human and divine natures. It was also declared that it is right to call Virgin Mary mother of God.

Apart from these ecumenical councils, regional synods were held to solve problems of the places concerned. When the question of double personality arguments that were declared as heresy at the council of Ephesus in 413 cropped up again, to suppress them, the emperor called for another synod in Ephesus. Mar Diascorus of Alexandria presided over the synod. Most of the church leaders including the representatives from Rome took part in this council. Pope Leo of Rome sent a message known in history as the 'Tome of Leo' to be read at the council. Since the contents of the message were contradictory to the convictions of the previous councils, the president did not allow the message to be read at the council. The Pope was angry with Mar Dioscorus for this.

Following this, according to the wishes of Pope Leo, in AD 451 Roman emperor Malkian arranged a council at Chalcedon in Asia Minor. Here Mar Diascorus who was the president of the second council at Ephesus was rebuked in public and declared guilty. The people under the leadership of the Patriarchs

of Antioch and Alexandria did not accept the Chalcedonian heresy, which was already declared as cursed and null at the council of Ephesus, but the Patriarch of Constantinople remained as an ally of Rome.

### **Questions**

1. Which are the years known as 'the apostolic period' and 'the apostolic disciples period'?
2. What benefits did the church enjoy during the reign of Emperor Constantine?
3. What is the significance of 'Sleeba Perunnal'?
4. What were the heresy teachings of Arius and Macadonius?
5. Why was Pope Leo angry with Mar Diascorus?

### **LESSON 23**

## **THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*Objective:* To introduce the Roman Catholic Church that constitutes half of the world's Christianity.

In faith and traditions, the Catholic Church, remains very close to our church. In 1981 the Patriarch of Antioch Ignatius Zakka Iwas and Pope John Paul II of Rome proclaimed through a joint declaration that there is basic unity between two churches in fundamental issues. In fact this joint declaration has contributed to much progress in ecumenical relationship between the two churches. As a result of this, a dialogue commission was established. As a result of the dialogue commission's effort, sacramental relationships between both churches were established. In 1993 both churches officially accepted inter church marriages in principle. Thus, today, The Syrian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church work closer than ever.

As per the traditional faith, it is believed that St. Peter and St. Paul founded the church in Rome. Rome received high regard from the beginning on account of their status as capital city of the Empire and as the Place of martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul.

To protect the Christian faith, Roman churches played a vital role. Divisions among churches in the first centuries hardly affected the Catholic Church. When Eastern Church fathers were persecuted for defending the true faith, the Catholic Church stood with them. But Catholic Church and Orthodox Church were separated at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D 451 and became enemies. This enmity came to an end during 1980's with the ecumenical dialogues.

The Beginning of the Middle Centuries.

### **Missionary Activities of Catholic Church:**

The Catholic Church took up much initiative and effort in the missionary activities after the fourth century. In fact, it is because of these missionary works of the Catholic Church, that Europe became a Christian continent. Conversion of king Frank Clovit, was a history making event for the spreading of Christianity in Europe. He played a crucial role in Christianizing the European continent. Apart from him, the other men who became instrumental for disseminating Christianity in Europe were Patrick, who spread Christianity in Ireland, Korub, who spread Christianity in Scotland, Villibros (A.D 690), who took initiative to Christianize Netherlands and Fasius who preached gospel in Germany. Because of these efforts, Western European nations became Christian nations by 9th-10th century.

### **Growth of Theology**

This church in Western Europe came to be known as the Catholic Church. In the beginning there were not many well-known theologians in the Catholic Church. Therefore, theological contributions of the church were little at that time. Only after tenth century the Catholic Church produced famous theologians. Nevertheless, African church fathers like St. Augustine and Thascius Cyprian are considered as Catholic theologians. Anselm, the Arch Bishop of Canterbury (1033 -1109), wrote his famous book *Cur Deus Homo* (Why Did God Incarnate). This book influenced western theology considerably. *Sicetnon* was another important theological book. It was written by French theologian Peter Abelard (1079 -1142). Peter Labardi of Milan (1100 - 1160) wrote another book called *The Sentences* that deals with God, Trinity, creation, salvation and sacraments. Dominican monk Albert (1193 - 1280) was another notable theologian of the Catholic Church. Among the catholic theologians,

Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) is considered to be the greatest theologian of the Catholic Church. His well-known book *Summa theologiae*, a condensed writing on theology was the exploration of Christian faith. The study of Greek philosophy was an important factor that contributed for the growth of theology during these periods in the Catholic Church.

Growth of theology also resulted in the establishment of many universities during this time. There were 40000 students in the University of Paris at that time. It was estimated that about 25 universities came into existence between A.D 1200 and 1400. The Syrian church also played an important role in this Renaissance of Christian theology in the Middle centuries. The Syrian church fathers translated Greek philosophical books into Syriac language. Later these Syriac books were translated into Arabic language at the time of growth of Islam. Lots of books were written in this line during this period. With the conquest of Western Europe by Islam, Greek philosophy and culture spread there. Actually, the European interest in learning Greek philosophy caused growth of intellectual culture in Europe.

### **Growth of Papacy**

From the beginning, the Bishop of Rome received a special honor from the Christian churches. But, later the Bishop of Rome began to claim jurisdiction over universal church. Those Eastern churches that accepted the decision of Council of Chalcedon were forced to accept authority of the bishop of Rome. Majority of the Oriental churches denounced the Synod of Chalcedon. Since there were no other patriarchs in Europe at that time, the Roman church became the most powerful in Europe. This situation felicitated in the gradual growth of papal authority. Eventually, the bishop of Rome came to be known as Pope. He also began to use for himself the titles like Universal bishop and Vicar of St. Peter. He also exercised political authority to elevate himself to 'Supreme Temporal Head'. When the emperor Charlemagne was crowned by the Pope in A.D 800 December 25, the emperor in fact was accepting the authority of Pope. In 11 century Leo IX enhanced the growth of papal authority by bringing powerful people to Europe. The Kings of Europe had to accept papal authority because the Catholic Church had spread all over Europe, and it had a strong administrative set up. Similarly, the crusades led by the western Catholic Church against the capturing of holy lands of Palestine by Arabs also provided a favorable atmosphere for the acceptance of political authority of the Pope.

Concerning papal authority and supremacy of Roman church, Gregory VII comments like this: The Pope is not judged by anybody; Roman church should be free from all kind of errors and remain infallible till the end of the earth. The lord is the founder of the church. The Pope ordains bishops and if needed excommunicates them. The Pope makes laws; he may create dioceses and reorganize them. The power to oust emperors is vested upon the Pope only. One who is elevated to the office of Pope becomes a saint by the grace of St. Peter. Here the pope is elevated to exercise both spiritual and temporal power of the Christian church. Gregory VII also described himself as the only representative of Christ on the earth.

### ***Monastic movements***

During the middle ages there was great development of monastic movements in the Catholic Church. There was a common belief among the people that, lifestyle of a monk is the most desirable way of life. Members of rich family also opted for monastic life.

#### **A. Benedict order**

St. Benedict (480-540) founded this monastic order and it progressed considerably during middle ages. There was a strong administration and orderly life style for this order. Monks belonging to this order concentrated in reciting Psalms and reading the scripture. St. Benedict entered into monastic life on account of his aversion towards immorality and anarchy of the society. In fact, the Syrian monks were his models in this regard. The heads of the monasteries were known by the title 'abbot'. The word *Abbot*, leader of the monastery is derived from the Syriac word *Aba or father*. The benedict order grew into an order consisting of rich men, painters and erudite people. Obedience was considered to be an important virtue among them. Obedience was a symbol self sacrifice. Seven times of prayer a day was mandatory among them. The western spirituality was greatly influenced by the benedict order. St. Benedict did not view monastic order as means of salvation. This monastic order contributed greatly for the conversion and integral development of the society and enrichment of family life.

#### **B. Augustinian movement:**

This monastic order has its origins with St. Augustine. They have more rigid rules regarding the monastic life. Renunciation, silence, labor and rejection of private property are salient features of this order.



### **C. Cistercian movement.**

Robert of France founded this monastic order in 1100. They differ from Augustinian order in many respects. They were very strict in their relations with outside world. Strict discipline, strict religious observance, simplicity and voluntary poverty were important features of this order. They followed the apostolic traditions. According to them, a monk should lead simple and holy life and should observe poverty and self sacrifices. They used rough cotton cloth material for dress. They did not indulge in lengthy prayers but gave importance for observing silence and reliance on self labor. The most famous monk among them was Bernard (1090-1153). He attracted many people to this movement and influenced the reformation of the church at that time.

### **D. Dominican order**

St. Dominic (1170-1221) was the founder of this movement. In 1215 he established a community in Tulsa. By 1277 it grew into about 400 houses. Dominican order of monks was considered to be of ordinary people's movement. This order gave emphasis to learning. They were not allowed to own private properties. They met their lively hood through the kindness of others. Albert and Aquinas were the prominent members of this movement.

### **E. Franciscan order.**

St. Francis of Assisi started this order. He was born in 1181 in Assisi. His father was textile merchant. He lived his childhood in wealthy surroundings. He became seriously religious when he was affected by a serious illness. He gave all his properties to others and became a beggar. He tried to follow Christ by giving away everything he had and spent his time by serving the sick, the poor and the orphans. His father disowned him thinking Francis has gone insane and crazy. Subsequently, he visited the Pope in Rome, and got permission to start a new monastic order. In 1212, a woman called Cler also joined his movement. Later, he started a convent-for the nuns. He started a third monastic movement in 1221 and this order allowed the people to lead ordinary lives. The love towards nature, simple life style and renunciation of private property were important features of this movement. They did not give much importance to studies because they believed that it would cause pride and self-boasting among them. The Franciscan monks do not own any personal properties. They lived like birds in the sky depending only on the lord. St. Francis of Assisi died on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1226.

In short, these monastic movements in the Catholic Church had a great influence in the social and religious life of middle ages.

## **Reformation in the Catholic Church**

Owing to moral degradation in the Catholic Church in the middle centuries, Martin Luther, John Calvin and Zwingli initiated reformation movement in the church. This reformation resulted in dividing the Catholic Church. To check this reformation movement, the Catholic Church launched another reformation known as the Counter Reformation.

Ignatius Leola gave leadership to this Counter Reformation. For this he formed an organization called Society of Jesus. The efforts of this society helped to avert the collapse of Catholic Church to the reformation movement. Later he had an accident to his leg and he became a monk. He decided to stand with the church at the time of its crisis. Obedience and submission to the church was a great characteristic of Ignatius Leola.

His ambition to become a priest was not fulfilled. Then he formed an organization called Company of Jesus in 1334 by gathering six men including Francis Xavier. The main purpose of this organization was to preach gospel among the illiterate children. Later the Society of Jesus workers contributed much to the growth of education in many countries including India. In 1541, Francis Xavier, who belonged to the Society of Jesus, came to India.

The church leaders at Rome realized the damages caused by these attacks on church, by the reformists and actively worked to rescue the church. As a result of this attempt, Monastic movements like Capuchin and Sisters of Charity, which was meant for women, came into being.

When the protestant movement became strong the Catholic Church called a Synod (council) at Trent in 1545. The Trent Council proclaimed Indulgence and adoration of saints as part of faith. The council was concluded in the year 1563 only. Gregory XII who became Pope in 1572 was particularly interested in encouraging education. It was Gregory who started the famous Gregorian university of Rome. Instead of the Julian calendar he introduced the Gregorian calendar also.

## Questions:

1. Who is the prominent theologian of Catholic Church? Which is his theological book?
2. What was the first occasion in which the emperor accepted the authority of pope? When did it happen?
3. What were the favorable factors that contributed to the growth of Papal authority?
4. What are the important monastic movements in the Catholic Church? Briefly describe the important features of each movement.
5. Who were the main leaders of the Reformation Movement?

## LESSON 24

### MODERN AGE

*Objective:* To understand the unprecedented advancement of the church brought about by sincere and committed leadership of the church in modern time.

The dawn of modern age in Catholic Church occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the Reformation works led by Luther many in Europe were lost to the Roman Catholic Church. However this brought about a revival of the church in the other parts of Europe. It was during the time of Leo XI (1605), the famous scientist Galileo underwent cruel torturing by the 'Inquisition council'. Galileo was tortured for his acceptance of the Copernicus theory about the earth rotating around the sun. The Catholic Church believed the sun was rotating around the earth. By this time Catholic Church had spread all over the world. In 1622, Pope Gregory XV founded an organization called 'The Congregating of the Propaganda' to preach gospel and carry out administration in various parts of the world. By seventeenth century, the Catholic Church got permission to work in Russia. Clement XII who became Pope in 1730 opposed the 'Free Masonry movement' which was taking place in Europe and declared it cursed. He gave official recognition to the 'Via scara' (Path of cross) celebrations practiced by the Franciscan Monks.

The French Revolution (1787-1799) was the greatest event in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Catholic priests in France had lot of property and privileges

like Lords. During the revolution along with the royal family members many of the church leaders were also killed. The Leaders of the revolution captured the vast wealth and property belonging to pope in France. They severed the relationship between Catholic Church in Rome and France. In 1799, a military expedition under the leadership of Napoleon Captured and imprisoned Pope Pius VI and took him to France. The pope died on the way to France.

The French Revolution affected the Catholic Church in France. When Napoleon became the emperor he realized that friendship with Rome will help him expand his kingdom. So he initiated peace talks with Rome. Pope Pius VII was invited to crown the emperor. However, Napoleon refused to kneel before the Pope and took the crown and crowned himself. He forced the Pope to an agreement giving back France all the captured properties of the pope in France. It was also agreed in the document that Headquarter of Pope would be transferred to France in the future. However all this became nullified with the fall of Napoleon. In 1829, during the time of Pius VII, the Catholic Church got freedom of worship in England through the enactment of parliament Act called '*Catholic Emancipation Act of Greater Britain*'.

Pope Pius IX who became Pope in 1846 and ruled the Catholic Church for 32 years is considered as the creator of Modern papacy. He allowed freedom of press and appointed many laity in high government offices. In 1854 he proclaimed '*Immaculate Conception of St. Mary*' as part of catholic faith. According to this proclamation Virgin Mary is considered to be free of inherited sin (sin by birth – sinless).

Similarly, papal infallibility was also proclaimed as a church faith in 1869 by the Vatican Council. According to the '*infallibility of the Pope*' theory, the Pope is the shepherd and teacher of all the Christians and according to his apostolic powers when he proclaims any declarations regarding faith, it should be accepted by all the church with out question. i.e. Papal Proclamations of faith are 'infallible'.

He appointed Archbishops for Eastern Europe and America and appointed a Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, which is actually under the jurisdiction the Patriarch of Antioch.

In 1870 Italian king Victor Immanuel captured Rome from the Pope. But the '*Law of Guarantees*' promised to protect the throne of Pope and his

freedom. Complete freedom in Vatican palace, the Basilicas and the establishments of Pope were granted. The pope refused to accept the offer of compensation by the king.

In 1878 Leo XIII became pope, but by that time the city of Rome was beyond the power of Pope. So he went to the top of Vatican Palace for the ceremonial blessing of the people after the enthronement. All the popes followed him in following this tradition. During his time, Leo XIII had to become at odds with the German ruler Bismarck. He took the initiatives to put an end to the slavery system of Brazil, which was largely a catholic country. He also selected qualified Brazilian Negroes for clergy training. He established relationship with many countries of the world. It is estimated that he founded 290 new dioceses all over the world.

### Questions:

1. Who started the celebrations of 'Via Sacra' – Path of Cross? Who was the Pope imprisoned by French Military?
2. How did French Revolution affect the Catholic Church?
3. Explain what is papal infallibility?

## LESSON 25

### CATHOLIC CHURCH - TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Objective:* To understand how countries of the world listen to the words of Famous Popes and to learn the unprecedented growth of the Catholic Church.

Those who became Popes in the twentieth century were all famous and well respected among the countries of the world. Pope Pious X who became pope in 1903 reformed the liturgy of the church. He took away the right of catholic kings to veto (invalidate) the elections of a Pope by the cardinals of the Catholic Church. Later the church proclaimed him as a Saint.

In 1914 Benedict XV became Pope. During his time, the First World War occurred. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia was also during his reign. He requested the world not to torture the defeated countries or sink them in debt but urged the world to form common forum to establish peace. Accordingly 'The League of Nations' organization was established. However none of his

other suggestions were carried out. He established 70 new dioceses all over the world. He ordained priests and bishops from Asian and African countries.

In 1922 Pius XI became the Pope. He made an agreement with the Italian Prime minister Benito Mussolini. This document is the famous '*Lateran Agreement*'. According to this agreement, the Pope became the head of an independent Vatican country. This is the smallest country in the world, and covers an area of 108.7 Acres only (less than one Square mile). Based on this treaty the Pope had to relinquish the Provinces the Pope had in Italy. However the Pope got back 13 buildings in Rome, which were outside of Vatican. The Pope realized that, like the Russian Communism the German Nazism and the Italian fascism are against the Individuality of the man. So the Pope encouraged the formation of '*Catholic Action*' discussion forums. This movement later developed into Christian Democratic Party in Italy. Since Pius XI was against ethnic superiority arguments of Hitler and Mussolini he had to fight against them. During his tenure, the Catholic Church was persecuted in Spain when the rule of monarchy ended. Many of the church's properties were nationalized, and Bishops and priests were imprisoned. The Church in Mexico was also persecuted during this period.

In 1939 Pius XII became the Pope when Pius XI expired. Previously he had served the church as the secretary to Pius XI and also as the representative of the Pope to Germany. So he was well aware of the church administration. Before becoming Pope he had opportunities to travel across America and Europe. Italy was with the united front against the Germans in World War I. However in World War II, which started in 1939, Italy joined Germany against the united front. He kept his political neutrality even when the united front was bombing Rome and the surrounding areas. After the fall of Mussolini when the Germans surrounded Vatican also the Pope refused to go away (move) from Vatican. In 1946 when the war ended he ordained 33 Cardinals in one celebration. They belonged to belonged to different nations like China, Africa, Australia, Chili, Cuba and Peru.

He published a new translation of the bible with the help of Hebrew and Greek linguistic scholars. During this period Catholic Church had to face severe persecution in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland. The Eastern Oriental churches were also persecuted in Eastern Europe during this period. The Pope excommunicated autocratic leader of Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito for

imprisonment of Cardinal Zagreb. When Cardinal Minsenthi was arrested in Hungary, Pius XII also excommunicated from the church all those who supported the arrest. In 1949 he prohibited the faithful of Catholic Church to abstain from any kind of cooperation with communist party. He refused sacraments to those who cooperated with communists. He proclaimed 1950 as a holy year to rectify the inequities of Second World War He also proclaimed The Ascension of Mary as an article of faith

The Pope did not cooperate with activities of the world council of churches, which came into existence in 1948, because he remained steadfast with the decision of Trent council that the Pope was the only Interpreter of Christian church (The Infallibility of Pope). Pius XI died in 1958.

In 1958 John XXIII became the pope. He was different from his predecessors in many aspects. As result of his works, many world leaders came into contact with the Vatican. Representatives of the Russian leader Khrushchev, and American President Eisenhower held talks on different issues with the Pope. President Kennedy made personal visit to the Pope. The Pope invited representatives from other Christian churches as observers to the second Vatican council. He was well respected by all kinds of people and died in 1963 before the completion of the council.

The council was successfully culminated during the tenure of Pope Paul VI. He translated the Latin Liturgy into many vernacular languages. He visited Jerusalem. After St. Peter the Apostle, no Pope before Pope Paul VI had ever visited Jerusalem. In 1054 the Pope and the Constantinople Patriarch had excommunicated each other. In 1965 they withdrew the excommunications and the pope visited the Constantinople church. The Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul) visited Vatican also. He was also engaged in dialogue with Michael Ramsey, Canterbury Arch bishop and Patriarch of Antioch Ignatius Yakub III. He made the decision that cardinals over the age of 80 should not be participating in the election of the Pope. Also cardinals over 80 should retire from active office. He visited many countries in Europe, South America, India, Australia, and Philippines and also addressed the United Nations Assembly.

Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, who was excommunicated by Pius XII, also visited the Pope Paul VI at Vatican. Many other communist leaders also visited him. He died in 1978.

On August 26th 1978 John Paul I became pope. But he died soon after (34 days) on September 29th. John Paul II became the next pope in 1978 October. He is from Poland the eastern European nation, which was under the communist rule. When he was 19 Hitler captured Poland and John Paul II was in captivity (jail) for years. When he was released he pursued religious studies and became priest and later the pope. John Paul II is one of the most traveled Popes of all time. Today John Paul II the pope is one of the most famous and respected world leaders.

### Questions

1. How did Vatican the headquarter of pope, become an independent Country.
2. Name the two most important global events during the reign of Benedict XV.
3. When Pius XI became pope he had thorough knowledge of the administration. Why?
4. Why did Pius XII refused to cooperate with the World council of churches?
5. Write the name of the following:
  - A. Who initiated Second Vatican Council?
  - B. Which Pope renewed the relationship with Rome and Constantinople by mutually removing the excommunications?
  - C. This pope had the shortest reign as pope in this century?
  - D. Name the pope who is from Poland?



## PROTESTANT CHURCHES

*Objective:* To learn the origin and development of Protestant Churches.

During the Middle Ages, Christian Churches in Europe except in eastern countries of Europe were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Roman Pope. Eventually besides spiritual powers, the pope got temporal powers as well. A vast geographical area came under the Papal supremacy as many of the local Kings, and Lords gave up their countries and land to the pope. Other areas were annexed by the Papal army. This position of power led the Papal office to fall into the hands of selfish, autocratic Popes who were more interested in the pursuit of money. The people became disappointed and frustrated at the money mindedness and immoral behavior of the Church leaders. Even though the people tried for a reformation in the Church, the Church leaders were able to ignore them with the support of the Kings. The following are some of the main personalities who tried for a reformation in the church.

Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274)

Thomas E Kempis, the author of "Imitation of Christ" (1380-1471)

Catherine the nun of Siena (1347-1380)

Savanarola, who burnt out the statues (1452-1498)

John Wickliffe (1320 -1384)

When we think about reformation the first name that comes to our mind is of Martin Luther. Pope Leo - X wanted to renovate and expand the St. Peter's cathedral at Rome. To raise funds he implemented "*Indulgence*" (redemption of sins after death) for a substantial monetary contribution to the pope. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German Augustinian celibate priest protested against this unethical practice of the Church. He wrote many articles against this system and also exhibited them on the doors of the Church at Wittenberg, Germany. This act of Martin Luther on 31st October 1517 is considered as the beginning of the reformation.

These articles displayed at the door of the church captured the attention of the people. Martin Luther raised his voice not only against Indulgence, but

he also questioned the trans-substantiation in Holy Communion, the validity of intercession by priests, and the Papal Authority. The church leadership asked to stop his rebellion against the church and especially against the authority of pope. He was threatened with death penalty. Later the German emperor declared a verdict to kill him without inquisition. At this Martin Luther fled Germany and lived in hiding. During this period he translated the entire Bible into German language. At this time also he did not give up his membership in the Catholic Church.

The followers of Martin Luther held a conference at Speier in Germany. At that conference a new Church group with all the reformatory thoughts came into existence. In this meeting some suggested, the new church should not do anything to hinder the Liturgy worship, traditions of the Catholic Church. The disciples and followers of Luther strongly protested against this suggestion. From this protest "Protestants" came into existence. After this a number of people in Germany joined this movement led by Martin Luther.

In Switzerland Zwingli was the contemporary of Martin Luther. Zwingli was protesting against the practice of 'Pilgrimage' when Martin Luther was protesting against 'indulgence' (card to redeem sins). Zwingli was a priest in Roman Catholic Church. He later left the Roman Church and gave up leadership for the reformation movement. He removed the statues of Saints from many Churches in Switzerland. He stopped the Holy Communion and prayers for the departed. He promoted the marriage of Priests. He introduced the practice of reading of the Holy Bible in the middle of the service and encouraged the preaching of sermon in the Churches. While Zwingli was working among the German speaking population, John Calvin led the reformation among the French speaking people. Later John Calvin spread the reformation message and movement into Holland and France. John Knox a disciple of John Calvin introduced the reformation ideas in Scotland.

### ***The Gist of Reformation beliefs***

1. All believers of the church have priesthood.
2. Justification in front of God is through faith not through rituals or practices or even deeds.

3. The Holy Bible is the basis of faith and Christian life not the traditions and practices of the Church.
4. Among the sacraments, only Holy Communion and the Holy Baptism are important.

Martin Luther objected to the 'trans-substantiation' theory of Roman Catholic Church, but he believed in the presence of Christ in the Holy Communion. This concept of Martin Luther is called 'Consubstantiation'. But Zwingli taught, the Holy Communion nothing but a symbolic sign for the memory of Jesus Christ. John Calvin took an in-between position between these two beliefs.

The Reformers claim the following as results of the Reformation movements.

1. People became aware of the spiritual freedom through the crucifixion of Jesus and the free accessibility of a repenting sinner towards God.
2. During a period of Priestly dominance made the people aware of the fact that even with out the intercession through saints a sinner can directly approach God.

Within the reformers itself there were differences of opinion in regards to the faith and practices of the church. Therefore, they couldn't stand together and as a single church. As a result they formed different Churches. We will learn about some of them in the upcoming chapters.

### **Questions.**

1. Who were the people who lead the reformation movement?
2. Which of the faith and practices of the Roman Catholic Church was objected by the reformers?
3. Who was first person that translated the Holy Bible into German Language?
4. Write down the principles of reformation movements?
5. Which sacraments of the ancient Churches are acceptable to the reformers?

## ANGLICAN CHURCH

*Objective:* To learn more about the Anglican Church which has much relationship to Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.

The Anglican Church (also known as the Church of England) has a particular place in the political system of Great Britain. It is the Church leader (The Primate) Canterbury Arch Bishop who enthrones the King of England. Before the reformation movements the Christian Church existed in England under the Roman Pope. In other European countries the reformation took root by the efforts of Martin Luther and his associates. However in England the King was the one who took the initiative for the reformation. That was not in regard to faith either.

The King of England, Henry VIII (1491-1547) who was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, sought permission from Roman Pope to get a divorce from his wife Queen Catherine. The Pope denied this request. . This angered the King and he severed all relationship of the church in England with the church in Rome. He declared the Church of England as an independent Church and the King of England as the head of the Church. He enacted the *Supremacy act*, which enables even women to become the head of the Church if the country is ruled by a woman (queen). Even though the King broke the relationship with Rome he did not accept all ideologies of the reformation movement.

The liturgy of Church of England '*The book of common prayer*' and the '*39 articles of faith*' (Mathasangathi) were formulated during the time of the successors of Henry VIII his children; King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth. The parliament of England by law declared the Anglican Church as the official Church of England. So the Church of England became the '*Established Church of England*'. From 16th century the Church of England is considered as a department of the Government. The appointment of a new Arch Bishop and Salary of many of the church officials, protection and maintenance of the church etc, are taken care by the Government. The Anglican bishops have the right to become members of the House of Lords of the Parliament. There are 43 and 13 Episcopal dioceses respectively at the jurisdiction of Canterbury and York Archbishops. There are two administrative bodies for the Church. One

is the convocation consisting of the Diocesan Bishops and Priests. Secondly a national assembly consisting of Priests and representatives of lay people.

By the efforts of the gospel mission bodies of the Anglican church like, Church Missionary society (C.M.S), Gospel Spreading Society (Suvishesha Pracharana Samgham -S.P.G), Oxford mission, and society of St. John the Evangelist, the Anglican church was established in such places as India, China, Africa, America etc. These Anglican Churches also use the name Church of England. In countries like Canada, Australia, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), which had strong political relation with Great Briton has many people from England settled there. They established branches of the Anglican Church in these countries.

Even though the Church of England follows the Protestant faith, they still keep many of the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. As we discussed earlier in England the establishment of an independent Church was not due to the influence of the reformation movement. In Anglican Church even today there are two sections the High Church and Low Church. These groups uphold the same faith but have slight differences in regard to the rituals and the priestly dress outfit. *High Church*: - They give more importance to rituals. They use censer and candles for the worship. *Low Church*: - They are not giving much importance to the rituals but give importance to the Preaching of the Word of God. They do not use Censer or Candles for worship. Combining the practices of these two groups there is a third group also in existence in the Church of England, which is called the Broad church. They have integrated the practices of both of the above-mentioned groups. When a Bishop or Priest visits a church, they follow the existing traditional practices of that Church during their visit.

### **Anglican Church in India.**

Bishop Middleton was appointed as the first Bishop of Calcutta in 1814. Later the Arch Bishop of Calcutta and the first Metropolitan of India, Bishop Dr. Westcott established 13 Dioceses, other than the diocese of Calcutta in different places like; Madras, Bombay, Colombo, Rangoon. Lahore, Travencore - Kochi, Thirunelveli, Chotta Nagpure, Laknow, Nagpoor, Asam, Doornakkal, Nazik. From 1930 onwards instead of the name Church of England they are known by the name of "The Church of India, Church of Burma and Church of Ceylon" with the approval of the British Parliament.

In 1947 when the Church of South India (CSI) was formed, the Anglican Dioceses of Madras, Colombo, Travencore-Kochi, Thirunelvali and Doornakal left the Anglican Church. Later when the Church of north India (CNI) was formed all other Anglican Dioceses also left the Church of England.

### **Questions.**

1. Who is the founder of the Anglican Church?
2. What is the difference between the high Church - Low Church categories of the Anglican Church?
3. Who is the head of the Anglican Church?
4. What is the present situation of the Anglican Church in India?

## **LESSON 28**

### **OTHER PROTESTANT CHURCHES**

*Objective:* To learn the commonalities and diversities among different Protestant Churches.

#### **(A) Presbyterian Church.**

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland holds the same status of Anglican Church in England. However both these churches have considerable difference in faith and administrative set up. John Knox the disciple of John Calvin initiated the reformation movement in Scotland. In 1560 the reformed faith taught by John Knox became the officially accepted faith of Scotland by the Scottish parliament. Four years later the General Assembly of the church approved the Prayer book of Knox (Thaksa) for their liturgy. After the period of Knox, Scotland came under the control of the king of England. During this period they tried to establish the faith of Anglican Church in Scotland but the people resisted this attempt. In 1661 the Presbyterian Church was declared as the *Established church of Scotland* by the parliament.

The Presbyterian Church is not an Episcopal church; it is administered by a Presbyter (elder). Like priests laymen also can be a presbyter. In regard to the administrative matter's Presbyter and the lay people has the same status. The head of the church is elected by the people and is called Moderator for a

term. Later the church was spread in to England, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Hungary, Unites States, India, China and Africa.

### **(B). Methodist Church**

This is the largest protestant Church in the world. In the 18th Century, John Wesley established this Church in England. So this church is also known as “Wesleyan Church”. John Wesley was born in 1703. He was a member of the Anglican Church. During his study in Oxford, he was very keen in bible studies and missionary works. He associated himself with a group of youths who were interested in prayer, visiting the sick, and in reading and learning the Bible. Since they were very systematic in their life and work, other students in Oxford teased them by calling them “Methodists”. They proudly accepted this name. John’s brother Charles Wesley also joined the group. In 1740 John Wesley formed a Methodist community in London. Some of them from this group decided to go on missionary work in US but the Anglican Bishop refused to give them ordination, so they relinquished their relation with the Church of England and formed a new church with the name “Methodist Church”. Because of the nature of his work and functioning style John Wesley is also called as the Francis of Assisi of the 18th Century.

Today there are different branches of Methodist church in existence. Methodist England, Methodist Episcopal church of USA, Primitive Methodist, United Methodist, Methodist new connection are some of them. They all have similarities in faith, but differ in their administrative set up. The Sermons and the notes on the New Testament by John Wesley are kept as the common property of all the Methodist Churches. Methodist church always promoted local Preachers and local gathering for the enrichment of the people. John Wesley formed study groups (class system) for the spiritual enrichment of those who got converted due to his mission work. The Wesley brothers have written lot of beautiful devotional songs for the Church.

### **(C). Congregational Church.**

The word congregation means the gathering of the Parishners. The basic concept of this Church is independence from all formal functioning of the church. All the members of the church have the same status and freedom in the church. To them church is a gathering of faithful people for service and togetherness. The priests are called ministers and they do not have any special blessings or rights above any member of the church.

In 1646 Queen Elizabeth of England declared that all members of the church should use the official prayer book of the Anglican Church. Those who did not obey were persecuted. This was the reason for the origin of the Congregational Church. Many people protested against this and left England and migrated to protestant faith prevailing countries in Europe. A group of people called 'Pilgrim fathers' migrated to America crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a ship named May Flower.

After 1689 the congregational Church was officially accepted in England. In the 19th Century, this Church had tremendous growth in America and England. The missionary wing of this church LMS (London Missionary Society) had done some work in Southern Travencore of Kerala. In 1947 LMS in India merged with the Church of south India. The Congregation church founded the world famous educational institutions Harvard University and Yale University.

#### **(D). The Baptist Church**

The basic belief of this church is the concept of Adult Baptism. This is the main difference between the Baptist churches and the congregational churches. The Baptist Church's teaching say that Baptism is a symbol of spiritual re-birth and is done to witness Jesus Christ in the world. There are Pastors and Deacons in Baptist Churches. They have no official Prayer book, and they give much emphasis for sermon, Bible study and singing.

There are different sub groups in the Baptist church, which are called Disciples, Mennonites, Adventists, Winnie Brennarians, Particular Baptists, Strict Baptists, and Plymouth Bothers etc. Among these groups Plymouth brothers are found in Kerala. John Nelson Darby started this group in Plymouth England. The group in Kerala omitted the name Plymouth from their church.

They believe all the members of the church are of priestly class. So they do not have any priests. They do the breaking of Bread at houses and baptism is given to Adults only. They started out the group with the explicit intension of not becoming a church. But there are six different sub groups within the Plymouth brother (strict Baptist) group. George Muller who was known as a man of prayer was a member of this church.

The Winnie Brennarians give much importance to the washing of feet among one another, kiss of peace, Peace meals, and also the breaking of bread.



The Adventists give much importance to the second coming of Jesus Christ. They all insist on adult baptism and hence are called the Baptists.

The author of the famous book Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan, the famous charismatic preacher C.H. Spurgeon, Famous missionary William Carey, were all members of the Baptist Church. In the 20th Century, all the different groups of Baptist Church joined together and formed the Baptist World Alliance

#### **(E). The Society of Friends or Quakers.**

In the Middle Ages, people gave importance to the Roman Catholic Church, and the Roman Pope. The Protestant Church gave importance to the Holy Bible. In this context some people argued that these two systems are preaching either submission to the Pope or submission to the Bible. They questioned the 'infallibility' of both. They considered both as spiritual slavery and ignored the Church's Sacraments, and the literal interpretation of the Bible. So in England a special sect was formed in the 17th century made up of those who believed that every faithful must live according to his spiritual light. George Fox (1624-1691) was the leader of this group. In the beginning they were called as "The Children of Light". Later on the basis of the Gospel according to St. John 15:15 ("...I call you as my friends...") they called themselves as "The association of Friends". They used to pray with wavering voice and shivering body. Because of this style of prayer they were called Quakers. And gradually they accepted this name for them.

They observed silence in most of the time in their prayer. During the silence if any one gets an inspiration from the Holy Spirit to pray or preach, they should do it. Men and women have the same privileges in the church. They do not have any creed, Church, Priests or Sacraments. They strongly oppose participation in any war. In 1856 some of these people migrated to America and established a colony in Pennsylvania.

#### **(F). Salvation Army.**

General William Booth (1829-1912) was the founder of the Salvation Army. They do not have Baptism, Holy Communion, or Priesthood. Because of this reason many protestant churches itself do not consider this group as a church. Since the founder of the church was an ex military official, different positions in the church are honored by the titles like General, Major, Captain, Corporal etc...

William Booth was a priest in the Methodist Church. At the same time he joined the '*East End Mission*' in London which was working among the orphans, the helpless and the suffering people of London and was trying to uplift them in the society. This mission later through his commitment and hard work grew into the great Salvation Army movement.

After the death of William Booth his son and daughter took over the responsibility as Generals of the movement. In countries like Europe, America, India and other Eastern countries, they worked among the downtrodden. They worked marvelously especially among the leprosy patients in India. The head quarters of the Salvation Army was in the south western region of Kerala at Trivandrum.

### **(G) Marthoma Church.**

Following the reformation movement, some members of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church left the mother church, and formed the Mathoma Church in 1888. Later they agreed to have inter - communion with CSI and CNI churches. They formed a joint council of Marthoma, CSI and CNI Churches also.

Even though the Marthoma Church has a strong relationship with the protestant churches, they still keep the traditions of the Oriental Churches in Liturgy, Robes of the Priesthood, compulsory celibacy for Bishops, Dress code of the Clergy, hierarchy in Church etc.... In the official Marthoma church Directory, they have described themselves as one of the '*Lesser Eastern Churches*'.

### **Questions.**

1. What is the administrative order of the Presbyterian Church?
2. How does the Methodist Church receive this name?
3. Who is the founder of the Methodist Church?
4. What was the name of the congregational church in Kerala? What is the present status of congregational church in Kerala?
5. What is the main difference between the Baptist Church and the Protestant Churches in terms of Faith?

6. Name some of the world famous missionaries of the Baptist Church?
7. What are the specialties of Quakers in regards to the ritual practices?
8. Who is the founder of the Salvation Army?
9. What is the major missionary work of the Salvation Army?
10. Even though the Marthoma Church has inter-communion with the Protestant Church, they describe themselves as an Eastern Church. Why?

## LESSON 29

### THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

*Objective:* To understand that everyone should be one in Jesus Christ.

John 17:21 says, "That all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you". Theologians describe this as the prayer of the big priest for the universal church.

This verse touched the hearts of many faithful, and as a result the ecumenical movement started. The English word 'ecumenical' originated from the Greek word 'oikoumenikos'. It means, 'the whole inhabited world'. The Christian ecumenical movement as a result of different Christian Churches joining together is different from the associations which different political parties or different countries make. As centuries passed by, different regions accepted different rituals and ways of administration in the Church. Then each church focused on the differences between them and the other churches. But the belief and hope that while individual differences in faith and liturgy and rituals are respected, different churches can work together in other aspects, led to the emergence of the ecumenical movement. It is not clear who started it or when it was started. There are various fields where different churches can cooperate and work together.

Translation of the bible into various languages helped this movement. When the British and foreign Bible society was established in 1084, the ecumenical movement got a lot of encouragement. Though the Bible society was started by the Anglican Church, from the beginning they allowed half of the members of the director board to be from other churches. In 1816 when the American Bible society was started, members from different churches forgot individual differences and co-operated.

The Y.M.C.A which is spread all over the world started in 1844 in England and later spread to America and other countries. Y.W.C.A which started in 1872 in America also has branches worldwide. In 1895 S.C.A (Student Christian Association) was started. All these associations did not consider the individual differences between the different churches. So all these associations got international recognition.

In 1910 there was an international missionary meeting in Edinburgh. In 1921 the international missionary council was established. Under the guidance of the council, missionary meetings were held in Jerusalem in 1928 and in Thambaram (Madras – India) on 1938. These meetings urged the members to work together for various projects.

In 1937, representatives from 122 protestant churches took part in a meeting held at Edinburgh to discuss the matters of unification in faith and rituals. The meeting held at Utrecht in Netherlands in 1938 decided to form the world council of churches instead of the meeting of just protestant churches. William Temple who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury was the president of this meeting. Since then world war II started, so there was a ten years wait before the idea to become practical.

*In 1948 the first world council of churches meeting was held at Amsterdam. Representatives of 147 churches belonging to protestant and eastern churches took part in this. Apart from the Roman Catholic Church, all the other major churches sent their representatives. The following is part of the prayer of the council, “We humbly accept that the factions in the church are against the wishes of Jesus Christ. We pray to the abundant grace of God that the number of divided days is reduced and that we are united and led into completeness in the Holy Spirit.*

So, for the first time in history an official independent association of churches came into existence. The fact that a meeting of the council was held in New Delhi in 1961 is a matter of pride for us.

### **Questions**

1. What is the meaning of the word ecumenism?
2. What is the biblical verse which gave encouragement for the ecumenical movement?
3. It was the success of some associations that gave the idea of ecumenical movement. Name those associations.
4. What is the biggest achievement of the ecumenical movement so far?

# ***THE TRUE FAITH (ORTHODOXY)***

## **LESSON 30**

### **INNER SPIRITUALITY**

The word 'spirituality' has meanings like related to spirit, regarding spirit and holiness. Adding words inner and spirituality, we get the word inner spirituality. It means giving importance to the spirit.

Inner spirituality is the total sum of one's beliefs, rituals, ceremonies and religious life. Different religions and different denominations of the same religion have different viewpoints regarding this. Spirituality is the spiritual efforts undertaken to find the inner soul. To understand the inner spirituality one must obtain a deep understanding of the spiritual forces. There are different thoughts in different churches and theologians also differ in their views. We will review this basing on the Holy bible, history, and through the thoughts of our fore fathers. To become participants in the mystery of incarnation of God is Christian inner spirituality.

### **BIBLICAL BASIS OF INNER SPIRITUALITY**

The biblical basis of inner spirituality is best understood by closely examining the Old and New Testaments.

#### **1. INNER SPIRITUALITY IN OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH**

Old Testament inner spirituality is experiencing God and the total metamorphosis of man. The transcendence of God is best understood through true divine experience. Bible explains it as the Glory of God. The Holiness of God is evidenced in His transcendence. The Israelites and Old testament prophets were selected by God and experiencing the transcendence of God is considered as the basis of their spirituality. Throughout the Old Testament, there are incidents where God takes the upper hand to communicate with man, gives them missions to be fulfilled and to be united with man. Moses is the father of the Old Testament spirituality. It is clear from Exodus 3:1 to 4:7 that God chose Moses. God calls Moses (Exodus 3:1-10). Moses' rebellion to god's call (Exodus 3:11) God's promise that he is powerful. Moses' submission (Exodus 3:12) When Moses was in god's presence, he was transformed and that reflected on his face (Exodus 34:28-30). The same happened to Israelites (Exodus 19:1-20:21) and prophet Elijah on mount Sinai (1 king 19:1-21).

In short the Old testament spirituality is connected with the experience of God and the powerful transformation that it brings to humanity. The fear of god is the central point of Old Testament spirituality. This fear doesn't keep man away from God, but the fear that leads to complete submission and trust in God. Thus in Old testament we are seeing many occasions in which God is taking the initiative to be in touch with man to give His commandments and by observing them the human race becomes close to Him.

## **2. NEW TESTAMENT INNER SPIRITUALITY**

The New Testament inner spirituality is related to experiencing god and participating in the mystery of incarnation of God. In Human history and race the experiencing of God is an immeasurable feat. To fully fathom the New testament spirituality we should know the human experience of God at the time of his incarnation. The writers of New testament books have given more importance to the missionary and evangelical works and teachings of Jesus than to the spiritual experiences of Christ. That is why Jesus is portrayed as the Lamb of God who carries the sins of the world.

The New testament spirituality is also based on the experience of God. This fact we can understand from the life of apostle Paul. The incident in the life of Apostle Paul at the gates of Damascus is the turning point in his conversion. (Act 9:3-9, 22:6-10, 26:12-16). The new testament spirituality is the joining of ourselves to the secrets of the life of Jesus. Apostle Paul rightly knew the importance of incarnation of Jesus Christ. By experiencing God he could rightly understand the depths of that mystery. This is reflected in many of his epistles. Romans 8-26-36 is a proof of that. To experience God we need to lead a life of prayer like St.Paul and understand the mystery of incarnation.

St. Mary is a good example of New Testament spirituality. Through the Holy spirit she was able to participate in the incarnation of God due to her purity of life and total submission to God from her childhood. The greatest feature of St.Mary was her ability and humility to absorb God's messages and keep them in her heart (Luke 2:19,51). In accordance with her spirituality she absorbed the messages of the angel and the privilege to bear Jesus Christ. The New testament spirituality is the experiencing of God and the participation in His incarnation.

## Questions:

39. What is the meaning of Christian spirituality?
40. What is special about Old Testament spirituality?
41. How is spirituality experienced in Apostle Paul's life?
42. Why is St. Mary called example of New Testament spirituality?

## LESSON 31

### HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN INNER SPIRITUALITY

To be participants in the incarnation of Jesus Christ is Christian spirituality. The spirituality of the early Christian church is similar to the spirituality of Jesus Christ. To understand this, it is just not enough to know few incidents in the life of Jesus Christ but the way that God showed by offering Jesus to the world i.e. To understand the methods of salvation from the creation of first man till the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Though the ancient church lacked an accepted form of theology it had its own spirituality with special characteristics. Spirituality of ancient church had 3 special features.

1. Because of the faith that Jesus Christ's second coming will occur quickly, one should be ready always to receive Him was one of the basic faiths of the ancient church. Therefore we can say that the spirituality of ancient church was eschatological.
2. Through breaking of the bread, sharing God's message and prayer the spirituality in those days was centered on Jesus Christ who was born, died and rose again. Therefore the spirituality of ancient church was 'CHRISTO CENTRIC'.
3. Early Christian churches considered martyrdom as a hopeful sacrifice. So they saw martyrdom as a practical method of spirituality. So we can say that early Christian church was based on martyrdom.

Gradually changes happened to this faith. During the period between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries the occasion to be a martyr were rather rare. Therefore some people centered spirituality on asceticism and celibacy, living solitary lives in

forests and deserts, creating another form of spirituality. For the sake of spirituality, leading a separated life led to the formation of monasteries (Dayaras). Later rules and regulations were chartered and monasteries started flourishing in large numbers. In eastern regions several Dayaras were established and they were excellent centers of practical Christian spirituality. The ascetics and monks who lived in Dayaras were learned and respected people. Some of them had a deep knowledge not only of the Bible and theology but also medicine, history, philosophy and biology.

From 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards spirituality started to be based mainly on religion. These movements grew steadily. From 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards nation based spirituality came into existence. So there came into existence spirituality of India, Spirituality of England, Spirituality of Italy etc which were all nation-based.

### **Questions:**

1. What are the special features of ancient church spirituality?
2. Describe the origin and growth of Dayaras in the ancient churches.

## **LESSON 32**

### **EASTERN SPIRITUALITY**

Eastern spirituality means the spirituality that generally exists in the eastern churches and eastern countries. Eastern spirituality is based on the Holy Bible and is a continuation of the spirituality of the 1<sup>st</sup> century early Christian church. Compared to western spirituality, eastern spirituality has its own special characteristics. Eastern churches give importance to the spirituality which each believer feels through the holy sacraments and which he experiences in his life in this world itself. Since the presence of God and divine actions through the Holy Spirit are realities of the present day, working of the Holy Spirit is given great importance in eastern spirituality.

While westerners consider spirituality and understanding God as two different subjects, knowing God based on spirituality is the eastern way of thinking. While westerners separate divine things and worldly things, easterners like to merge divinity into worldliness. Westerners give importance to intellectual thinking and written codes of practice while easterners give



importance to the divine intervention that is beyond human intelligence. That's the reason why easterners see and feel divine presence during the holy sacraments. Westerners consider spirituality as something special to each individual while easterners give a social outlook to spirituality. In short, eastern spirituality is based on eastern theological understanding of God and is different from western spirituality, because eastern and western spirituality give importance to different facts and aspects.

## **IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT EASTERN SPIRITUALITY**

### **1. Centered on the TRINITY**

The spirituality, which exists in eastern churches, is centered on the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The spirituality of western churches is based mainly on Jesus Christ. We can see God's boundless love in the creation of earth and man. Total submission in front of this love, and to sing and praise him, is the real spirituality. Man receives God's protection and blessings through Christ. Every baptized believer is considered to have received the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

### **2. Giving importance to the working of the Holy Spirit**

Stressing the importance of the working of the Holy Spirit in individuals and in the church is characteristic of the spirituality in eastern churches. Holy Trinity works today among the believers and fulfills the holy sacraments, which are the mediums of salvation, through the Holy Spirit. Eastern churches believe that the holy sacraments reach their climax when the Holy Spirit dwells on them. Apostle Paul has defined Christian life as a life in the Holy Spirit. What he meant is that God's Holy Spirit lives in each faithful person and leads him.

### **3. Eastern spirituality is based on sacraments**

Eastern churches have stressed the great importance of the holy sacraments. Eastern churches see the sacraments as the medium towards salvation. By receiving the holy sacraments, each person becomes a part of the spirituality of Jesus Christ. By participating in the Holy Sacraments, each person is transformed into an inseparable part of the salvation that Jesus Christ defined. A person who receives the sacraments grows in spirit and is led by spirit to the completeness of Jesus Christ. This growth starts from the holy baptism, which is the sacrament of being 'born again'.

A person who receives the holy baptism is released from the clan of old Adam, who was deep in sins, and joins the tribe of Jesus Christ who is the second Adam, and his new generation of humans. At the time of baptism, as a symbol of receiving the Holy Spirit, anointment is done with the 'Holy Mooron'. The meaning is that a person who is baptized gets rid of his old sinful self, joins the church that is the body of Jesus Christ, and becomes the son or daughter of God the Father. A baptized person, being a child of God, is transformed and is obliged to walk in the way of the Holy Spirit.

Eastern churches stress that a believers' spirituality must absorb the inner meaning of holy baptism. For a believer who is born again through holy baptism and anointment of Holy Mooron, Holy Qurbana is the sacrament of participating in the mystery of Jesus Christ. In the Qurbana of eastern churches, importance is given to coming of John the Baptist who was predecessor to Jesus, birth of Jesus, His public ministry, crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension to heaven and His second coming. By participating in the Qurbana, a believer becomes a part of all the above events. The sacrament of the Holy Qurbana is above the limitations of place and time. The curtain between earth and heaven during the holy sacrament of Qurbana is open. Here, through forgetting oneself, the opportunity to enjoy heavenly bliss and eternity is achieved. At that moment, a believer feels the presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and sings praises of the Holy Trinity along with the angels in heaven. It happens on earth but it is a heavenly feast. Since it is beyond human comprehension, our fathers defined it as a mystery. In the Holy Qurbana, the body of Christ which is the church, and the spiritual body of Christ which is his flesh and blood, become one. Since the church is the worldly body of Christ, it tries to grow spiritually towards Christ by partaking of His spiritual body. This is the special feature of eastern spirituality.

#### **4. Eastern spirituality is based on worship.**

Worship brings man closer to God. Even if a person is in service of man, if his relationship with God is not getting stronger, his spirituality is incomplete. Worship-based service to humanity is special to eastern spirituality. Society can exist only if the worldly and godly part of spirituality complement each other.

## **5. Eastern spirituality stresses the importance of learning theology**

Eastern spirituality was not confined to rituals and traditions alone. It gave equal importance to learning theology. Regarding Syrian churches, the theological universities of Edessa and Nisibis bear good evidence to this fact. Eastern spirituality has a clear-cut theological base.

### **Conclusion**

In Christian thoughts, the basis of spirituality is visualizing God. To achieve spirituality, participation in the incarnation of God is necessary. Experience of complete transformation of man is the basis of Old Testament spirituality, but in New Testament it has to be understood based on the relationship of God and Jesus, and above all in the participation of the mystery of incarnation. In the visions of church fathers, spirituality was the participation in this mystery of incarnation.

Concerning eastern churches, there existed a spirituality based on eastern understanding of theology. The essence of this is the sacramental spirituality. One must strive to see God through the holy sacraments. It is our responsibility to create a working style suitable to the present day situation based on God's love and giving equal importance to both worship and human service. Let us pray to God to modernize the world with our life in Jesus Christ strengthened through Qurbana and other sacraments.

### **Questions:**

1. What are the main differences between eastern and western spirituality?
2. The central point of eastern spirituality is the Holy Trinity – Explain.
3. How does eastern spirituality stress the working of the Holy Spirit?
4. Explain how eastern spirituality is based on sacraments?
5. How do the eastern churches establish the relationship between the Holy Qurbana and spirituality?
6. Give a short account of the main attributes of eastern spirituality.

## THE DIVIDED CHURCHES

As capital of the empire and being a big city, Rome was famous and important from the beginning. The Episcopa of Rome also was important. When Constantinople became the capital of the eastern empire, that city also gained importance.

When the cities of Rome and Constantinople were important as centers of power and administration, Antioch and Alexandria became famous as centers of learning and knowledge. The learned theologians of Antioch and Alexandria took the responsibility of establishing and explaining the faith and doctrines at the three councils. Mar Athanasius and Mar Koorilose were the leaders for the same.

The European churches of Rome and Constantinople did not achieve a theological growth comparable to that of the churches of Antioch and Alexandria so at the council meetings when matters of faith and doctrine were discussed, the representatives from the European churches could not play an active part. The church in Rome which was politically important did not like this state of affairs.

When Constantine became Emperor, period of persecution for the Christians came to an end and the golden period started. Along with this greed for power and rivalry among churches also grew. The church in Rome, which claimed more importance, tried various ways to establish its supremacy over the other churches. They thought that this would give them an opportunity to grow equal to the churches of Antioch and Alexandria in the field of theology. Leo, the Episcopa of Rome was waiting for an opportunity for this and it happened when it was decided to hold the council at Ephesus to discuss about the heresy of Evuthicos. Leo saw it as .the chance to establish Rome's position in the field of theology. Therefore though he did not attend, Leo sent an essay (Tome) through his representatives, to be read at the council. Mar Diascorus, president of the council did not allow the 'tome' to be read at the council as many of the ideas in it were similar to that of Nestorius which were already declared as cursed at the council of Ephesus in AD 431.

For Leo, who was trying to establish the supremacy of the Roman church, this was a big blow. Leon's later efforts were to take revenge on Dioscorus. Leo wished to defeat Alexandria which was the leader in theology and to establish the influence and supremacy of Rome there also. To achieve this he decided to conduct another council and to make all the churches agree to the 'tome'. His wish was not fulfilled during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, who was the ruler that time.

Emperor Theodosius died soon and Emperor Martian who became the next ruler agreed to Leo and called another council. This council started in AD 451 at Chalcedon. Instead of AD and BC modern day writers prefer to use the terms CE. (Christian Era) and BCE (Before Christian Era).

**Aims of this council was:**

1. To defeat Dioscorus
2. To accept the Tome of Leo
3. To establish the supremacy of Rome in the field of Theology.

The council publicly acquitted him and declared him guilty. Leon's tome was accepted. So the Nestorian argument of dual personality, which the council of Ephesus in AD 431 rejected, was accepted with some alterations.

Nestorius argued that Jesus Christ had two personalities and two kinds of nature. The decision at the council of Ephesus in AD 431 was that the personality of Jesus Christ cannot be separated as human and god and his nature into human and divine. Mar Koorilose explains it as 'one nature of the incarnate word'.

Evuthicos taught that human nature and divine nature merges and become one but church has not accepted this. Human nature does not become divine nature and divine nature does not become human. They do not mingle or merge and become one and one nature does not destroy the other. Instead divine nature in completeness and human nature in completeness except for sin are inseparable in one essence. This is the teaching of our church.

Therefore after incarnation also Jesus Christ was complete man and complete God. After this inseparable union, actions and nature of Christ cannot be separated as some human and some divine. It is against the faith to teach

that divine nature of Jesus raised Lazarus from death and that it was his human nature that lamented on the cross because in Jesus Christ there is inseparable union of divine and human natures in their completeness.

According to the Tome of Leo the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ are separate and all his activities can be divided into human and divine. This theory was completely against the convictions of the AD 431 council. So the churches of Antioch and Alexandria did not agree to the decisions of the Chalcedon synod.

The four oriental churches including the Syrian orthodox church follow the faith decided at the AD 431 Ephesus council. After the Chalcedon council in 451 AD which the oriental orthodox churches never accepted, the Roman church and the eastern orthodox churches which came under Constantinople misunderstood and considered them as accepting the false faith. Recently the discussions which took place between the Catholic Church and oriental orthodox churches have cleared the misunderstandings. The crowning example of this is the common proclamation which Pope, supreme head of Catholic Church and H.H.Patriarch, supreme head of Syrian Orthodox Church made in 1982 about the single personality faith.

The church which stood in one faith was split into two after the Chalcedon council. Church in Rome and church in Constantinople accepted the Chalcedon council and the decisions taken there. (But the council held at Constantinople in AD 553 came to the conclusion that many of the decisions at the Chalcedon council were wrong and so some decisions were reformed and some discarded). Churches in Antioch and Alexandria did not accept the decisions of the Chalcedon council. So the church was divided into two (1) Those accepting the Chalcedon faith and (2) Those not accepting the Chalcedon faith. The oriental orthodox churches have so far stood steadfast under the faith proclaimed at the three councils of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus. But the western church and the Eastern Orthodox Church (Byzantine) held councils later and made changes in the faith and broke away from the ancient church.

The churches who did not accept the double personality theory are known as the oriental orthodox churches today. Syrian orthodox, Coptic orthodox, Armenian orthodox and Abyssinian orthodox (Ethiopian) churches belong to this group. All these churches have the same faith and liturgy.

## Questions

1. What is the teaching of Nestor and Evuthicos about the nature of Jesus?
2. In Tome of Leo what is different to the decisions at the A.D. 431 Ephesus council ?
3. What is our faith about the nature of Jesus Christ?
4. Which are the orthodox churches with the same faith?

## LESSON 34

### THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

Syrian Orthodox Church is under the throne of Antioch. Of all the Patriarchal thrones organized at the Nicea council (Antioch, Alexandria and Rome) the throne of Antioch is the most ancient. It is important to note that the followers of Jesus Christ were called Christians for the first time in Antioch. Also it was at Antioch that St. Peter established his apostolic throne.

In the early centuries of the Christian Era, Antioch had a very important place. Antioch was the third biggest town of the Roman empire. According to E.S.Burchiar in his book about the history of Antioch, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century 5 lakhs of people lived in 1 lakh houses in a radius of 15 miles. Antioch in the 4<sup>th</sup> century was much bigger than many of the modern Indian cities today.

Antioch was the center of Greek culture and learning. It was famous as a center of trade also. Prominent countries of that time like Greece, Egypt and Syria had trade relationships with Antioch. Since traders from various parts of the world visited Antioch, travel and communications with other parts of the world was easy from Antioch. All these must have prompted St. Peter to establish his throne at Antioch.

From B.C.300 when Emperor Seluchus Nicater established Antioch till the 6<sup>th</sup> century when Persia conquered it, Antioch remained famous. When the great Emperor Constantine became Christian, he built a beautiful church in Antioch. Many Emperors after him followed the tradition. Also the rich Christians of that time built many churches. So till the Persians and Arabs destroyed it, Antioch continued to be the center of Christian culture.

From 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards the town of Antioch and the Christian church became weak. There were four reasons for this :-

1. Persecution from the double personality (dyophysite) group after the Chalcedon council.
2. The earthquake in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.
3. The Persian attack in AD 538. The city was nearly completely destroyed in this attack.
4. In AD 638 when Arabs invaded and conquered Antioch, it became isolated from the Christian world. It was AD 538, the same year of demise of Mar Sevarios that Antioch was destroyed completely. After him the throne was shifted from Antioch.

### **Dayara Movement**

Many fathers till Yacoob Burdana suffered much to keep the faith pure. All of these fathers were people belonging to Dayara. At least from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Dayara movement started in Syrian Orthodox church. Though inmates of these Dayaras are few these days due to unfavourable circumstances, for centuries they were the centers of spirituality, knowledge and service.

### **Dayara of Mar Mathai**

The Dayara of Mar Mathai situated near Mosul in Iraq was founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and is an important one. Apart from Mar Mathai who established it, Abraham, Zaki and Daniel were the other leaders in the Dayara in the beginning. One Arabic historian has recorded that there were about thousand people who lived a Dayara life there. In the middle ages this Dayara was well known as a centre of learning. One of the most famous ascetics of the Syrian church, Maphriyano Bar Hebraya lived here for long time and wrote many books while living there. Since the 10<sup>th</sup> century, for a long time it was the headquarters of the Maphriyano. We lost all the invaluable books in the library. They are kept in places like the British Library, Vatican library and in different places of Europe where ancient manuscripts are kept. Only few original hand written books of not so much importance are there now. Thousands visit the place as tourists and pilgrims.



## **Dayara of Mar Barsouma**

Another important Dayara was the one established by Mar Barsouma who was called to eternal rest in AD 457. He was respected by everybody. Though he was not a Metropolitan he held an important place than many of the Metropolitans that time. Emperor Theodosius specially invited him to take part in the 449 Ephesus council to discuss the heresy of Evuthicos. Of all the people who attended the council he was the only one who was not a Metropolitan. The church has acknowledged his purity and his name is included in the 5<sup>th</sup> Tubden where the deceased fathers are remembered though he was not a Metropolitan.

Since the 8<sup>th</sup> century (some historians say 9<sup>th</sup> century) till 1239 our Patriarchs lived in this dayara. Michael the Syrian who wrote our church history lived in this Dayara (1166-99). Before becoming Maphriyano Bar Hebraya also lived in this Dayara. In the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Kurd tribal people destroyed the Dayara. It was not renovated again.

## **Dayara of Mar Haniya**

Another important Dayara called 'Dayara of Haniya' was established by Mar Haniya the Metropolitan of Mardine in AD 800. From the beginning itself there were 80 inmates there. The library there made it world famous. From 1293 onwards the Patriarchs used to live there. Of the inmates who were members of this Dayara there were 21 Patriarchs, 9 Maphriyano and not less than 130 bishops.

There were Dayaras for nuns also. Most of them got destroyed though some are still existing.

Apart from the people who lived together in Dayaras, there were ascetics who lived in caves. There were others who lived ascetic life on high rising pillars. Such people were called Destuno Mar. Semavoon Destoona whose name is mentioned in the 5<sup>th</sup> Tubaden is the first one to do that (389-459). Since he had special gifts and powers wherever he went people went in search of him. So it was to avoid disturbance from people while meditating that he decided to meditate from the top of a pillar which was 60 feet tall. But soon the place became thickly populated.

Once Emperor Theodosius sent a group of Metropolitans to Semavoon Destono, requesting him to go and live in the palace of the Roman Emperor. He refused the request. He was interested in meditating in the most difficult way. While living in Dayara once he was sent out of the Dayara by the in-charge for self-inflicting serious injuries. Later the in-charge regretted and called him back.

When Semavoon Destono died in 459AD, six Metropolitans and 600 soldiers kept vigil for the body. The body was taken to a place called Kasiyanoos first. Later the body was taken to the headquarters of the Patriarchs and buried there.

Following his footsteps many used to meditate standing on top of pillars. The practice was prevalent in African and European churches also. Mar Michael used to meditate from the pillar till the age of 105 when he died. In 19<sup>th</sup> century also there were ascetics who followed the practice.

Syria and neighboring regions where people of single faith lived came under the rule of the Arabs in 7<sup>th</sup> century. With this the persecution from the Chalcedonians ended and there was peace in the church. The only condition of the Arab rulers was that the Christians should not work against Islam religion and its rulers. All non-Muslims had to pay tax also. This cannot be considered a burden, Military service was compulsory for the Muslims. Because the Christians were exempted from this they had to pay tax instead. Priests and ascetics were exempted from tax.

The Muslim rule before the crusade helped the Christians in many ways. The Muslim rulers were keen to make use of the knowledge of the Christians. That was good for the Christians. Secondly since the countries of Syria, Persia and Mesopotamia got united politically gospel spread to many places.

Since there was no more support from the Royals the double personality people lost their strength and the need to confront them was not there anymore. The peaceful atmosphere allowed them to improve their pursuits in other fields. In fields like science, medicine, Astrology, history and theology Syrian Christians made significant contributions.

The first Maphriyano Mar Maruthja, Musebar Keepa and Mar Yacoob of Edessa lived during this time.

Since Christians were more educated than the Arabs they held important positions under the Khalifas. Their growth in the field of trade helped them financially also. Although few rulers were against the Christians generally till the crusade, the Muslim dominated period was a time of peace and progress for the Christians.

### **Questions**

1. What is the importance of Antioch in the history of the Church?
2. Write about the ancient Dayara movement in the Syrian Orthodox Church.
3. What were the considerations given to the Christians during the Muslim rule?

## **LESSON 35**

### **THE COPTIC CHURCH**

The Patriarchal throne at Alexandria was established at the Council of Nicea. Today, the Church which comes under this throne is known as the Coptic Church. Most of the members of this Church are Egyptians. It is called the Coptic Church because Coptic language is used for the liturgy. Till the 13<sup>th</sup> century this was the language that people spoke.

The land called Misraim in Bible is the Egypt of today. This land has a lot of connection with the Bible and the history of Israel. In the Bible there is reference to Abraham going and living in Egypt. Israeli people grew in number while in Egypt. Apart from all these, according to the instruction of the angel, Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus to Egypt. So this land had the fortune to make a safe place for the Lord Savior of the world.

The traditional belief is that Apostle Mark established the Church in Egypt as instructed by Apostle Paul. The probable time of his arrival in Egypt is between AD 48 and 61. Historians are unable to pinpoint the exact year. But it is sure that he was martyred in AD 68.

A cobbler named Anianus was the first person to believe in Jesus on hearing the gospel from Mark. Later his family members and many others believed in Jesus. The growth of Christianity amazed others. They wanted to kill Mark. Mark sensing the danger wanted the Church to grow even if he was

killed. So he ordained Anianus as the Episcopa. He ordained three priests and seven deacons. After the time of Mark, Anianus led the Church. The Coptic Church considers Mark as the first Patriarch and Anianus as the second Patriarch.

In AD 68 in a place called Bokalis, while celebrating Easter Mark and other believers were attacked by enemies. Mark was tied in ropes and pulled along the streets. He was tortured the following day also and he died as a martyr on the next day of Easter.

### **The School of Theology at Alexandria**

In the early centuries, all the achievements in theological learning and faith can be attributed to the school of theology in Alexandria. Tradition says that it was established by deciple Mark, but there is no document to prove when it was established. For centuries it remained as the theological capital of the world. This school gave birth to many accomplished leaders. World famous learned theologians used to be in charge of the school.

Pantenus was the first most important person who was in charge of the school (It is believed that he died in AD 190). While he was the head, The Patriarch of Antioch Demetrious sent him to India to spread the gospel. After Pantenus, Mar Clemes, Oregon and Dionysios the great were in charge of the institution. Fathers Mar Athanasius and Mar Koorilose studied in this school.

Later, due to the persecution of the Arabs, this school became weak. A school similar to that or learned people equal to the ones at that time were never found in the history of Church again. Absence of priests with good theological knowledge led to the weakening of the Church. Today this Church is on a revival path. Regarding steadfastness in faith and in Dayara movement this Church was always in the forefront.

### **Persecution faced by the Coptic Church**

Coptic Church did not grow up under the care of the royals or due to religious tolerance. Kings who were idol worshippers, westerners with the double personality theory and later non Christian rulers tortured this Church.

During the rule of Patriarch Dematrius1 (188-230), persecution by Emperor Septimius Severus was the first persecution by a ruler. In 202 he

passed a law prohibiting conversion to Christianity. He sealed the school at Alexandria (secretly it continued to function ). Many, including father of Oregon became martyrs. Still the Church continued to prosper. In 211 by the time the Emperor died the number of bishops increased from 3 to 20.

In 250, during the reign of Emperor Deiyus, the next persecution started. He passed a law by which everyone had to obtain a certificate from the regional magistrate that offerings were given to idols. Thousands who refused were martyred. This torture continued till 262 when Emperor Paulinos passed the order of religious tolerance.

In 302, Emperor Diocletian started persecuting the Church again. All the believers were expelled from the army. Churches were demolished, books were destroyed and wealth of the Christians confiscated. Christians were terminated from government jobs and all Church meetings were prohibited. Those who objected were given death penalty. Christians protested against these laws. Terrible persecution was the result. Including Peter I the 17<sup>th</sup> Patriarch, many were martyred. It is said that the number of martyrs was around one and a half lakhs. With the famous Edict of Milan by Emperor Constantine , persecution from gentile kings came to an end.

It was towards the Alexandrian Patriarch Mor Diascoros who presided the 449 Ephesus ecumenical council that Pope Leon had the maximum hatred. After the Chalcedon council, with the support of the Emperor, the Roman Church started torturing Diascoros and the believers who were with him. The aim of Rome was to bring the double personality believers into authority and by that to bring the whole of the Church under the double personality faith. Diascoros was ousted and sent in exile. Instead, the double faith follower Proterias was made Patriarch. But the faithful did not accept it. They chose Timotheos Ilurus as the Patriarch. He was also exiled. Then the split in the Church worsened and the Church parted ways, one group as 'Melkites' and other group as single personality supporters.

In 482 Emperor Seno Herotiburn tried to bring unity in the Church through proclamation but did not succeed. In A.D 567 Emperor Justin II acknowledged both groups.

In 630, the Church again had to bear the persecution from Cyrus, Patriarch of the Melkites. He had the support of Emperor Hiraclius. Many including

Menaze the brother of Patriarch Binyamin were tortured and killed. Cyrus with all military preparations visited each town and village and put many faithful in jail and killed many others. He confiscated the wealth of the Christians and looted Churches. He had the same policy towards Dayaras and the inmates there. Bishops like Victor and Cyrus were scared and joined the Melkite group but most of the priests, Church members and Metropolitans faced this persecution bravely.

In 641, Arabs invaded Alexandria. and they levied heavy taxes on the Christians. Patriarch Alexandrios II was put in jail and his wealth was confiscated. In 705 Khalifa Abdul Malik banned the Coptic language and made learning of Arabic compulsory. So by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Coptic language was no longer used as conversation language. Now it is used only for liturgy.

Persecutions like these weakened the Church. Since there were obstacles to the learning of theology and Bible, the Church became weak and never regained its old glory.

### **Coptic-Catholic relationship**

### **Coptic-Catholic relationship**

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, from the time of Patriarch Koorilose III (1235-1243) onwards, there were attempts to bring the Coptic Church under the Catholic Church. In the Leon council (1274) and in the Florence council (1439) conducted under the Roman Catholic Church, representatives of the Coptic Church took part. Those who took part in the Florence council denounced the single personality faith and pledged allegiance to the double personality faith. A deed was also signed there. But the people objected to this decision taken by the authorities only and in practical terms the decision became null.

Later during the time of Patriarch Yuhanon XIV, Gabriel VII and Gabriel VIII, there were attempts to bring the Church under Rome. All those attempts failed. In 1630 one mission belonging to the Capuchin missionaries of the Catholic Church was established in Egypt. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, work of the European missionaries caused trouble in the Church. In 1899, Pope Leon XIII joined the Catholics and ordained a Patriarch for the Coptic Church members. There are only very few members under this Patriarch.

## **Church Associations**

In 1875 a council called Majlis – Al- Mili was established by the Church members. The council argued that they wanted the authority to rule and to decide who should be ordained as priests. But the priests and one group of Church members opposed this move. But things got worse and in 1892 the Patriarch was ousted and forced to live in a monastery.

The ordinary people could not accept this act against the Patriarch. The faithful protested strongly. Though the Patriarch was brought back into authority 5 months later, the conflict between the Patriarch and Majlis- al- Mili continued. In 1954 the Patriarch was again ousted. Because of the troubles which followed, the government imposed many restrictions and the Church lost many rights.

## **THE COPTIC CHURCH TODAY**

The headquarters of the Church today is Cairo in Egypt. Though in the early days the Patriarchs used to live in Alexandria, for various reasons they shifted to the Dayara of Makarios in Nithria in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and later in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to Cairo.

About a million people belonging to Egypt, Sudan other African countries and neighboring Middle Eastern countries belong to this Church. The early gospel work helped the Church to grow to this dimension. The people, who fled to far away places due to persecution, spread the gospel in all the places they settled and made the Church grow.

Under the Patriarch there are 39 dioceses, 12 monasteries and 6 convents. The committee consisting of Church members, priests and Metropolitans choose the Patriarch. The Patriarch carries out the Mooron Koodasha and ordains Metropolitans. Synod has the main role in administrative matters. There is a committee to help the Patriarch in administration. It is a rule that those considered for the post of Bishop should have completed 50 years and only those who have completed 25 years are ordained as priests.

Different from us, the Coptic Church celebrates Christmas on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Easter is celebrated one week after the Passover of the Jews.

## Questions

1. What caused the Coptic Church to split?
2. What is the importance of the theological school at Alexandria?
3. Write a short note about the administrative set up of the Coptic Church.

### LESSON 36

## THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Armenia is the first country which accepted Christianity as the official religion. In A.D 313, emperor Constantine of Rome became a Christian. Much before that in 301, the king, officials and the people of Armenia accepted Christianity as their religion. This country which was first to accept the religion was also the first one to suffer persecution. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were cruelly persecuted. During the First World War about one-third of the Armenian population was mass murdered. There cannot be these many numbers of martyrs in any other Church.

According to the traditional belief of the Armenian Church, apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew were the apostles who spread the gospel in Armenia. In the early centuries itself, it was an accepted fact in many Churches that Bartholomew went and spoke in Armenia. But there are differences of opinion regarding who St. Thaddeus was. According to one tradition, he was the brother of St. Thomas called Didimos and according to another tradition he was Judas Thaddeus with the other name Levi.

St. Thaddeus preached the gospel in Armenia for 23 years from AD 43. St. Bartholomew preached there from AD 60 to 68. Because of their gospel work, many believed in Jesus Christ. This led to the enmity of the gentiles. In AD 66, Thaddeus and in AD 68 Bartholomew was martyred. It is believed that many others were martyred along with them. In the place called Arthas, the grave of Thaddeus and in the place called Alpak the grave of Bartholomew is still present.

So, even though established apostolically, there are no documents about the condition of the Church for two and a half centuries. Probably, the Church was growing because even in AD 301 there are signs to indicate that Christianity was the most important religion in Armenia.



It was a person called Gregor Partov who was responsible for the conversion of the emperor and thereby that of the whole nation. He was called Lusaverich (person spreading light) by the Armenians. More than one reason led Emperor Tiridatus III to the conversion. When the Emperor was sick, Gregor who was in jail miraculously cured him. The encouragement of the Emperor's sister was another reason. The martyrdom of 37 nuns influenced the king a lot. The king wanted to marry one of the nuns who reached Armenia fearing persecution. But the nun was not willing. This led to the murder of 37 nuns. Their bravery and their strong faith in Jesus led the king to the Christian religion.

With the effort of King Tiridatus III and Gregor most of the people in the country believed in Jesus. Though Gregor was a lay man, due to his contributions for spreading the gospel, in AD 302 he was ordained as Bishop. He was appointed as Catholicos by Tiridatus III and the Metropolitan of Casarea, Leorance ordained him. When Gregor came back as Metropolitan in the king's chariot accompanied by the army, he was welcomed by the king himself. Many who witnessed this became Christians.

The message spread very fast during the time of Gregory. The king Tiridatus was with him during many of his journeys to spread the gospel. Gentiles joined the Church in large numbers. Many of their temples were converted into places of Christian worship. When Gregory was the Catholicos, by-laws were written for the Church. Canons also were established. Church was divided into different dioceses, headquarters built and Bishops ordained for each. He sent missionaries to Georgia. In short, Gregor Partov was one of the greatest missionaries and administrator the world has ever seen. In 325 he was called to his heavenly abode.

From the time of Gregor Partov, the head of Armenian Church was known as Catholicos. After the death of Gregor Partov, his son Aristaris became Catholicos. Later his elder brother Vruthanis took over. Later for a long time dynastic succession followed. The period between AD 353-373, when Nersis the great ruled, is an important period in the history of the Armenian Church. This period and the period between 387 and 439 when St. Isahak ruled can be called the golden period in the history of the Armenian Church. At the synod which Nersis convened in 365, important decisions were taken regarding administration in the Church and in the government. The synod banned marriage between blood relatives. All pagan customs and rituals were strictly forbidden.

Tax was levied and the Synod decided that the money should be used for building hospitals, leprosy sanitariums, and houses for blind people, orphans and widows, rest houses for travelers, and monasteries for Dayara people. As a result, about 2000 such institutions came up in the country. So, the Church was shining as the light of the whole country of Armenia.

The rule of St. Isaac was a period of growth, culturally and spiritually. It was because of his effort that the Armenian language had a script and the Bible and other books of worship were translated into the Armenian language. Until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Armenian language had no script. The colloquial language differed in many places.

Because of the above reasons, Greek and Syriac bibles were used. There were no books in the Armenian language. So, during worship, there were people who were specially trained to read the Bible and to translate it into the local language. A priest called Mesrom was appointed to make the script for the Armenian language. Later, a group consisting of 100 people was appointed to translate the Bible. They translated from Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) and peshita (Syrian Bible) into the Armenian language Bible. It took the effort of 100 people for 29 years for this task.

The liturgy which Mar Baselios organized for baptism, marriage, burial and consecration of the Church were also translated into Armenian language. Along with this, life history of the holy fathers and the books they wrote were also translated. To teach the people to read and write, educational institutions were established by the Church throughout the country. With the spread of the Bible, and other spiritual messages, superstitions and rituals became less. This also helped to prevent heresies.

It was in the provinces of the Roman Empire that most of the early century Christians lived. Arguments and discussions regarding faith took place between people or Churches within the Roman Empire. Armenia which was not a Roman province was not much affected by these arguments. Though the council at Nicea was the only one they attended, they consider the councils at Constantinople and Ephesus as affecting them also. In AD 435, at Ashtishath, a regional Synod was convened and the decisions taken at the Ephesus Synod accepted upon. The word "theokos" (mother of God) describing Mother Mary was also accepted.

The Armenian representatives did not take part in the controversial chalcedonic council of AD 451 Oct 8. That was a time when the Armenian Church was facing serious persecution. Most of the Metropolitans were either exiled or were put in prison. But later, when they came to know about the decisions at the Synod, they rejected them as it was against their faith.

In AD 506, the Synod at Dwin officially rejected the chalcedonic council and the decisions taken there. In 564, another synod was convened at Dwin and reconfirmed that the decisions at chalcedonic Synod were wrong and that those at 431 Ephesus Synod were correct. In 726, a Synod was convened at Mansikert and declared the Monophysite faith as the official faith of the Church. This meeting which was held with Howanus Ottsoon Catholicose as the president was attended by the Metropolitans from the Syrian Church also.

There were attempts many times to bring the Armenian Church under Constantinople and to make them accept the dual nature theory. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Hiraclis tried to do the same. In AD 870, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch called Fotias wrote a long letter to the then Armenian Patriarch Zaccharias asking him to accept the chalcedonic council decisions. The Catholicos wrote back that the chalcedonic decisions were not acceptable to him as they were against the true faith and against the decisions of the three Ecumenical councils.

Later during the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the Armenian Church established relationship with the Catholic Church it did not change the faith. It was the enmity towards the Arabs and the distrust in the Greeks that prompted the Armenians to have contact with the Catholics. Even under this situation, the Armenian Church did not accept the dual nature theory of the Roman Catholics. In 1248 when the representative of the pope asked 15 questions regarding faith, the Catholicos took quite a different stand from that of Rome. In 1268 the Armenian Church completely rejected the 'filioque clause' of the western Church

The three Ecumenical Councils have agreed upon the belief that the Holy Spirit comes from the father and is respected and praised along with the father and son. The same we repeat in the Nicene Creed. The Catholic Church later changed this. They brought the new theory that the Holy Spirit comes from the father and the son and they made the changes accordingly in the creed. The added portion in the creed is known as the 'filioque clause'. Since this new

theory of the Roman Church was not Biblical and not agreeing with theology, all the other Churches existing at that time rejected it including the Church in Constantinople which stood with the Roman Church till that time. The Churches known as the eastern Orthodox Churches broke away from the Catholic Church in 1054 on this issue.

15 Churches are known as the Eastern Orthodox Churches or the Byzantine Churches. The four small Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople who accept the dual nature theory and the autocephalous Churches of Russia, Cyprus, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Poland and Sinai belong to this group.

In 18<sup>th</sup> century with the help of the French, the Catholic Church again tried to bring the Armenian Church under the control of Rome through negotiations and when that failed, using force they tried to bring the Armenians under their control. They abducted Patriarch Avedik and in 1711 tortured and killed him in France as he did not denounce the true faith. The Bishops of Mardin and Aleppo decided to join the Catholic Church for personal benefits. But the people continued in their ancient faith and rejected the Bishops. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV ordained a Catholic Patriarch for the Armenian Church but only very few people accepted this Patriarch who was the representative of the Roman Catholic Church. Now also there is a small community which follows this Patriarch.

The Armenian Church suffered much due to the change of regimes. During the rule of Arabs and Ottoman Turks there was much persecution in the Church. The head of the Church, the Patriarch, did not even have a proper headquarters during this time. During attacks and persecutions the headquarters had to be shifted often.

There was mass murder of the Armenians during the rule of Sultan between 1894-95. It is written in history that blood of the murdered Armenians was flowing like river. On Christmas day in 1895, 1200 Armenians were burnt to death in the Church in Ulfa. More than 2500 villages were set on fire. About a lakh of Armenians fled the country and became refugees.

The Armenian Church developed its liturgy based on the liturgy of St. Basil the Great, Mar Evanyios with the golden tongue and that of the Syrian Church. While all the other oriental orthodox Churches use sour bread for Qurbana, the Armenian Church uses bread which is not sour. They do not have

the tradition of mixing water in wine. Priests wear black robes and caps. Dayara priests wear head dress also.

In one year 157 days are for fasting. Christmas is celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Like in our Church, there is Qurbana on Sundays and on all maranaya feast days. In big congregations there is Qurbana on Saturdays also.

### **Questions**

1. Which was the first country that accepted Christianity as its official religion?
2. Describe the achievements of the Armenian Church under Catholicos Gregor.
3. Why was the rule of St. Isaac a period of spiritual reformation for the Armenian Church?
4. What were the various persecutions that the Armenian Church faced from time to time?

### **LESSON 37**

## **ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Ethiopian Church is one of the oldest in the world. It is the largest of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Opinions of historians differ as to when Christianity reached Ethiopia. It is believed that long before they became Christians, even during the time of King Solomon, the Ethiopians used to worship one God only. When queen Sheba married King Solomon, worshipping one God reached that country. Later Menelik I the son of queen Sheba reached Jerusalem and met his father. He was given the title 'Lion of Judea'. Legend is that through Queen Sheba and King Menelik, the Ethiopians started believing in one God.

The incident of Philip and Eunuch points to the fact that gospel reached Ethiopia in the 1<sup>st</sup> century itself (Acts 8:26-40). But till the 4<sup>th</sup> century not much gospel work was done in Ethiopia.

The Coptic missionaries Frumentius and Eddesius put the foundation for the Ethiopian Church. It was not their personal decision to go to Ethiopia for gospel work. It can be said that God led them there for it.

Merchants from Alexandria, Frumentius and Eddesius started on a journey to India in a merchant ship. While the ship was sailing through the red sea, there was shipwreck while near the Ethiopian coast. Frumentius and Eddesius were saved by the Ethiopian King Ella Amida's people. The King appointed Eddesius as his wine carrier and Frumentius as his secretary and teacher to the Prince. Frumentius taught Prince Esena Christian faith. When Esena became king, he and his people were baptized and Christianity was officially declared as the religion of the country.

After some time the king allowed Frumentius and Eddesius to go back to their own country. After reaching Alexandria, Frumentius met the Coptic Patriarch Athanasius and requested him to ordain a Metropolitan for Ethiopia. This Athanasius is the one we remember in the 5<sup>th</sup> Thubden. Athanasius anointed Frumentius as the first Metropolitan of Ethiopia. In 356, he reached Ethiopia along with some priests.

Frumentius was member of the Alexandrian Coptic Church. So Ethiopian Church existed as a diocese of the Coptic Church. The Metropolitan known as 'Aboona' and ordained by the Coptic Patriarch used to rule the Ethiopian Church. Though Ethiopia was geographically separate, faith and liturgy was the same as that of the Coptic Church. After the chalcedonic council when there was trouble in the Church, the arrival of Syrian fathers of the Monophysite faith in 480 helped the Ethiopian Church to have a steadfast faith. The Ethiopian Church had connections with the Syrian Orthodox Church also. In about AD 480, nine fathers reached Ethiopia from Syria. They are known as the nine saints. The leader of this group Amba Michael Arashavi started the first monastery in Debra Damo.

The Church achieved tremendous growth during this period. Many monasteries were established during this time. From Greek, Syrian and Coptic languages Christian books were translated into the local language Geez.

For centuries, Ethiopia was ruled by a Christian dynasty which traced their ancestry to King Solomon. The whole of Ethiopia was under this king. But the situation changed with the arrival of the Arabs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. When their power increased the Christians migrated to the mountains and the Muslims occupied the plains.

Details about the history of Church from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century are not clear. The ancient dynasty lost power in between. In AD 920 a Jew came into power and persecuted the Christians. In 960 another Christian dynasty came into power. In 1268 the same dynasty which claimed their ancestry to King Solomon came into power again.

Though the Muslims established power in a major part of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Churches never faced persecution like the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Christians. There are two reasons for this. (1) Christians lived in the mountainous areas and the Muslims in the plains. (2) Most of the times Christian kings were ruling Ethiopia. During the reign of King Shara Jacob the Church achieved great success in its intellectual and missionary pursuits.

### **Relationship with Catholic Church**

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards there were attempts to bring the Ethiopian Church under the Roman Catholic Church. Many missionaries were sent to Ethiopia from Rome for this. In the 1441-42 Florence synod (The Catholic Church synod) Ethiopian Church representatives attended. They accepted the conditions to join the Catholic Church. But since Emperor Shara Jacob and other Church members did not agree, the decisions were never enforced.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were attempts by the catholic missionary Bermudez to make the Ethiopians join the Catholic Church. Bermudez asked King Claudius, the ruler at that time to accept the supremacy of the Pope. But the king requested the Patriarch to send more Metropolitans so that faith is preserved (The headquarters of the Patriarch was at Alexandria in Egypt). Also Bermudez was imprisoned for several months and exiled to Goa.

In 1558 the Catholic Bishop called Ovido reached Ethiopia. He decided to use force to bring the Ethiopians under the Roman Catholic Church. He wrote to Europe to send Portuguese army for the same. But soon Ovido and the other missionaries with him died. So once again the Church was saved from the clutches of the Roman Catholic Church.

Later two missionaries called Padropaes and Antonio were sent to Ethiopia. They were involved in a shipwreck and the Arabs caught them and made them slaves for seven years. Another two missionaries who took up the mission were murdered.

The Arch bishop of Goa Menesis sent a converted Brahmin called D'silva to Ethiopia. Padropaes who escaped from the Arabs also joined him. Taking advantage of the political conflicts at that time in Ethiopia they tried to establish Roman Catholic authority there.

Ethiopia was passing through a political crisis then. From king Malak Sagad I, Prince Jacob forcibly took over the reign. In the hope that if he agreed to Roman supremacy, Rome will help with army, Prince Jacob approached Padropaes. But the faithful refused to change. They stood firm behind Aboona. This conflict continued for about 20 years. When Malak Sagad III became king he declared that everybody should agree to Roman authority.

When the Pope ordained Alphonso Mendez as Patriarch and sent him to Ethiopia, the situation became worse. He excommunicated Aboona and his followers. Mendez visited each and every congregation to make them agree to the Roman supremacy. He baptized the Christians and consecrated the Churches again. The earthly remains of the buried holy fathers were taken out and made unholy. Latin Qurbana was made compulsory instead of the Ethiopian one.

Anyone who protested was persecuted severely. There were riots in the country. In the war at the place called Vayira Dega, 8000 faithful died. Later, even the King turned against Mendez. In 1632 till Basilidez became Emperor, this unpleasant situation continued. As soon as Basilidez became Emperor he exiled the Catholic missionaries. Mendez escaped to Goa. With this there was a temporary stop to the efforts to bring the Ethiopian Church under Rome.

Later also the Catholic Church sent missionaries to Ethiopia. Many were killed. Later there was a proclamation banning the entry of Catholics into Ethiopia. In 1936 when Italy conquered Ethiopia, Catholic missionary activities started again. Many gentiles joined the Catholic Church. There is a small congregation in Ethiopia today which is under the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Coptic Ethiopian Relationship**

From the early days, with the name 'Aboona' the Coptic person ordained by the Coptic Patriarch ruled the Ethiopian Church. Such a system came into existence because the Ethiopian Church was the result of the missionary work of the Coptic Church. So faith, liturgy and administration were the same as that of the Coptic Church.



But Emperor Johannes IV who came into power in 1872 wanted to make the Ethiopian Church an independent one. With this aim the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople was asked to send bishops. But people objected to this. So the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria was asked to send an Arch bishop and 3 bishops.

In 1926 when Aboona Mathews died request was put up to ordain an Ethiopian as the Aboona. After discussion, in 1929 a new administration came into existence. According to this, a Coptic was ordained as Aboona and 4 Ethiopians were ordained as bishops under him. In 1948, an Ethiopian was ordained as Aboona for the first time. On June 29 1959, Baselius became the first Patriarch of Ethiopia. Today the Ethiopian Church is an independent one.

### **Faith and Sacraments**

Since it was established by the Coptic missionaries and nurtured under their care, in faith and liturgy their tradition is followed. They accept only the three Ecumenical councils that are agreed upon by the other three oriental Churches. There is unity with the Syrian Armenian and Coptic Churches regarding trinity and Monophysite theory.

But in worship practices, the Ethiopian Church has its own special features. It is believed that when Menelik I came to Ethiopia, some Jews also went along with him. Probably due to this connection with Solomon there are many Jewish rituals in the Ethiopian Church. Like the Jews Saturday is Sabbath day for the Ethiopians also. According to the Old Testament laws, circumcision, purification, avoiding forbidden food etc still exist. Like the Levi people who danced in front of the tabernacle, a group of people called Debterus dance during processions. They dance holding a T shaped stick in one hand and a musical instrument in the other hand.

Members of the Church are very punctual about sacraments and fasting. About 250 days in one year are fasting days for the Church. Only vegetarian food is consumed during fasting. During fasting days, except on Saturdays and Sundays, till 3pm no food will be eaten.

Primary education is given related to Church and liturgy. Along with the most important subject which is mathematics, Psalms, songs of praise of Jesus

and St. Mary and prayer in geez language are taught. Geez is the ancient language of Ethiopia. It is important only as the language of liturgy. People talk in Amharic language. About three million people are members of this Church. Addis Ababa is the headquarters of the Church. There are 53 ascetic groups in the Church. Christmas is celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Questions**

1. Who laid the foundation for the Ethiopian Church?
2. Describe the efforts made to bring the Ethiopian Church under Roman Church.
3. Describe briefly the faith and rituals of the Ethiopian Church.



