

**MALANKARA JACOBITE SYRIAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**



TEXT BOOK CLASS – VIII

2009



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PREFACE

We are thankful to our Lord Almighty in helping us and guiding us through the work of these Sunday school books. These books are the translations of the “Padamanjari” published by Malankara Jacobite Syrian Sunday School Association.

Children of our community, unable to read and write Malayalam were finding it very difficult to study and understand the faith of our church taught in Malayalam. Even in Kerala, children studying in CBSE and English Medium schools are not able to assimilate Malayalam. Circumstances forced us to have English version for the text books. Now the syllabus has changed that caused the second edition of the text books.

A number of persons contributed to this noble venture. 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 .

We are also grateful to St.Peters Jacobite Syrian Church Baharin who helped us for publishing these text Books in English.

Puthencruz
17.08.2009

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MALANKARA JACOBITE SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Malankara Syrian Sunday School Association was formed in December 27, 1920 at a meeting held at Piravom seminary presided over by St. Paulose Athanasious Metropolitan, known as the "Protector of the True Faith". In 1964 when peace was established in the church M.S.S.A. joined the Sunday School Association of the catholicos faction and continued functioning in the name O.S.S.A.E. But the Catholicos ordained by H.H.the Patriarch in 1964, put forward the claim of a new throne in the church contrary to the true faith and canons of the Church which resulted in the split in the Sunday Association also.

In 1973 a meeting of the Sunday school teachers held in connection with the Patriarchal day decided to reorganize the Sunday Schools which owed allegiance to the Holy Throne of Antioch and All the East. Thus Malankara Jacobite Syrian Sunday school Association was formed in the meeting held at St. Peter's Church, Ernakulam on February 20, 1974. The association byelaw was passed in the meeting held at Baker Memorial School, Kottayam on October 2, 1974. The Association is governed by the byelaws amended and approved by the General Body from time to time and subsequently got registered under the Charitable Societies Act.

H.H. the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East is the Supreme Patron and H.B. the Catholicos is the patron of the Association.

The "Atma Deepam" magazine, an organ of the Association enlightens the souls as the name itself implies. There is an examination wing which controls and conducts the examination from Class I to XII including JSSLC. The JSVBS wing prepares study materials and conducts training camps for teachers for the Vacation Bible School all over India. There is a wing which conducts "Balakalolsavam" at Sunday school, District, Diocese and Association level. Another wing conducts camps for teachers and students. All these wings are functioning from the headquarters. Thus the headquarters at Puthencurz is the nerve centre of various activities of the MJSSA.

M.J.S.S.A. has also started a charity scheme in the name "Mor Baselios Paulose II Catholicos charitable Fund" for the poor and backward.

Plus two course was started for those who passed JSSLC. Syriac language is also taught in Sunday School classes. Several counselling centres are functioning under MJSSA. These were introduced as a Millennium Programme. Spread over in 74 districts there are 600 Sunday Schools, more than 8000 teachers and 60,000 students under MJSSA. No doubt MJSSA has a very important place in the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church in India.

PART I
LESSON 1
PRAYER
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 praise, O God. *Barekhamor.*

ENTE DHEIVAME! NEE ENTE DHEIVAMAKUNNU; NAJN NINAKKAI KATHIRIKKUM.

DAHICHUM VARANDUM VELLATHINAI AGRAHIKUNNA BHOOMIPOLE, ENTE
ALMAVUM NINNE KURICHU DAHICHIRIKYUNNU. ENTE JEDAVUM NINAKKAI
KAATHIRIKUNNU.

NINTE BALAVUM NINTE BAHUMANAVUM KANMAN IPRAKARAM SATHYAMAYITTU
NAJAN NINNE NOKKI

ENTHENNAL NINTE KARUNA JEEVANEKAAL NALLATHAKUNNU; ENTE ADARANGAL
NINNE STHUTHIKKUM

NJAN JEEVANODE IRIKKUMBOL IPRAKARAM NJAN NINNEVA AZTHUKAYUM, NINTE
NAMATHIL ENTE KAIKAL UYARTHUKAYUM CHEYUM.

ENTE ATHMAVU KOZHUPPUM MEDASUM KONDENNAPOLE PUSHTTIYAKUM. ENTE

AYI STHUTHIYULLAADHARANGAL KONDU NINNE MAHATHWAPPEDUTHUKAYUM CHEYUM.

ENTE KIDAKKAYINMEL NJAN NINNE ORTHU; RATHRI KELANGALIL NJAN NINNE
DHYANIKKUKAYUM CHEYTHU.

ENTHANNALNEE ENIKKU SAHAYAKKARANAYITHEERNNU. VINTE CHIRAKUKALUDE NIZHALIL
NJAN MARACKAPPEDUML.

ENTEATHMAVU NINNE PINTHUDARNNU. NINTE VALATHUKAI ENNE THANGUKAYUM CHEYTHU

ENTEATHMAVINE NASIPPIPPAN ANNVESHIKKUNNAVAR BHOOMIYUDE AAZHANGALILEKKU
PRAVESIKKUM.

AVAR VALINU ELPIKKAPPEDUKAYUM KURUNARIKALKKU BHASHNAMAYITHEERUKAYUM
CHEYYUM; RAJAVU DHAIVATHIL SANTHOZHICKUM.

AVANEKKONDU AANAYIDUNNA EVANUM PUKAZHCHAYUNDAKUM. ENTHANNALASATHYAM
PARAYUNNAVARUDE VAYI ADAKKAPPEDUM.

DHAIVAME ! STHUTHI NINAKKU YOGHYAMAKUNNU. BAREKHMORE.

Enyono

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. *Barekhamor.*

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.*

SWARGASTHANAYA RAJAVEE ! NJAN VINTE ADUKKAL VANNU NINTE SIMHASANATHINTE
MUMBAKE VANDHICHU. NINAKKU VIRODHAMAI NJAN CHEYTHA SAKALA PAPANGALUM ENNODU
KSHAMIKKANAME.

UTHAMANUM DHAYALUVUMAYULLAVANE ! NJAN NINNODAPEKSHIKKUKAYUM NINTE
KARUNAKKAI AGRAHIKKUKAYUM CHEYYUNNU. NINAKKU VIRODHAMAI NJAN CHEYTHA SAKALA
PAPANGALUM ENNODU KSHAMIKKANAME.

PRAKASAVUM, PRAKASAPUTHRANUM, PRAKASATHIL VASICHU KONDIRIKKUNNA

VANUMAYULLAVANE ! ANTHAKARATHAL AKRAMIKKAPPEDATHA AA PRAKASATHINU ENNE NEE
YOGHYANAKKANAME. BAREKHMORE.

SWARGATHILUM BHOOMIYILUM MAHATHWAMULLAVANUM SWARGHEEYARUM
BHAVUMEEKARUM THANTE NAMATHE MAHATHWA PPEDUTHUNNAVANUMAYA KARTHAVE
NINAKKU STHUTHY. AMMEN.

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.

Prom 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 praise, O God. *Barekhamor*.

PRAKASATHINTE SRASHTAVINU STHUTHI. KARTHAVINTE BRUTHYANMARE ! STHUTHI
PADUVEEN. NINGAL KARTHAVINTE NAMATHE STHUTHIPPIN.

KARTHAVINTE NAMAM ADIMUTHAL ATHINTE ASTHAMANAM VAREYUM KARTHAVINTE
NAMAM VALIYATHAKUNNU.

KARTHAVU SAKALA JATHIKALKUM MELAI UNNATHANUM AVANTE BAHUMANAM
AKASATHINU MEETHAYAKUNNU.

UYARATHIL VASIKKUKAYUM AZHATHE NOKKUKAYUM CHEYYUNNA NAMMUDE
DAHIVAMAYA KARTHAVINODU THULLYANAI AKASATHILUM BOOMIYILUM ARULLU.

AVANELIYAVANE JANATHINTE PRABHUKKANMARODU KOODE IRUTHENDATHINU KOOPPAYIL
NINNUM UYARTHUNNU. AVAN MACHIYAYAVALE MAKKALUDE SANTHOSHA MULLA MATHAVA
BHAVANATHIL VASIKKUMARAKKUKAYUM CHEYUNNU.

DHAIVAME ! STHUTHI NINAKKU YOGHYAMAKUNNU. BAREKHMORE.

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. *Stomen ...*

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 lepers to make our prayers and offerings sweet smelling fragrances.

Barekhamor.

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.

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.

For the Intercession of the Patron Saint

St. (Name), 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.

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 judgment. 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 Cross9 at Your side.

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 judgment 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. *Moryo rahem 'a lay noo 'adarayn.*

Bo'ootho of Mor Ya'qub

O Lord, open Your great door full of mercy. Hear our petitions and show mercy to our souls.

O glorious light which enlightens all creation in the morning, enlighten our intellects so that we may praise Your mercy.

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.

DHEIVAME ! NJANGALE SAHAYIKKANAME. NJANGAL CHEYTHA PAPNGALIDE THIRAMALAKALUM CHUZHAIKALUM NJANGALE CHUTTYIRIKKUNNU. NJANGAL PAPASAMUDRATHIL MUNGIPPOKATHIRIPPANAYITTU NEE NJANGALKKU SAMADHANA THINTE THURAMUGHAMAYIRIKKANAME. NJANGAL ANUTHAPATHINAYITTU KATHIRIKKUNNU.PATHROSINU ENNAPOLE NJANGALKKU NINTE KAI NEETTITHANNU NJANGALODU KARUNACHEYYANAME. STHOUMEN

Qulo

SUGANDA VASANAYITTU PITHAVAYA DHAIVATHINU THANNETHANNE KAZHCHA YANACHAVANAYA MESIHA THAMPURANE ! NEEMOOLAM NJAGAL DHAIVATHINKAL SUGADA VASANAYAYI THEERUMARAKANAME. NJANGALUDE NAMASKARANGALUM SUSRUSHAKALUM NEE NIRASIKKARUTHE. AVA NINAKKU SUGANDA VASANA VEESUNNA SUGANDA VARGANGALAITHEERANAME. BAREKHMORE.

ATHYUNNATHANTE SAKTHI AVASIKKUKAYUM LOKATHINTTE RAKSHAKANE PRASAVIKKUKAYUM CHEYTHA SUDHIMATHIYAYA KANYAKAYE ! LOKATHIODU KARUNA CHEYYUVAN NINTE EKAGATHANODU NEE APEKSHICHU PRARTHIKKANAME. NINTE PRARTHANAYALUMAPEKZHAYALUMAVAN LOKATHODU KARUNA CHEYYUMARAKATTE.

SAHADENMARE! DAIVAM THANTE KARUNAYAL NJANGALELLAVARODUM KRIPA CHEYYUVANUM AVASANA NALILE SIKSHA VIDHIYIL NINNU NJAGALE RASHIPPANUM JAYATHINTE KIREEDANGAL NINGAL PRAPIKKUNNA SAMAYATHU NJANGAL KANMAN EDAVARUVANUMAYITTU NJANGALKKU VENDI APESHIKKANAME.

MOR THOMA SLEEHA NJERIKKATHILIRIKKUNNA ELLAVARUM NINTE SAHAYATHE ANWESHIKKUNNU. NINTE PRARTHANA NJANGALKKU KOTTAYUM ABHAYASTHANAVUM AYIRIKKANAME. NINTE PRARTHANAYAL NJANGALIDE YACHANAKAL NALKAPPEDUKAYUM, NJANGALUDE RIGHIKAL SUGHAPPEDUKAYUM PISACHUKALAL PAREEZHIKKAPPEDUNNAVAR SWATHANDRYAPPEDUKAYUM CHEYYUMARAKANAME.

KARTHAVE ! NINTE NYAYAVIDHI UGRAVUM NJANGALUDE KADANGAL VALAREYUMAKUNNU. NEETHI KOPICHIRIKKUNNU. ODIOLIPPAN NJANGALKKU KAZHIVILLA. NJANGALKKUVENDI NYAYASTHALATHEKKU NFNNE AYACHATHAYA AA SNEHATHAL NJANGALE NYAYAVIDHIYILEKKU PRAVELIPPIKKATHEYUM NJANGALUDE KADANGAL ORKKATHEYUM ERIKKANAME. NEETHI NIRANJA NYAYADHIPANAYULOVE ! DHAYATHONI NGANGALODE KARUNA CHEYYANAME.

NIDRA PRAPICHAVARAYA NJANGALUDA PITHAKKANMARKKUM SAHODARANMARKKUM ASWASAVUM NLLA ORMAYUM NEE NALKANAME. KARTHAVE ! NINTE ARADHAKARE VISUDHANMARUDE SANGANGALILUM NIRAKALILUM CHERKKANAME. NEE NINTE SIMHA SANATHINMEL IRIKKUKAYUM NALLAVARE DHUSHTANMARIL NINNU VERTHIRIKKUKAYUM CHEYYUNNA SAMAYATHU NYAYASANATHINKAL AVARKKU NINTE KARUNA LABHIKUMARAKANAME. NINTE MAHATHWAM VELIPPEDUNNA NALILAVAR NINTE VALATHUBHAGATHU NILKKUKAYUM CHEYYUMARAKA NAME. MORIYO

KARTHAVE ! NINNE STHUTHIKKUNNATHUM UNNATHAMAYA NINTE NAMATHINU PADUNNATHUM, PRABHATHAKALATHU NINTE KRIPAYUM RATHRIKANANGALIL NINTE VISVASAVUMARIYIKKUNNATHUM METHRANALLATHAKUNNU. KARTHAVE ! PRABHATHATHIL ENTE SABDHAM NEE KELKKANAME, PRABHATHATHIL NJAN ORUNGI NINAKKU KANAPPEDUMARAKANAME.

KARTHAVE ! NINTE JANATHODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME. KARTHAVE! NJANGAELLA

VARUDEYUM PAPANGAL PARIHARICHU KSHAMIKKANAME. PARISUDHANAYULLAVANE !
NINTE VALATHUKAI NJANGALUDEMEL AVASIPPICHU NINTE NITHYAMAYA NAMAM
NIMITHAM NJANGALUDE ROGHAVASTHA/DKKU PARIHARAM NALKANAME.

PART II

LESSON 2

HOLY QURBONO SONGS

1. AGNYATHMEREYAMAREERERUM
DHOOTHANMARUM THEE POONDOR
KADEESKA-DEESENAR-THUM KO-
NDINNAKKABARINGAL VANNU
DHAIVAM KABAREE-NNUTHANAM
CHEYTHETTAM MAHIMAVODE
KAVALKKAR KANDANDHANMAR
RAYME-LEENNEERENMARE
YAVAR KANDAY MRITHAREPOLE BAREKHMORE

Pattakkaran : Subuho

2. 'MUDRAKKI-LLE SATHYAMA- KEDE'
NNARAYUNNACHARYANMAR
ONNICHU- THARAMATHINAVAR-CHONNAR
'MUDHRAKKOTTUM KEDILLA
MRITHARAY NJANGALE YAKKITHEER-
THASCHARYAM KANMAN
NJANGAL SWAPNAM KANUNNO ?
ENNA-LUM DHAIVAM KATTUM
SATHYATHE MARAVAKKAMO ?'

Janam : Menolam ...

3. VANGIPPO- YA PITHRIKKAL-KKUM BHRA-
THAKKALKKUM NALKASWASAM;

NINNARA-DHAKARE NIN PARISU-
DHANMAR SANGATHIL CHERKKA
NEE SIMHASANAMEREETTA
DHUSHTTANMARE NEEKKUMBOL
NJANGADE MRITHAR DHAYA KANANAME
NIN MA-HATHTHMYAMUDHIKKUMBOL
VALABHAGATHAYEEDENAM.
MORIYORAHM MEELAINU ADHARAIN

QULO (LOK MORIYO)

1. DHAIVATHIN PUTHRANE MARIYA-MUDHANATHIL
SESHAM THOTTAKKARANPOL KANDAL THOTTATHIL
'NEEYENTHINU KARAYUNNAREYARAYUNNU'?
YENNATHINEN NADHANEYAVARKO-NDENGO POYENNAL
THANAVAL- 'MARIYAME' YENNAN
ODIPPO- YUDANVALARIYICHAL
KARTHAVUTHANAM CHEYTHE-NNA SLEECHANMARE. BAREKHMORE.

Priest:: *SubuhoHaleluyya*

2. UTHANAM CHEYTHUDANE THNNEKURISICHA-
SEHIYONE NASIPPICHU, SBHA-PANIEEGRAHANATHE
OTHUYIRIN THAN MESAYORUKKAM CHEYTHATHINUL
THANRAKTHAMATHIL CHERTHORA PUTHRANNAY STHOTHRAM
STHOTHRAM SLEE-BAYAL VEENDAVANAY
STHOTHRAM CHA-VALUYIR CHERTHAVANAY;
STHOTHRAM PUNNYATHINU THANURUDHI-RANGAL THANNAVANAY

People : *Menolam ... Haleluyya*

3. THAN SUDHA SAREERAM BHAKSHICHUM THAN RAKTHAM
PANAM CHEYTHUM; MRITHARAYOR THANNA-THMAKKAL MEL
AZHIYALOKE PAPATHI-NNIRUL VAZHVAIVAN
PRARTHICHIDUKA NAM MISIHA THANNODAVAR PERKKAI
AVARATHMA-KKALE VANGIYA NATHA !
AVAR NINNEKKONDADIYATHALE

NEEYAVARE VILICHUNIRUTHEEDANAME- VALABHAGE

MOR YAKOBINTE BHOVOOSO

1. *UTHANATHAL THANSABHAYE VEENDONAM PUTHRA
NIN SAINOO NALKITHAN PRAGAYE KAKKENAM NEE*
2. *CHAVEKKEEZHAKKI BHALAVAN SKEPPAYILURANGI
MOONNAM NALILUNARNNEZHUNNETTAN BHALAVANAI*
3. *KSHEENAM MARI MOONNU DHINAM MEVIKKURISINMEL
KSHEENICHONADIKONDU NASIKKATHINGESHUNNETTU*
4. *DHAVEEDHAM THA-THAN THAN VARAVINGANE KANDAPPOL
ODICHENNA- VEENAYUMAYI- KAMBIMURU-KKI*
5. *CHONNAN MATHU-KURANGAMANUGA-NOPPAM NADHAN
MITHRANGALKKA-NADHAVUMARIKAL-KKARTHIYUMEKI*
6. *VINMAN LOKARKKAIKYAM NALKEEDUM SAINO NI-
NNUTHANATHAL NINSABHAYIL SAINO NALKENAM*

PART III

OLD TESTAMENT

LESSON I

PROPHETS - A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Prophets have an important role in the history of Israel during the period of old testament. Prophets informed the will of God to the kings and the people at large. "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son". (Heb. 1: 1-2) There were many who had earned the gift of prophesy, but all of them were not known as prophets; prophetic work was not their main role. Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Deborah, Miriam, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and so on are not known as prophets.

The word 'Prophet' is originated from the Greek word 'Prophetes'. Prophet is the one who communicates divine revelation to others. The word for prophet in Hebrew is 'Nabi'.

Prophetic Books

Depending on the size of the book, prophets are classified as major and minor. There are 16 Prophetic books of which 4 are of major prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and 12 books are of minor prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Period of Prophets

Generally 8th Century to 5th Century B.C. is considered as the period of the prophets. Prophets of 8th century(800-700 B.C.)Amos, Jonah, Isaiah and Hosea
Prophets of 7th century(700-600 B.C.)Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah and Habakkuk
Prophets of 6th century(600-500 B.C.)Daniel, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah
Prophets of 5th century(500-400 B.C.)Joel and Malachi .

Prophetic Mission

The Mission of the Prophets was to reveal the will of God to the people. Up to the time of Samuel, they were called seers who predicted future events. The prophets or seers foretold events to come. Their mission was not restricted in foretelling future events alone. They were also engaged in other activities. The following were also the important duties of prophets.

1. Prophets were messengers of God who revealed God to the people.
2. They were true interpreters of Law.
3. They were preachers and teachers in relation with religious and social matters.
4. They were political advisers and conveyed the will of God to both the kings and the people
5. They were social reformers who opposed evil practices among the people.

Prophetic Message

There are similar ties and differences between all the prophecies, depending on the period in which they lived. They were influenced by political, religious and social atmosphere. However, there are certain distinctive features in the message of prophets who are guided by the Holy Spirit.

1. Their messages were Christ centered (Luke 10 : 24).
2. It was interpreted by Christ (Luke 24: 27-44)
3. It was a testimonial of Jesus Christ (Acts 3: 21-24)
4. It included the message of grace and salvation (1 Pet. 1:9-12)
5. It was filled with revelations that would endure till the end of the world (Mat 5:17 - 18)

Prophetess

Not only men but women were also involved in prophesy. They were:-

Miriam (Exo. 15:20-21)

Deborah (Judg. 4: 4-5)

Huldah (2 Kings 22:14)

Anna (Luke 2:36)

In short, prophets were representatives of God. They gave guidance in matters of politics, traditions and faith to both the king and his subjects. Quite often, the moral fervour of prophets made kings virulent and many prophets became martyrs.

The Vision about Christ in Prophecies

All prophecies either directly or indirectly point to Jesus Christ. Even though prophecies are apparently centred around Israel and God they also give hope about the new earth and new heaven ruled by God, the King. They also gave an indication of a King of Kings who would take the power after destroying all the enemies of the Israel. That king of kings is Jesus Christ. The birth of Jesus, his activities, Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, Second Advent and Judgement - all are mentioned in these prophecies.

Questions

1. Briefly explain the role of prophets in the lives of Israelites .
2. What were the duties of prophets?
3. Which period is known as the era of prophets?
4. Who all are major prophets and in which period they lived?
5. Who all are minor prophets and in which period they lived?
6. Name the prophetess of Israel

LESSON 2

ISAIAH

Isaiah son of Amoz prophesied during the period of Ussiah, Jonathan, Ahaz and Hezekiah who were the the kings of Judah. It is Isaiah who prophesied more about Christ in old testment. He illustrates Mesiah as a Suffering Servant. He predicted the birth of Jesus from a Virgin (7:14) Sufferings and Crucification (Chaprters 52 and 53)

The traditional belief of jews is that Isaiah was murdered during the period of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah. Isaiah prophesied for about 40 years.

Theologians consider the book of Isaiah as a miniature Bible. The first 39 chapters are prophesies about the punishment for idolatry and injustice. Judha, God's own people have sinned ; The nations around them and whole world has committed sin. Therefore, a judgement is certain ; God would not allow idolatry, immorality and injustice to continue forever.

The last 27 chapters are messages of salvation. Isaiah gives hope that the Lord will come and save the whole mankind by removing all the sins of mankind through the cross. He concludes his prophesies by giving hope of a new earth and a new heaven (66:22). We can see this hope also in Book of Revelations in new testment. (Rev. 21: 1).

Some theologians are of the opinion that the prophesies of Isaiah were written in two periods. According to them the first 1-39 chapters of the book were written before the Babylon exile and chapters 40-66 were written during the exile. However, Some others differ and say since the whole book was written by one author, there is no need to differentiate between the first and second part. There are more similarities than differences between these two parts.. Therefore, it is better to study the book as a whole.

Vison about christ

There is no other book in the old testment that contain this much of prophesies about Christ. He has clearly prophesied about the two phases of the redemption plan of Christ.(The events that took place from the birth of Christ to His ascension is the first phase of the redemption plan. The second Advent of Christ and the related events is the second phase of the redemption plan). The prophesies about first phase were already fulfilled. See some examples.

Off-spring of a Virgin

There for the Lord himself shall give you a sign: “ Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel” (Ish 7:14) St. Matthew proclaims that his prophesy has come true. through the birth of jesus through St.Mary.(St.Matthew 1:22,23)

Great Light

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has a shined(Issh 9:2) In the gospel of St. Mathew it is

explained how this was fulfilled. (St.Matt. 4:12-16).

The Chosen Servant

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him;” (Isaiah 42:1) St. Mathew proclaims this has come true. (St. Matt. 12: 17,18).

Numbered with Transgressors

Isaiah 53:12 states: “...and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”. St. Mark states how this prophesy has come true. “And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right, and one on his left” (St. Mark 15:27)

The prophesy of Isaiah is much different from other Old Testament books. God would punish severely and destroy the sinner. However, Isaiah elucidate that God is one who saves the man without remembering his past sins if the man repented and returned. Judgement and Hope reflect one after the other in the book of Isaiah.

Questions

1. In which period Isaiah lived ? Who were the kings of Israel at that time ?
2. Why book of Isaiah is described as a miniature of the Bible ?
3. Write in brief Isaiah’s vision about Christ.

LESSON 3

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah prophesied during the period of King Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. He was the son of Hilkiah, the priest of Anathoth Jerusalem. He is often known as the ‘weeping prophet’. The Lord appointed him as a prophet for nations even before he formed in the womb and consecrated him before he was born (1:5).

The Mission of Jeremiah

He had a glorious mission. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant (1: 10).

The mission of Jeremiah was noble but at the same time he had to face hardships which were severe. He had to suffer ridicule and contempt even in the service at his native place.

They caught hold of him and put him in prison. The king and the kinsmen sought to kill him.

Still he was steadfast in his ministry of prophesy. They put him in a cistern of mud. Later he was deported forcibly to Egypt. At the end of 40 years of prophesying, he was stoned to death.

Major Thoughts

Trust in God is the important message given by Jeremiah. He informed the leaders and people who do not keep moral laws, in strong language, about the coming punishment. He explained that the Lord punishes the sinner, but at the same time He awaits the repentance of the sinner.

Vision about Christ

Jeremiah in the chapter 23:1-8 has very clearly illustrated about Messiah. He gives hope to the people that the Saviour would come as a good shepherd and as a righteous branch of David. Jeremiah prophesied that He will reign as a king and deal wisely and will execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.

The book, Lamentations

The book, Lamentations is considered as a part of the book of Jeremiah. However, there is an argument that it is not written by Jeremiah. The misery of Jerusalem is the major theme of the book. The book is written as an eyewitness account of the situation of Jerusalem when the city and Temple were destroyed, the leaders were caught as slaves and when the sacrifices were stopped.

The author expresses his agony at the destruction of the city and the temple. He also confesses that the cause of their destruction are their sins. The author who depends on the mercy of God, hopes that Israel, the bride of Lord will be accepted again. The book, Lamentations accepts that the prophesies about the punishments were inspired by God. While the Lamentations express deep anguish and sorrow at the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel, they also proclaim the mercy of Lord and faith in the promises of Lord.

Even though Jeremiah forewarned the people about the total destruction of Israel, they did not accept that. The Lord through the prophet warned the people to forgo their evil ways but they rejected. Jeremiah foretold the people about the exile in Babylon for 70 years. Still, they did not believe him (Jeremiah chapter 25) Jeremiah illustrated the people through many symbols about the Lord's mercy and his punishments. Still the people refused to believe in him and as a result they had to go on exile to Babylon as his prophesy.

Questions

1. What was the mission of Jeremiah ?

2. Write in brief the important message in the prophecy of Jeremiah ?
3. What is vision about Christ of Jeremiah ?
4. Write the content of the book, Lamentations?
5. Write in brief the prophecy of Jeremiah about exile in Babylon ?

LESSON 4

DANIEL

(The prophet of Exile)

Daniel lived in the 6th Century B.C. during the Babylonian exile. When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem in 605 BC and carried away many captives to BABYLON. Daniel and his three friends were among them. When Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, a second time, he completely destroyed the city and carried away many more as slaves including the prophet, Ezekiel (587 B.C.)

There are different opinions regarding the period, when the book of Daniel was written, even though Daniel prophesied during the Babylonian exile. When some say it was at the time of exile, others say it was written during the religious oppression by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167-164 B.C. In the original Hebrew version, the book of Daniel has 12 chapters where as in Greek it has 14.

Major thoughts

The book, having 12 chapters, can be divided into two parts. The first part chapters 1-6 contains the unshakable trust in God and adherence to the traditional rituals of Jews, shown by Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego)

Chapters 7-12 is a narration of the vision of Daniel. The vision of Daniel reveals that all colonialist powers against God and His plans will be destroyed and the kingdom of God will survive.

The references about son of God (Jesus Christ) makes this books noteworthy. indications about resurrection makes this book different from others (12:2-3)

Vision about Jesus

1. The vision of Daniel about the Messiah is peculiar in many respects. When the huge statue made up of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay was standing up, a stone touched by none came and shattered the statue, and it crumbled to the dust and wind carried it all away. The stone touched by none is Messiah and the statue is many colonialist forces. Daniel points out that in the appropriate time, Messiha will remove all colonialist forces and will rule the world (2:31-35,44).

2. Through his vision Daniel introduce Messiah as the Son of Man who received absolute dominion. He was given dominion and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.(7:13-14).

2. The cut off anointed prince

Daniel prophesied to rebuild Jerusalem an anointed prince will come but he will be cut off and thereafter there will be war and misery. This anointed prince is Messiah.(9:25-27)

3. A Man clothed with belt of gold (glory)

This vision of Daniel is similar to that of St. John's revelations (Rev: 1:12-16). man clothed with golden sash across the chest.

The essence of the visions of Daniel is that ultimately God's side will win and Kingdom of God will be established. He clarifies that there will be days of severe persecutions and afflictions before this.

Prophesy of Daneil gives hope and comfort to those people who suffer from slavery and severe persecutions. It is made clear in the prophesy that those who trust in God, in spite of severe persecutions, will be saved and reinstated in the end by God .

Questions

1. In which century did prophet Daniel live ? When was this book written ?
2. What are the main thoughts in the prophesy of Daniel ?
3. Write in brief about the vision about Christ by Daniel.
4. What do Daniel clarify in his prophesies ?

LESSON 5

EZEKIEL

(Prophet in Exile)

Prophet Ezekiel lived in the 6th Century B.C. During the period of exile he worked among the Jews. Both Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporaries. Ezekiel was in the group of slaves carried away to Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar in the 2nd invasion in BC 587. Jeremiah had prophesied earlier about this exile and its period as 70 years. (Jeremiah 29:1-11).

The Mission of Ezekiel

Some jews who had no faith in the word of the God about the return from exile after

70 years believed that their plight was due to the failure of God. They neglected the true God mingled with the Babylonian way of life and became a part of Babylonian culture. Even in Slavery they did not seek the true God. However, another group sought the true God after realising that their plight was due to their misconduct and also due to their reluctance to turn to the God neglecting the warnings of prophets. They believed completely in God's commandments. Being steadfast in Lord, they began to return to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices. Elders of Judah offered sacrifices under the leadership of Ezekiel who was also a priest.

Ezekiel received the gift of prophesy while he was living on the banks of river, Chebar. The great task of Ezekiel was to turn the people to God who were turned to idol worship and false prophets during their long period of exile.

Major Thoughts

The first part of the prophesy (chapters 1 to 33) generally speaks of punishment. The prophet exposed the infidelity and sins of Judah and Jerusalem and also told that they will get severe punishments for that. Nobody can slip away from it. The prophet repeatedly states that the day of the judgement is at hand. He also states that the nations who oppressed Israel will also be punished.

The second part (chapters 34-38) mainly speaks of the deliverance of Israel. Prophet says that the Lord God himself will feed His sheep, will seek and rescue the scattered sheeps and will bind up the injured.

The prophet gives hope and speaks of a time when Israel will be reinstated after the destruction of all its enemies. The desolate city will be full of inhabitants. There will be safety and prosperity for the people. A renewed heart will be given to the people. The new temple will become the fountain of living water.

The prophesy of Ezekiel applies to social order as well as individuals. While he speaks about the punishment and the salvation of Israel as a whole, he makes it clear that the same punishment and salvation is personal also. Like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:29) Ezekiel too opposed the saying, 'the parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge' (Esk. 18:2). The prophet makes clear that each one get salvation and punishment according to his own deeds

Vision about Christ

Ezekiel presents Messiah mainly in three ways.

1. The cedar tree planted on high and lofty mountain: (Ezkiel 17:22-24) A tender sprout of a cedar tree will be planted on a high and lofty mountain of Israel. It will produce boughs and bear fruits and would become a noble cedar. Under it every kind bird will live and in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. This denotes the supremacy of Messiah.

2. The real heir of the Ruler (21:27). ‘Until He comes whose right it is; to him I will give it. This denotes that Messiah will come as the real ruler.

3. The True Shepherd (34:11-31) “.....I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd””.

The prophet states that Israel, the flock will be safe under Jesus Christ, the True Shepherd. (See chapter 10 of St. John).

Questions

1. Which King made Ezekiel slave and took him to Babylonia ? In which year ?
2. What are the main thoughts of Ezekiel prophesy ?
3. What is Ezekiel’s vision about Christ ?

LESSON 6

MINOR PROPHETS

It is studied earlier that the prophets can be classified as major and minor prophets. For the convenience of learning, minor prophets can be grouped in to three.

1. Prophets before the exile (before 6th Century B.C.).
2. Prophets during exile (6th Century B.C.)
3. Prophets after the exile (After 6th Century B. C.)

1. Prophets before the exile

Amos, Jonah, Hosea (8th Century), Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah (7th Century) are minor prophets before the exile.

Amos

Amos lived in the beginning of the 8th Century B.C. . The meaning of the word ‘Amos’ is one who carries burden.

The background of the prophesy

During the reign of King Jeroboam, Israel enjoyed prosperity. This prosperity created a new set of hegemony leaders. This group include land lords, business men and officers . The traders sold wheat mixed with chaff and used false measurments. (8:4) The Judges took bribes and set aside justice (5:12). To persue hedonism the women wanted more money and they encouraged their husbands to oppress the poor(4:1). Rituals became an extraneous show. They irritated God by conducting insincere sacrifices everyday.(4:4-5).

This is the background of the prophecy of Amos who was a shepherd. Amos told the people through the prophecy that as Lord is just, He expect justice and righteousness from

His worshippers..

The main message of the prophesy of Amos is Justice, True and Sincere worship and Care for the weak .

Vision about Christ

A clear picture of Christ can be seen in the prophesy of Amos (1:1-10, 9:11-15). He expects Jesus as the Ruler, Saviour who restores his people and also as the Judge with all powers .

Jonah

The meaning of the word 'Jonah' is 'dove'. Jonah was a contemporary of Amos who lived in the 8th Century B.C. Theologians consider that the book of Jonah was written after the exile between 400-300 B.C.

The content of the book is the story about Jonah than his prophesies. God asked him to go to Nineveh, a city in the north east, to deliver the message of God but he disobeyed God and boarded a ship going to Tarshish, a country in the west.

The disobedient Jonah who tried to run away from God's command is thrown overboard and a large fish swallowed him and again he was brought to the shore of Nineveh. Jonah preached the people to repent. They repented and God saved them. God make realise the truth to depressed Jonah through an incident of the castor bean plant and Jonah became happy in that.(4:6-11)

Jews beleived that salvation is their right and nobody else had any right to it. But the book of Jonah is a fitting reply to this narrow mindedness. This book gives us the message that God's mercy have no boundaries and all people are the children of God like Jews and God desire to give salvation to all. In the Three-Day Lent, it is coustomary in our church to read the book of Jonah and meditate on it.

Vision about Christ

Jonah is the only prophet whom which Jesus has compared Himself . (St.Matthew 12:39-41)" An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of the Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here." The experience of Jonah in the belly of the sea monster was a hint of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

HOSEA

The prophet Hosea lived in the 8th century B.C. He is the prophet who declared God's

commands through his own life experiences. .

Contents

This book has 14 chapters. The first three chapters illustrates the relationship between God and Israel in the background of his own marriage life. In the chapters 4-13 he explains the punishments that would fall on Israel for their sins and their unfaithfulness towards God. The 14th chapter states the calling for repentance and it tells the endless mercy of God who restore the people to His Love by forgetting their sins.

Background

Hosea started his prophesy at a time when the people of Israel had forsaken their true Lord and started worshipping other gods. On the command of the Lord, Hosea marries a woman of whoredom. After a while she left Hosea and turned again to whoredom. Hosea bought her and accept her again.

The Message of Hosea

Through this action prophet gives the message of redemption. Hosea gives a message to the world through this prophecy that God will redeem those who return to God even if they were much unfaithfull.

Vision about Christ

St. Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, when he describes the childhood of Jesus “ This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet ,’out of Egypt I have called my Son “. (St. Mathew 2:15).

God called back Israel from Egypt when Israel was a child .Similarly God called back the child Jesus from Egypt. Both Israel and Jesus at the time of their childhood runawayed from their native place to Egypt and God restored them both. Hosea compares God’s own people Israel and Jesus the Son of God. in these two events. Like Hosea redeemed the whoredom woman by giving price Jesus redeemed us by paying his Blood as its price.

Question

1. Into how many groups can the minor prophets be classified ?
2. Which century is considered as the time of exile ?
3. Who are the minor prophets who lived before the exile ?
4. What is the background of the prophecy of Amos ?
5. What is the main message of Amos ?
6. Explain the vision about Christ by Amos ?
7. The book of Jonah is an apt reply. To what ?
8. What is the message of the prophecy of Jonah ?

9. Which prophet declared God's commands through his own life experience ?
10. What is the message of the prophesy of Hosea ?

LESSON 7

PROPHETS BEFORE THE EXILE - 7th CENTURY BC

MICAH

The word Micah means "Who is similar to God ?". He was from Moresheth, south west of Jerusalem . He was a villager and nothing more is known about his family.

Background of the Prophecy

Authorities and leaders exploited the poor; traders took undue profit and judges became partakers of injustice and even the priests were indulged in sinful, immoral lives. This was the background when Micah started his prophecy.

Theme of Prophecy:

There are seven chapters in the book of Micah. One third of it describes the sin of the people. The second one-third speaks of the punishments by God for their sins. The last portion is about message of Redemption. It is sure that sinners would be punished, but if they repent and turn back to God, he is gracious enough to forgive their sins. This is the main message of Micah's prophecy. "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession" (7:18)

Vision about Christ

The birth place of Messiah and his everlasting rule have been clearly stated by Micah. It is noteworthy that this prophecy was made about 700 years before Jesus was born.

"O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." (5:2).

The scribes and priests were quite aware of this prophecy. Wise men from the east asked Herod the king, where the baby to be the King of Jews was born.. Herod in turn enquired with the scribes and chief priests where the Messiah was to be born. They answered immediately, "In Bethlehem of Judea" (Matt. 2: 1-6).

NAHUM

The main theme of Nahum's prophecy is the utter destruction of the city of Nineveh.

Background

Nineveh was once the capital of Assyria. The people of this heathen city heard the preaching of prophet Jonah and repented for their evil doings. Seeing their change of mind, the compassionate God averted the punishment. After about a century, the people of Nineveh again changed their minds and indulged in all sorts of evil deeds and started serving idols. They forgot the true God. They also cruelly tortured Israelites, the people of God. In this background the prophet predicted their destruction.

Unlike the prophecy of Jonah, Nahum predicts the utter destruction of Nineveh without giving the people a chance to repent. Nahum prophesied that the city would be completely destroyed such that at a later date nobody would know where the city was. The Israelites had suffered so much from the Assyrian kings.

Nahum's prophecy does not have any complaint against his own people. Jonah went to Nineveh and prophesied, but Nahum prophesied against Nineveh without going there.

Vision about Christ

In this prophecy there is no direct reference about Jesus Christ. In chapter 1:2-8, there is an indirect reference to Christ. Here Lord is being described as a King of Kings who judges all people, wielding absolute power. This will happen at the second advent of Jesus Christ.

HABAKKUK

This is a small prophecy containing only three chapters. The main theme of this book is the destruction of a powerful ruler who tortured the people of Israel. It is not clear who that ruler was. Some opine that it was an Assyrian emperor. Nothing more is known about the prophecy.

This book is a song of lamentations containing two questions asked by the prophet to God and God's reply to them.

This book has three chapters. The first two chapters contain the two questions and their reply from God. The third chapter is a song of praise to the Lord.

First Question 1:1-4

How long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

Second Question 1:12-17

Why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?

The Reply of the Lord - Chapter 2

The Lord replied that the wicked people would be destroyed and the righteous would

be saved. God said, "The righteous live by their faith."

Vision about Christ

There is no direct reference about Jesus Christ in the prophecy of Habakkuk. However, there are references about Salvation or Saviour in two places (3:13-18). The name Jesus, which means "Saviour", has been derived from the word Salvation. "She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins". (St. Matthew 1:21)

We can also see an indication of the Kingdom of Messiah in this book. "But the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (2:14). This is going to happen at the reign of Messiah.

ZEPHANIAH

The word Zephaniah means 'hidden by God'

Zephaniah who is known as the prophet of judgement, speaks with very strong words about the sin of Israel and God's punishment for it. Zephaniah prophesied when the people of Israel was full of wickedness and idol worship and they led a life renouncing the true God. A Day of Judgement would come and it would be the Day of the Lord (1:14-16).

Call for Repentance

Although the prophet very strongly declares about the Day of the Lord's wrath, he also tells the people about the mercy of God. He consoles the people that God will forgive their sins if they repent. (2:3)

Vision about Christ

There is no direct prophecy about Christ in this book. Still, the prophet expects a Saviour of Israel to come and that Saviour is Jesus Christ (3:9-20).

Jesus speaks twice indirectly about Zephaniah. When we compare Zephaniah 1:3 and St. Matthew 13:41 and Zephaniah 1:15 and St. Matthew 24:29 we can understand it. Both these are related to the second advent of Jesus.

Questions

1. Who are the minor prophets lived in the 7th Century B.C. before the exile ?
2. What is the message of the book of Micah ?
3. Who clearly prophesied the birth place of Jesus ? Write the chapter and verse of the prophecy ?
4. Against whom did Nahum prophesy ?
5. Which is the prophesy that does not have any complaints about his own people ?
6. Which prophet did not give any chance for repentance ?

7. Describe the two questions of Habakkuk and their reply by God ?
8. Who is called the prophet of judgment ?

PART IV
LESSON 8
NEW TESTAMENT
GOSPELS

In the new testament of the Holy Bible, the first four books are known as Gospels. Gospel means good news. The root of this word is from the Greek word “Evangelion” and in English it is “Gospel”. In old English, it was “Good spell”. Jesus calls his messages “Good News” (Luke 4:18, Mark 1:14).

In the Christian Church that came into existence after the Pentecost, the memories of the life of Jesus, his ministry, Passion and Resurrection were very much alive. When the lives of most of the people who lived with Jesus and witnessed his ministry, were nearing an end, many tried to record those events and preserve them. St. Luke begins his Gospel reminding this need to write an account, orderly and carefully, of all matters from its beginning. Many wrote such records, but those of St. Mathew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John were accepted as Gospels. The idea of four Gospels got recognition from about AD 100. These Gospels are included in the Holy Bible. None of these are a complete biography nor a full description of the ministry of Jesus Christ. They, in their totality, reveals the personality of Jesus. Each one of the authors gives importance to a particular trait of Jesus and goes on explaining that point with proofs and instances.

Synoptic Gospels

The first three Gospels, i.e. St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke are known as Synoptic Gospels. The similarity in the contents, narration of the events and order of incidents in these three Gospels forced theologians to have a detailed study. There are also clear differences between them. These similarities and differences are still a point of debate among the theologians. This is known as Synoptic Problem.

The Gospel according to St. Mark is the first written Gospel . St. Mark was a close

associate of St. Peter. He was also the translator of the preaching of St. Peter. Pappiyas, one of the church fathers had recorded that St. Mark must have used the information received from St. Peter and made a chronological record of events in the Gospel. Both St. Mathew and St. Luke used this book and they used the same chronology in writing their books. Almost 90% of instances quoted by St. Mark are used in the other two gospels. There are differences too. St. Mathew and St. Luke have added some 200 verses in their books. It shows that they have depended on another source. This source is noted as 'Q' by theologians. 'Q' is 'Quelle', a German word meaning 'source'. This source is not available now.

The Gospel according to St. John is the last gospel written. This gospel is quite different from others in message, expression and substance. St. John is giving a theological interpretation of the redemptive works of Jesus.

In short, Gospels are books written by the Evangelists based on the traditions of the early church developed from the experiences of the Apostles and other eyewitnesses, interpreted by the Evangelists with their own view points and theological visions.

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Evangelion' ?
2. What are the reasons to write the Gospels ?
3. How can we fully understand the teachings of Jesus Christ ?
4. What is 'Synoptic Problem'?
5. How can we understand that there was a source known as 'Q' ?

Project

Write two miracles written in Synoptic Gospels and explain how they are described in them.

LESSON 9

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

I. The Gospel According to St. Mark

St. Mark was a co-worker and helper to both St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Peter sent him to Alexandria and he established a church there. His house in Jerusalem is famous- the Mansion of St. Mark or Zeion Mansion. Today the Mansion of St. Mark is a Dayara and a blessed monument of our church.

The Gospel of St. Mark was written between AD 66-70 in Rome. The sources for the book are those matters that St. Mark learned from the preachings and teachings of St. Peter. When we examine the contents, we can understand that the book was written for believers other than Jews. He has left out topics like the genealogy, the fulfilled prophecies and cita-

tions from the Law. St. Mark has recorded only those events from John the Baptist to the Ascension of Jesus. There is no mention of the birth and childhood of Jesus. The intention of the book is to draw a clear picture of Jesus as the Son of God. Rituals of Jews and names of places are given in detail so that the gentiles may understand them (7:2, 14:12, 15:42). Also meaning of Aramaic (Syriac) words are given (3:17, 5:41, 7:11, 7:34, 15:34). Most part of the Gospel deals with the ministry of Jesus. Presentation is short and vivid. St. Mark presents the story of Jesus in a straight forward manner with an emphasis on what Jesus did rather than on the words and teachings.

Vision about Christ

The Gospel begins with the statement: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”. St. Mark points out this at the time of His Baptism (1:11), Transfiguration (9:6), Declaration of Peter (8:29) and the Declaration of the Centurion (15:39). At the same time, St. Mark gives equal importance to the idea that Jesus is also the ‘Son of Man’. He uses the word ‘Son of Man’ 14 times. In the Old Testament this word first appears in the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:13). Also Jesus calls himself the “Son of Man” (8:31).

Of the four Gospels, St. Mark states the most about the human traits of Jesus- about his emotions like anger (3:5), surprise (6:6), compassion (6:34), hunger (11:12).

Contents

Smallest Gospel : Chapters 16: Verses 678

Ministry in Jordan (1:1-13)

Ministry in Galilee (1:14-7:23)

At places between Galilee and Jerusalem (7:24-10:52)

In Jerusalem (11-13)

Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension (14-16)

2. Gospel according to St. Matthew

St. Mathew was a disciple of Jesus. He is also called Levi. Both St. Mark and St. Luke calls him Levi. He was a tax collector. The Gospel was written in Aramaic between 65-75 A.D.

The Gospel begins with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to David and then to his foster father Joseph. Thus Jesus is pictured as a person of the chosen people of God. It is mainly written for the Jews. Therefore, Hebrew words are not further explained (5:22) the rituals of the Jews are given without explaining their origin. (15:3; 23:5)

Vision about Christ

a) As the new Moses and Teacher : Jesus is revealed as the new Moses by St. Matthew. Like Moses gave them the Commandments of God at Mount Sinai, Jesus through the Sermon on Mount teaches these Laws in their fullness.

b) As Messiah, the King: In this Gospel, Jesus is depicted as Messiah the King, the hope of Israel. The phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' is used 32 times in this gospel. In the New Testament, this phrase cannot be seen anywhere else. There are 40 quotations from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and prophecies.

The word 'Church' can be seen only in this Gospel. There is a special reference to the Church in this Gospel.(16:18, 18:17). Therefore, this Gospel is also called the 'Church Gospel'.

St.Matthew reports many events not included in the other Gospels such as the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Joseph (1:18-26), visit of the Wisemen, escape to Egypt (2:1-18), dream of Pilate's wife.

Contents

Chapters 28: Verses 1071

St. Matthew, while writing the ministry of Jesus, has deviated from the chronological order, inter-connecting identical events together.

The Gospel can be divided into the following classes:

1. Genealogy and Birth (1:1-2:23)
2. Beginning of the ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:25)
3. Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:25)
4. Miracles (8:1-9:35)
5. Preaching about the Kingdom of God (9:38-11:1)
6. The unfaith and rejection of Jews (11:2-12:50)
7. The Parables about the Kingdom of God (13:1-52)
8. Training for the Apostles and teaching about the Church (13:53-18:35)
9. Ministry in Judea and Jerusalem (19:1-23:39)
10. Sermon about the End of the Age (Sermon on the Mount Olive) (24:1-25:46)
11. Passion of Christ (26:1-27:66)
12. Resurrection (Chapter 28)

3. Gospel According to St. Luke

Among the four who wrote Gospels, St.Luke is the only gentile converted to Christianity. He has also written the Acts of Apostles. Both these books are dedicated to Theophilus. St.Luke was the companion and co-worker of St.Paul. During the captivity of St. Paul, St.Luke was a helper to him. He was a physician and an artist too. A picture of St.Mary drawn by St.Luke is still preserved in the Dayara of St.Mark. It is believed that this book was written around 70 A.D. before the destruction of Jerusalem.

St.Luke depicts a clear picture of Jesus, who was born as a man, as the Saviour of the whole mankind. In the prologue the author declares that as many wanted to write about

Christ, he too desired to write everything orderly. With beautiful language and excellent presentation, this book stands prominent among the New Testament books. St. Luke has written elaborately about the birth and childhood of Jesus. Unlike St. Matthew, St. Luke does not give much importance to fulfilment of prophecies. St. Luke quotes only very few Old Testament verses. Like St. Mark, St. Luke gives the meaning of the Aramic words. St. Luke gives the genealogy of Jesus while presenting the beginning of His public ministry. While St. Matthew writes the genealogy from Abraham onwards, St. Luke states it from God himself to prove that salvation is for the whole humanity. Many things related to prayer are mentioned in this Gospel (3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:29, 23:46). Hence, this book is also called the 'Prayer Gospel'. Compared to other Gospels, names of women are given more in this Gospel. 'Mary's Song of Praise', which is used in our prayers is from St. Luke 1:46-55.

Vision about Christ

1. St. Luke gives importance to the fact that Jesus came for the salvation of the entire humanity, and not for the chosen races. John the Baptist presents Jesus, quoting from the Book of Isaiah: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." (3:3-6)

2. St. Luke has written the Gospel giving emphasis to the love and compassion that Jesus had for the humble and poor. It is made clear that Jesus was the true Son of Man, who was sympathetic to the sorrows and sufferings of the sinners and offered them invaluable gift of salvation.

3. St. Luke also establishes, through the parables of lost sheep, lost coin and lost son, that Jesus is the perfect Man who came in search of sinners. (chapter 15)

Contents

Chapters 24 Verses 1151

1. Introduction 1:1-4
2. Birth and childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist 1:5-2:52
3. Activities of John the Baptist 3:1-20
4. Baptism and Temptation of Jesus: 3:21 - 4:13
5. Ministry in Galilee 4:14 - 9:50
6. Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem 9:51-19:27
7. Ministry in Jerusalem 19:28-21:38
8. Passion of Jesus 21:1-23:56
9. Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven 24:1-53

Questions

1. Which Gospel was written first?

2. How do we know that St.Mark wrote the Gospel for believers other than Jews?
3. Who is the apostle among the synoptic gospel writers ?
4. For whom did St. Mathew write the Gospel? Explain
5. Which Gospel is known as the ‘ Church Gospel?’ Why ?
6. In the Holy Bible which are the books written by St.Luke?
- 7.Name the Gospel writer who was a physician and an artist too?
- 8.How the Gospel according to St.Luke is defferent from the other Gospels?

LESSON 10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

St. John is the son of Zebedee, and brother of St. James. Only St.John had a natural death among the Apostles. This book was written in Ephesus in 98 or 99 A.D. This means that it is the last written Gospel. St.John has given more importance to the personality of Jesus rather than his ministry. The 17th Chapter deserves special attention. This is a long Prayer of Christ as the High Priest, to the Holy Father. This is known as the ‘High Priestly Prayer’.

The Gospel according to St. John is different from the other Gospels in substance, presentation and content. His intention was not to write an historical record. Taking into account the needs and challenges of that time, his aim was to reveal to the world who was Jesus and what was his mission. His style of writing is also noteworthy. This Gospel gets special attention because of symbolism, discourse style and usage of irony.

St.John records seven allegories that Jesus had said about himself.

1. I am the bread of life (6:48)
2. I am the light of the world (8:12)
3. I am the gate (10:9)
4. I am the good shepherd (10:11)
5. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
6. I am the way, and the truth, and the life (14:6)
7. I am the true vine (15:1)

The differences of the Gospel of St.John from the Synoptic Gospels.

1. St.John has written six miracles of Jesus which are not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. They are water turned into wine; healing of the official’s son, healing at the pool of Bethzatha; healing of the man born blind, raising of Lazarus, the miraculous fishing.
2. In the Synoptic Gospels many parables are included whereas in the Gospel of St.John

there are no parables. Instead allegories are used. eg. Living Water, Bread of Life, True Vine, and so on.

3. Birth from a Virgin, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, establishment of the Holy Qurbana which appears in the Synoptic Gospels are not found in the Gospel of St. John. Washing of the feet of the Apostles is found only in the Gospel of St. John.
4. Synoptic Gospels give more emphasis to the activities of Jesus in Galilee and nearby places, whereas St. John gives more importance to His activities in Jerusalem.
5. Synoptic Gospels mention about only one Passover feast. St. John records that Jesus celebrated three Passover feasts. (2:13, 6:4, 12:1). So we can assume that the public ministry of Jesus lasted at least three years.
6. The farewell speech of Jesus at the Mansion is elaborately explained by St. John. (chapters 14-17). This is not found in the Synoptic Gospels.

Vision about Christ

St. John himself declares that his intention is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. (20:30-31) St. John proves that Jesus is the Complete God (1:11-18; 5:20, 8:25; 10:30; 20:28) and the Complete Man (4:6; 11:33; 12:27; 13:21). St. John undoubtedly shows the union of the personalities of Christ. The Eternal Word became a human being. St. John depicts this Word as giving life to the World (6:33), the Bread of Life (6:48), the Living Water (7:37) and the Eternal Light (8:12).

Contents

Chapters 21: Verses 876

1. Introduction 1:1-18 :- Says about the Word.
2. Book of Signs and Symbols 1:19-12:50 :- Seven miracles (signs) of Jesus are described in 12 chapters .
3. Book of Glory. 13:1-20:31 :- Jesus reveals His glory to the disciples who accept him. The farewell speech at the Mansion, High Priestly Prayer, the Passion, Death and Resurrection are included in this part.
4. Appendix Chapter 21 :- Appearance of Resurrected Jesus Christ to the disciples.

Questions

1. What is known as the 'High Priestly Prayer'?
2. Describe the writing style in the Gospel of St. John?
3. What are the allegories used by St. John about Jesus?
4. How St. John's Gospel is different from the Synoptic Gospels?
5. What is the proof that the public ministry of Jesus lasted three years?

Project:

Make a list of the Miracles of Jesus, written in the Synoptic Gospels, quoting Chapters, Verses and the book, which are not mentioned in the Gospel of St. John.

LESSON 11

THE ROYAL ENTRY OF JESUS IN TO JERUSALEM

(St. Matthew 21:1-22; St. Mark 11:2-26; St. Luke 19:28-48; St. John 12:12-19)

You have studied important events, teachings and instructions in the ministry of Jesus in the lower classes. Jesus had instructed his disciples not to disclose the important facts that He is the Son of God, and that they had seen His Glory at the mountain. But, Jesus now decides to reveal who he is and to make the people understand that He is the expected Messiah, the King of Jews. Jesus gives instructions to his disciples for the same.

He enters Jerusalem as the King of Kings. This was the time of the Passover feast. This was a time when Jews from all over the world gathers in Jerusalem. Jesus starts his journey from Mount Olive which is on the eastern side of Jerusalem.

As they approached Jerusalem, near the town of Bethphage and Bethany, He sent two of His disciples to fetch a young donkey that had never been ridden. They brought the donkey to Jesus and they threw their cloaks over it. Jesus mounted on it and continued His journey to Jerusalem. This journey of Jesus on the young donkey was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah. (9:9 :- “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”) In those days it was believed that a king coming on a horse is for war and on a donkey is for peace. Jesus rode on a donkey, the symbol of humility, to testify that the Kingdom of God is not worldly one as others had expected.

The people accepted Jesus in a royal way. They spread their cloaks and branches of trees on the road. These were all things of reception given to victorious kings. The people who went ahead of and followed Jesus shouted in great joy, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel.” Hosanna is a Hebrew word meaning, ‘Lord save us.’ This song was sung by Jews at the feast of Tabernacle. The seventh day of the feast was called the ‘Hosanna Day’ and the small Olive branches held by the worshippers were known as ‘Hosanna’. (Psalms 118:25). They symbolised the palm leaves

that we use on Palm Sunday.

On seeing this royal reception given to Jesus, a group of Pharisees became jealous and asked Jesus to stop the disciples. Jesus answered: “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.” Jesus saw the city of Jerusalem from far off. On foreseeing the utter destruction of Jerusalem, as it rejected Him, Jesus wept. As Jesus said, the city was completely destroyed in A.D.70 .

Purification of the Temple

After entering Jerusalem, He first went to the temple. He drove out those who were selling things there. This was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi.(Malachi 1:3). The temple court was a place for the gentiles and buying and selling were being done there. As a result, gentiles could not freely participate in the prayers. The coins offered in the temple were special and as a result money exchange was essential. Similarly, animals and birds for sacrifices were to be certified by the priests that they were without any defect. If an animal or bird is brought from outside, the priest would raise some lame reason to reject it. In both the cases relatives of the priests were making immense profits. The anger of Jesus rose against this undue profit making practice in the place for worship. He not only purified the temple but also cured blinds, lames etc. Here we can see Jesus who rises against exploiters and at the same time gives showers of blessing to the faithful.

Jesus purified the temple and He used to preach there daily. The High Priests, Scribes and the Pharisees began to think of a plan to destroy Jesus.

Questions

1. What was the intention of the royal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem?
2. His journey on the young donkey was the fulfilment of which prophecy?
3. How did the people receive Jesus when he entered Jerusalem?
4. Why did Jesus purify the temple by driving out people engaged in business?
5. Why did Jesus weep on seeing Jerusalem?

Project: Write a brief account on how Palm Sunday is different from other Sundays?

LESSON 12 THE PASSION OF THE LORD

(St. Matthew 26, 27, St. Mark 14, 15; St. Luke 22, 23; St. John 11, 13, 18, 19)

In all the four Gospels detailed explanations are given about the Passion of the Lord. More importance was given to this by the early Church because the fulfilment of His ministry of salvation was through His Passion, death, Resurrection.

For ease of study, Passion of the Lord can be divided in the following parts.

1. The plot against Jesus
2. Celebration of the Passover Feast and institution of the Holy Qurbana.
3. The prayer at Gethsemane
4. Arrest of Jesus
5. Trial of Jesus
6. Crucifixion

1. The plot against Jesus

St. Matthew 26: 1-5, St. Mark 14:1-2; St. Luke 22:1-2; St. John 11:45-53

The Pharisees and the Scribes were scared at the royal reception Jesus received in Jerusalem. They were afraid that sooner or later all the people will be at His side. Therefore, they planned to destroy Jesus at any cost. High priests, Scribes and elders of the people met at the court of Caiaphas, the High Priest. They conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill Him. However, they decided to execute their plans after the feast so that a riot among the people can be avoided during the days of the feast. At this time, one of the disciples of Jesus, Judas Iscariot went to the Chief Priest and agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. 30 pieces of silver was the price of a slave. Thus the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled. (11:12)

2. Celebration of the Passover Feast and institution of the Holy Qurbana

St. Matthew 26:17-25; St. Mark 14:12-21; St. Luke 22:7-14; St. John 13:1-30

Jesus entrusted Peter and John with certain instructions to prepare the Passover Feast. They did accordingly. The Passover feast was prepared at the Mansion of Mark. They ate the Passover meal in accordance with the Law. (Exodus 12). During the meal, Jesus mentioned about the betrayal of Judas. Judas left the place. There was a dispute among the disciples as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples like a servant. Thus Jesus illustrated the model of humbleness and service. After completing the observance of Passover feast according to the Law, Jesus instituted the Holy Qurbana. (You have studied this in Class VI.)

3. Prayer at Gethsemane

St. Matthew 26:36-46; St. Mark 14:32-42; St. Luke 22:39-46

After the celebration of the Passover feast and the institution of the Holy Qurbana, Jesus went to Mount Olive, east of Jerusalem, along with His disciples. Jesus reminds them of the prophecy of Zechariah that “Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered”

(Zechariah 13:7). However, He gives them hope by saying that He would resurrect and go to Galilee ahead of them. Peter declares that he would never desert Jesus even if all become deserters. But Jesus told him that before the cock crows, Peter would deny Him three times, that very night. From there, Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane at the western valley of Mount Olive. Leaving the other 8 disciples at one place, Jesus took Peter, Jacob, and John (those who had witnessed His transfiguration) and went ahead to pray. Jesus shared with them His mental agony. He told them to stay awake with Him and going a little farther, He threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My father if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but you want." Jesus was without sin. So He had great anguish when He took upon Himself the sin of the whole world. Therefore His blood came out as drops of sweat. We must fully understand the complete dedication of Jesus to His Father even in this great mental distress. In the Garden of Eden the first man started the sin by disobeying God. On the other hand, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, by His perfect obedience, opened the way for salvation.

After gaining strength through His prayer to His Father, Jesus came back to His disciples, but He found them sleeping. He told them, "See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going."

4. Arrested of Jesus

St. Matthew 26:47-56, St. Mark 14: 43-52, St. Luke 22:47-53, St. John 18:3-12

After eating the Passover meal with Jesus, Judas Iscariot went straight to the high priests. He informed them that it was the right time to arrest Jesus. Judas led a group of soldiers and police carrying swords, clubs and lanterns to there. He had given them a signal that whom he kisses is Jesus. He came forward and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. Jesus calls him, "Friend". Here we can see the eternal love of God who calls the one who betrays him, 'Friend'. The soldiers arrested Jesus. Seeing these, Peter who was standing nearby got so angry that he drew the sword and struck the High Priest's slave, and cut off his ear. The slave's name was Malcuse. Jesus warned Peter and cured the man. When the disciples saw Jesus being arrested, they fled in fear. They did foolishness and fled in fear since they slept while they should have been praying. Jesus was strengthened through prayer and he could face the situation calmly. But the disciples, who became lazy, lose their courage. However, those disciples who ran away today, were strengthened after Resurrection and suffered hardships and died as Martyrs for Jesus.

Questions

1. Why did the Jews decide to destroy Jesus?
2. Jews gave the price of a slave for Jesus. Explain?

3. How did the Jews observe the Passover?
4. How Jesus taught his disciples the way of humbleness?
5. What hope did Jesus give to His disciples during His passion?
6. How did Jesus gain strength for His passion?
7. Why did the disciples sleep even when Jesus wanted them to be awake?
8. Jesus called Judas Iscariot His friend. What do you understand from this?
9. Why did Jesus warn Peter?
10. Why did the disciples flee when Jesus was arrested?

LESSON 13

TRIAL OF JESUS

(St. Matthew 26:51-27:32; St. Mark 14:53-15:21;
St. Luke 22:54-23:25; St. John 18:13-19:17)

Jesus faced trial in 6 important phases.

1. Before Annas, the previous High Priest, during the night. (St. John 18:12-14)
2. Before Caiaphas, the High Priest, and the Scribes and elders, informally at night. (St. Matthew 26:57, St. Mark 14:53, St. Luke 22:54)
3. Before the Sanhedrin formally, in the morning. (St. Matthew 27:1-12, St. Luke 22:66)
4. Before Pilate (St. Matthew 27:1,2, St. John 18:28-41)
5. Before Herod (St. Luke 23:6-12)
6. Again before Pilate (St. Matthew 27:15-26, St. Mark 15:6-15, St. Luke 23:13-25, St. John 18:39-19:16)

Illegal Trial

Jesus faced a trial devoid of any natural Justice. All decisions were one-sided. According to their own law itself, it was wrong. The trial faced by Jesus was not according to the Laws of the Jews nor that of the Romans.

Justice was denied to Jesus in the following ways.

1. They had condemned Jesus to death, before they questioned him (St. Mark 14:1, St. John 11:50)
2. False witnesses were produced. (St. Matthew 26:59). The statements of the witnesses were accepted as proofs only after verification of the faithfulness of the witnesses by religious leaders through various ways.
3. No chance or opportunity was given to Jesus for self defence. (St. Luke 22:67-71)
4. It is unlawful for the Sanhedrin to meet at night. (St. Luke 22:53-55)

5. They put Jesus under oath. When Jesus answered they used his own reply for judging.(St.Matthew 26:63-66)

6. Sanhedrin should meet in their office adjacent to the temple.Trial can be conducted only there. But in the case of Jesus, they met at the house of the High Priest. (St.Luke 22:54)

7. It is not lawful to pronounce judgement on the same day of the trial. It could be done only on the next day . In this case also they broke their own law.

1. Trial Before Annas

This incident is recorded only in the Gospel of St.John. Annas was the father-in law of Caiaphas. His family was selling doves in the Jerusalem Temple. He was a very influential man. He questioned the disciples and teachings of Jesus. Annas wanted to establish that Jesus was the leader of a group of conspirators against the Roman government.His intention was not lawful. The trial of the convict must be conducted only after the trial of the witnesses.That is why Jesus said to ask those who heard Him.

One of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face. Jesus asked him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”. Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas.

2. Before Caiaphas

Jesus was trialled twice before Caiaphas. First during the night itself when there were only a few members of Sanhedrin . Later in the morning, when all the members of Sanhedrin met, they questioned Jesus formally.

Sanhedrin means ‘Council’. It was a council of the Judges of the Jews. It included Pharisees, Sadducees and elders of the people (70-72) members. High Priest was head of the council. This council had no legal authority to put a man to death. They could trial convicts only in the day time.There should be atleast 2 witnesses. The statement of the witnesses should agree with each other.

They engaged false witnesses by giving bribes to give witness against Jesus. But the statements were contradictory. When High Priest asked Jesus why he was not answering anything, Jesus was silent.He told Jesus, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”. The intention of this question was to make Jesus declare that He is the Messiah. Their plan was to impose blasphemy on Jesus and thereby request Roman government for executing death sentence. Jesus declares that He is the Messiah. The High Priest tore his clothes and gave verdict that Jesus had blasphemed. The High Priest tears his clothes when he hears blasphemy. They spat in his face and struck him.

At this time, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard and warming himself. Many

people there identified him. He became feeble and denied Jesus three times. At that moment the cock crowed. Peter remembered the word of the Lord. Jesus turned around and looked at Peter. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

This incident gives us a warning. Peter was proud that he was more loyal to Jesus than anybody else. When he was to pray, he slept. Instead of being with Jesus, he kept away. When Jesus looked at him, he was heart-broken of his guilt and it led to his repentance. He wept bitterly. Later he requested his oppressors to crucify him upside down so that he could kiss the feet of his master when he died.

After the trial, the Council decided to take him to Pilate for trial and Crucifixion.

3. Before Pilate

Pilate was the Governor of Judea from 26-36 A.D. His headquarters was in Caesarea. He came to Jerusalem to look after law and order during the festival.

Trial of Jesus was done both inside and outside his palace. They themselves did not enter the headquarters so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

Sanhedrin accused Jesus of only blasphemy. But thinking that Pilate would not take it seriously, the Jews imposed two more charges against Jesus - (1) Jesus taught not to pay tax to Caesar (Roman Emperor); (2) Jesus declared himself a King. When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod who was the ruler of that province. As it was the festival season, Herod was also in Jerusalem.

4. Before Herod

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great who ruled Judea at the eve of the birth of Jesus. Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus had called him 'fox'. (St. Luke 13:31)

When Herod saw Jesus he was happy since he thought that he could see some miracles from Jesus. He asked Jesus many questions but Jesus was silent. Herod and his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then they put an elegant robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. On that very day Herod and Pilate became friends; before this they had been enemies.

5. Again before Pilate

Pilate realised that Jesus was innocent. He tried to explain this to the priests and the people. Since Herod did not see anything wrong with Him and as He had not done anything to deserve death, Pilate told the people He could be flogged and released. At every Passover feast, the Governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they

wanted. Pilate asked if he could release Jesus accordingly. They replied that they wanted Barabas and Jesus should be crucified. Barabas was a notorious prisoner. Again Pilate requested to set free Jesus. Then the crowd shouted, "Crucify, Crucify Him". In the meantime, Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, sent him a message not to involve in the judgement concerning Jesus. Pilate requested them for the third time to flog and release Him, as He had not done anything to deserve death. At last Pilate ordered to crucify Jesus and set Barabas free.

The Roman soldiers stripped Jesus off His clothes and put a purple robe around him; and flogged Him. They wove a crown of thorns and put it on His Head. They put a reed in His right hand and knelt before Him and mocked Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!". Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and dripping blood all over, before the crowd. Pilate told them, "Here is the man!". The crowd answered back, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Hearing that Jesus was the Son of God, Pilate became afraid.

Pilate entered his headquarters (the Praetorium) and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate asked Jesus the reason for his silence and reminded Jesus that he had authority to crucify or set him free. Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above." Hearing this, Pilate became restless and wished to release Jesus. But the crowd shouted back, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the Emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the Emperor." He decided to go along with the wish of the people since he did not want to lose his position. He took Jesus outside and sat on the Gabbatha (Stone Pavement - Judge's bench) and said to the Jews, "Here is your king!" The crowd answered, "We have no king but the Emperor." Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified. The soldiers made Jesus to wear his own clothes and led him to Golgotha to be crucified.

Questions

1. What are the phases in which Jesus faced trial?
2. Prove that the trial of Jesus was unlawful?
3. What was the intention of Annas in questioning Jesus?
4. What is Sanhedrin?
5. Which are the two trials before Caiaphas?
6. Why did Caiaphas ask Jesus on oath?
7. What made Simon Peter to repent?
8. What was the guilt Sanhedrin put on Jesus?
9. Why did Pilate come to Jerusalem?
10. What was the guilt the Jews raised against Jesus before Pilate?

11. Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod?
12. Why was Herod happy when he saw Jesus?
13. How did Herod and Pilate become friends?
14. Why did Pilate sentence Jesus to death even though he knew that he was innocent?
15. What are the sufferings that Jesus had to face at the headquarters of Pilate?
16. Why did the Jews not enter the palace of Pilate?
17. What did Jesus tell Pilate about authority?

LESSON 14

CRUCIFIXION

St. Mathew 27:33-56; St. Mark 15:21-41; St. Luke 23:26-49; St. John 19:16-37

Crucifixion was a punishment awarded to rebels, rioters, traitors and to the slaves who deserted their masters. This punishment was the most cruel and painful. It was considered as a warning to others. The convict has to carry his own cross to the place where he is to be crucified. An inscription describing the crime is put on the cross.

Roman soldiers took Jesus outside the Jerusalem city to Golgotha for crucifixion. A multitude of people and leaders of Jews followed them. Criminals were not executed inside the city. The word Golgotha (Calvary) means 'skull hill'. Calvary is a Latin word. It is only an elevated place in the shape of a skull just about 30 feet high. In the Holy Bible this place has many significances.

1. It is believed that the skull of Adam is lay buried there.
2. Melchizedek offered sacrifice at this place.
3. Abraham built an altar to sacrifice Isaac.
4. David offered sacrifices at this place.

Jesus was very much tired due to the cruel punishment that he suffered. Still Jesus moved on carrying the cross. On seeing this heart breaking scene, the women who followed him cried loudly. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Jesus was prophesying about the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. When the soldiers saw Jesus become very weak, they compelled Simon of Cyrene (Tripoli-Libya) to carry His cross (He later became Christian).

On reaching Golgotha, they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with myrrh (gall). This was a drink to reduce the pain of death. He tasted it but refused to drink as He wished to die

suffering pain. They crucified Jesus in between two criminals. Pilate wrote an inscription and put on the cross, which read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”(Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum - INRI). It was written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew languages. The Jews wanted Pilate to change the inscription to ‘This man said, I am king of the Jews’. Pilate refused and said, “What I have written, I have written.”

One of the criminals who was crucified along with Jesus, believed in him and he said to Him, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” This man repented when he heard Jesus praying to God to forgive those who crucified him. He also criticised and advised his friend who insulted Jesus. This proves that even at the time of death, one can have repentance and forgiveness of sin.

The soldiers took His clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. However His robe was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So, they decided not to tear it but cast lots for it.

At the foot of the cross there stood His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene and His disciple John, whom He loved the most. Jesus the responsibility of His mother to his disciple John.

Jesus was crucified at the 3rd hour (morning 9 o’ clock). From sixth hour to ninth hour (from noon to 3 pm), there was darkness over the whole earth. At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook, the rocks were split apart, and the tombs were opened. Jesus breathed his last at the 9th hour. Seeing all these, the centurion who was a gentile believed in Jesus.

Soldiers used to break the legs of the crucified to verify their death. They broke the legs of the two criminals and then came to Jesus. They saw that He was already dead. They did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and at once blood and water came out. This incident has not been recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. St. John who was a witness to it has recorded it to show that Jesus who died on the cross was truly the complete Man and the complete God.

Questions

1. Death by crucifixion is given to what kind of people?
2. What is the importance of Golgotha according to the Holy Bible?
3. What did Jesus tell the weeping women who followed Him?
4. Why did Jesus not take the drink to reduce the pain of death?
5. How did one of the criminals obtain salvation?
6. What was the circumstance that made the gentile centurion to believe in Jesus?

LESSON 15

BURIAL, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

The Burial of Jesus

St. Matthew 27:57-66; St. Mark 15:42-47; St. Luke 23:50-56; St. John 19:38-42

Joseph of Arimathea, who was a secret disciple of Jesus, and Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and leader of the Jews, boldly came forward to undertake the burial of Jesus. Both of them were members of the Sanhedrin. Joseph asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds (40 kg). They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen clothes, according to the burial custom of the Jews. There was a garden in the place where He was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. It belonged to Joseph. They buried Jesus in that tomb. A large stone was rolled to the door of the tomb.

Next day the chief priests and Pharisees met Pilate and told him that Jesus had said that he would raise to life on the third day. They requested him to give orders to guard the tomb carefully until the third day, so that His disciples could not steal the body at night and propagate that Jesus came back to life from death. Pilate told them to take their own guards and make the tomb as secure as they desired. They made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and by posting guards.

RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

St. Matthew 28:1-20; St. Mark 16:1-19; St. Luke 24:1-53; St. John 20:1-21:23

It was a Jewish custom to anoint the body with spices up to the third day. It is usually done by women. The women who had been witnesses to the crucifixion and burial of Jesus came to the tomb early morning on Sunday when it was still dark. They found the stone kept at the entrance rolled away and an angel of the Lord sitting on it. The angel gave them the message that Jesus had risen from the dead and showed them the empty tomb. They were told to inform the disciples of the news of the Resurrection. When they were returning from the tomb, Jesus appeared and told them to inform His disciples that He was going to Galilee. Seeing all these, the guards became frightened.

The guards went to Jerusalem and told the chief priests everything that had happened. They feared that if the people came to know the resurrection of Jesus, they would believe in Him and the chief priest will be punished for crucifying an innocent man. They forced the guards, by giving a large sum of money, to tell that His disciples stole the body of Jesus while they were asleep. They did so.

It is recorded in the Holy Bible that the resurrected Jesus had appeared 10 times to his disciples and others.

1. To Mary Magdalene alone, near the tomb. St. John 20:11-18
2. To Mary Magdalene and the other Mary - St. Matthew 28:1-10
3. To St. Peter alone - St. Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5
4. To the two disciples who were going to Emmaus - St. Luke 24: 13-35
5. To the 10 disciples except St. Thomas on the same day of Resurrection in the evening at the Mansion of Mark. St. John 20:19-24
6. To the 11 disciples including St. Thomas on the 8th day of the Resurrection at the Mansion of Mark - St. Mark 16:14-18.
7. To the disciples at the shore of the Sea of Tiberias - St. John 21: 1-23
8. To the 11 disciples and 500 other brothers and sisters in Galilee - St. Matthew 28:16-20, 1 Corinthians 15:6
9. To St. James - 1 Cor. 15:7
10. To all those who had gathered at the time of His Ascension - St. Mark 16:19, St. Luke 24:50-52

It is also recorded in the Acts of Apostles that Jesus appeared to St. Paul - Acts. 9:3-9.

Jesus had told in advance about His Resurrection to His disciples. But they could not understand it. Now they experienced it directly. In the evening of the same day of His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the Mansion of Mark. When the doors of the Mansion where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus came inside the Mansion without opening the doors and greeted them with Peace. This proves that the Resurrected body of Jesus was beyond the limits of space and time. When they got the presence of Jesus, frustration and fear disappeared from the disciples and they were delighted. He then gave them the authority to forgive sins. He gave them the authority by breathing on them and saying, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (St. John 20:21-23). As the Son of God, Jesus had the authority to forgive sins. He gave that authority to His disciples and through them to the priests. The essence of the Sacrament of the Holy Confession is involved in this.

Apostle Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared. When they told

Thomas that they had seen the Lord, he did not believe them. He said, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." The next Sunday His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe". Thomas answered him, "My Lord and My God!". By saying so, he declared his faith.

As decided earlier, the 11 Apostles went to Galilee. Eventhough only St. Matthew has described it, St. Mark gives hint about it. Here Jesus appears to them. This gathering was an incident since the angel has told once (St. Matthew 28:7) and Jesus has spoken twice about it. (St. Matthew 26:32,28:10). In addition to what has been given, Jesus gave the Apostles more authority, duties and promises in Galilee. The powers and duties given are:-

1. Make disciple of all nations.
2. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
3. Teach them to obey the commandments of Jesus.

The great promise that Jesus gave to the Apostles was, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Resurrected Jesus appeared to His disciples for the third time at the Sea of Tiberias Here, a miraculous fishing takes place. Jesus gives them food. After food, Jesus gave Peter the administrative powers of His church. (You have larned more about this in class 7, chapters 14,15)

The facts that we should understand about the resurrection of Jesus Christ are:-

1. The foundation of Christain belief is on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - 1 Cor. 15:14
2. The most important message of Resurrection is Peace. Resurrection removes fear and gives hope.
3. Even before Christ, dead men have came back to life. Thay did not came back to life on their own. But they were brought back to the same life in which they lived once. It was not a resurrection to eternity. Through His Ressurrection, Jesus acquires the glorified body, which is beyond physical laws.
4. Through Resurrection, Jesus defeated death completely and released man from the slavery of sin and Hades.
5. Resurrection of Jesus is a forerunner of the resurrection of the human race to be taken place in the future. (Romans 8:11, 1 Cor. 6:15, 1 Cor. 15:44-54, Philippians 3:21)
6. Jesus Ressedted for the justification of the human race. (Rom. 4:25)

Ascension of Jesus

St. Mark 16:19; St.Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:3-11

For 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and confirmed to them that he is alive and taught them many things concerning the Kingdom of God, through many miracles. He told them to stay in Jerusalem itself until they receive the Holy Spirit.

After this, they went to Mount Olive. There Jesus blessed them by raising His hands. As they were watching, Jesus was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. While He was going and they gazing up towards Heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into the Heaven." As Jesus had told them, they returned to Jerusalem and waited for the Holy Spirit.

Questions

1. Who took the initiative for the burial of Jesus?
2. Explain the burial of Jesus.
3. Why did the chief priests and the Scribes demand Pilate to put guards at the tomb of Jesus?
4. To whom did the Resurrected Jesus appear first?
5. To whom and when did the Resurrected Jesus appear, according to the Holy Bible?
6. How did Jesus confirm the faith of St. Thomas?
7. What are the duties and authorities that Jesus gave to His disciples in Galilee?
8. How did Jesus give the authority to forgive sins to Apostles?
9. What are the lessons that we have to understand from the Resurrection of Jesus?
10. Describe the Ascension of Jesus?

PART V

HOLY FAITH

LESSON -16

MORONoyOTO FESTIVALS

A. Holy festivals that are to be observed like Sundays

You have studied the six moronoyoto festivals that are to be celebrated like Sundays in the standard VII. Try to recollect them. Let us study the other festivals in this category.

7. Pesaha (Maundy Thursday)

Passover (Maundy Thursday - *Pesaha*) and Good Friday are the two most important incidents in the life of our Lord in this world.

Thursday of the Passion week is observed as the Maundy Thursday (*Pesaha*) by the church. The word *Pesaha* means Passover. It is the annual feast of the Jews to commemorate their exodus from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses by the command of the Lord. To redeem Jews from a defiant Pharaoh, the destroyer of the Lord entered each and every house of Egypt in the midnight and killed their first born; while the destroyer passed over Jewish homes sealed by the blood of the lamb. This pasover is celebrated as the *Pesaha* by the Jews. (Exodus Chapter 12).

The slaughtered lamb was the forerunner to the Messiah, who was sacrificed to save the whole world from sin.

On this *Pesaha* day, after completing the old testament *Pesaha* in the Zion Mansion, Jesus in the presence of his disciples instituted the new testament *Pesaha*. After transforming the bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ, He gave it to His disciples and commanded them to observe it until His second coming. The new testament *Pesaha* is a commemorates this.

On *Pesaha* wednesday, the celebrations begin in the church with evening prayers followed by Soothara and midnight prayers. Then the *Pesaha* special service and prayers starts and ends with the Holy eucharist and its acceptance by the believers.

Good Friday

Observance of the Good Friday is an unavoidable in the life of a Christian. On Good Friday, Jesus Christ was slaughtered for the atonement of the sin of the world in Calvary. Good Friday service begins at 9 am and ends at 3.30 pm.

There are two circumambulations (*Pradakshinam*) in the good Friday observance - the first one is conducted after 3rd hour prayers. It starts by going out through the southern door of the church, moving westwards, completing one revolution and entering the church through the north door. Umbrellas and flags are not permitted in this circumambulation. It symbolises the journey of Jesus to Golgotha carrying the cross.

The second circumambulation is conducted towards the end of the service. After the noon and 9th hour prayers and cross adoration services, everyone kneels and kisses the cross. The 2nd circumambulation is conducted after this. This also leaves the church through the south door and after completing one circuit around the church, enters the church through the North door. Black umbrellas and flags that shows grief are permitted for this circumambulation. In some churches the 2nd circumambulation is conducted inside the church. In this case, the journey moves through the southern side of the church and returns through the northern side. Umbrellas and flags are not required for this circumambulation. It commemorates the carry-

ing of the body of Jesus for burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemous.

After the service, the faithful disperse after drinking the *chorukka* (blessed bitter water from the cross). It commemorates the giving of sour wine to our Lord on the cross when He felt thirsty.

Easter (*Kymtha*)

The Resurrection of our Lord on the 3rd day of his crucifixion is known as Easter or *Kymtha*. Our Lord who died and buried on Friday, defeated death and resurrected on the 3rd day, Sunday. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of Christian faith. We are worshipping the Resurrected Christ rather than the dead Lord lying on the cross. If the Lord had not risen from the tomb, there is no benefit for mankind. It is the resurrected Lord who defeated death and saved the mankind from the slavery of Satan.

It is Mary Magdalene and her friends who first came to know the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus. When they reached the tomb in the early morning of Sunday, they saw it opened. It is the angel of the Lord who informed them the good news of the resurrection of Jesus. The Lord first appeared to the weeping Mary Magdalene who remained near the tomb, even after the departure of her friends. He blessed her and entrusted her the mission of informing the disciples the good news of his Resurrection and then disappeared.

Easter is the festival of peace. When the Resurrected Lord appears to the disciples who were grieved due to His death, He first says, "Peace be with you". To get that heavenly peace, we must attend the Easter Services.

Easter services begin with evening prayers on Saturday. After completing all prayers, the Easter services end with the Holy Mass. Either after *sleeba* celebration or after the Holy Mass, the faithful kiss the *sleeba* and greet peace to each other. Obedience of the cross is not permitted between resurrection and *Ponticost*.

Ascension

Thursday that comes after forty days of resurrection is celebrated as the festival of Ascension. Resurrected Jesus appeared many times to his disciples during those forty days. He made them known that as promised, he has resurrected from death and taught them many lessons. On the 40th day after his resurrection accompanied by his disciples, he went to Mount Olive, and ascended to heaven in their presence (Act-1 :9-11) The disciples were stunned to see that spectacle. They were consoled by the angels and assured them that he will come back in the same way. He has given us an assurance that "after I go prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself" (John 14 :1-4) "and I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever". He has

further assured us that. when he ascends to heaven , he shall send the Holy spirit. He has ordered us to wait and pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

You should not leave Jerusalem you should wait for the offer, that you heard from me, from father John has baptised you with water. You will receive baptism by the Holy spirit without delay (Acts 1 : 4 - 5)

Ten days between ascension to Pentecost is known as days of expectation. Festivals, ceremonies and marriages are not permitted during these days.

Pentecost

Pentecost means 50th day Sunday the 10th day that comes after ascension is celebrated as Pentecost. It was on that day the Jews celebrated Pentecost . As directed by Jesus while all the disciples along with Mariam, the Mother of Jesus and other women were praying harmoniously in the mansion of St. Marks on that Sunday, the 10th day after ascension; That the Holy spirit, the steward descended and dwelled in them .The Holy Spirit still remains in this world and will be here until the 2nd coming of the Lord .

Pentecost is an important festival of the Jews .It is a festival of harvest- It is also called

1. Feast- of gathering (Exodus 2 : 3 -16)
2. Feast of weeks (Exodus 3 : 4 -22 ,Deut. 16 : 19 -22)
3. Feast of gathering
4. festival of the first fruits(Num. 29 :26)

This festival is celebrated after the 7th week of the beginning of harvest - (50th day) count Seven weeks from the time that you began to harvest the corn and then celebrate the harvest festival, to honour the Lord your God, by bringing to him a free will offering in proportion to the blessing he has given you “ (Dut. 16 : 9-10)

It was on that day of the festival of the harvest of the Jews (50th day) that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples. For the Christians, it is on the 50th day after resurrection that the Pentecost came. For that reason it is the festival of the gift of Holy Spirit for Christians. The Pentecost Service is conducted in three orders. First is the special prayers to God , the Holy father; Second to God, the Holy son; and the third to God, the Holy Spirit . At the end of each one of these services water is sprinkled upon the believers as a symbol of obtaining Holy Spirit.

Festival of the Cross.

Memory of the discovery of the Cross of our Lord is celebrated as the festival of the cross. In 306 A.D., Roman emperor Constantine had a vision about the greatness of the cross. He defeated Maxentius in 312, with cross as the symbol in his flag. Queen Mother Helena, went to Jerusalem and discovered the cross and the Tomb of our Lord in 326 A.D. she constructed a beautiful church around the Tomb and brought the Holy cross to

Constatinople.

September 14th is celebrated as the Holy day of the cross since it is Kanni harvest season in Kerala, It is celebrated with festival of the new rice.

Lord Jesus earned salvation for mankind through obedience, endurance and unflinching faith in God. He, by his life, earned atornment for the sin of Adam. One should show respect and obeisance to the cross, the symbol of obedience and endurance. In doing so we are showing respect to Jesus, who earned our salvation through the cross.

Other Moronoyoto Festival.

Memorail day of the saints in whose sacraed name the church is dedicated, is to be observed like a moronoyoto festival. Even if these memorial day falls on wednesday or friday, that day need not be observed as fasting days and believers are allowed to use fish or meat.

When the people of Isreal in their exodus from Egypt to Canan angered Yahweh fiery serpants discented from heaven to bite them and those who were bitten died on the spot. The people cried to Moses. They wailed that we have sinned against you and the great God. Moses then prayed to God and as God had commanded Moses made a brass snake and placed it on top of the flag mast in the centre of the encampment. Those who were bitten by fiery snake was asked to look at the brass snake with faith and those who were bitten looked at the brass snake and escaped from death. It is in this memory, the victorious Cross of our Lord is fixed in the centre of the church. Those who look at the Cross with faith can escape from satanic torments. All beleivers entering the church should bow anad show obeisance to the Cross.

Holy saturday is the memorial day in which our Lord discended to Hades and preached the gospel to the souls who were imprisoned there.

Other Important Moronoyoto festivals

Wednesday of the Ninevah feast(three day lent), Feast of Ascension of St. Mary(Agust 15) Feast of St. Peter's and St. Paul (June 29th) and St. Thomas day (July 3rd) are the other festivals that are to be observed along with moronoyoto festivals.

PART VI
Worship - A study
LESSON -17

(A) CHURCH INSTRUMENTS

1. CENSER

The instrument used to burn incense during the Holy Mass and other Sacraments is known as censer. Burning of incense was an important custom in Jewish Worship

There are two parts for the censer, a base and a lid (an inverted cup) connecting the two there are four chains each with three bells a total of twelve, The chains are joined together at the top by a hook and a ring.

The lower cup of the censer indicates womb of Virgin Mary the Mother of God and the fire inside it represents our Lord who stayed in the womb of the virgin. The 1st chain indicates the Holy Father, Second & Third the Holy son, and the fourth Holy spirit. While the twelve bells indicate the twelve apostles of Jesus. The conjoining of the hook and the ring represents the unity of the Trinity. Incense put in the censer is a gum. It reminds us that as the gum produces pleasant smell in the presence of fire, our prayers should be Holy and sincere so as to become acceptable fragrance to God.

There is another meaning also for the censer. The upper cup represents heaven, the lower cup the earth, and the charcoal in it the sinners and the fire, the holy spirit. Just like the coal blazes in the fire, the sinners are to be purified in the presence of God.

Evangelion table (*Simhasana*)

It is the Gospel stand where the *Evangelion* containing the four gospels is kept. It is usually placed on the right side of the *Thronose* or Altar. The Gospels represent Jesus, the Holy Son. The abode of Jesus in the Heaven is on the right side of the Holy Father.

In our prayers, we face the east. It is believed that God is sitting facing west and the churches are built with a western face with an eastern view. Then the right hand side is the northern side of the church.

At the time of *Holy Qurbana*, the north corner of the *Shooshepo* is folded. It is done during the preparatory prayers (Thuyobo), after burning incense in the name of the Holy son. It is because of the belief that the seat of the Holy son is in the right hand side of the Holy Father.

On the day of his Martyrdom Saint Stephen saw the Heaven opened and Jesus standing on the right hand side of the Holy Father. (Acts 7 : 54 -56)

Thablitho

It is a small piece of board used to place the Vessels (Chalice & Patern) It has been consecrated by a high priest by Holy Chrism. Each Thablitho has an inscription of the name and the date of its consecration . It is to prevent a second consecration or to prevent the use of one which is not consecrated . In places where there is no church, the priests can offer the Holy Mass by placing the holy vessels on it.

Thalbeshto (Viri koottam)

The *Thablitho* is placed in the centre of the Throne and a multi coloured cloth, Virikottam is spread on it. The Chalice and Paten are placed on it. It is made up of three pieces of cloth - red, green and white. The outer piece is red, symbolising the universe created by God. The middle piece is green which symbolises the earth, and the innermost piece is white, symbolizing the Holy church. The white portion covers Thablitho and Chalice and Paten are placed on it. The Virikoottam is either plain or decorated with embroidery work. Now a days, there is a tendency to use the Virikoottam stiched in any order or colour, this is because of ignorance regarding its meaning. It is highly wrong.

Chithola (Altar cloth)

The cloth that covers the whole Altar is called chithol. Only red, green and white clothes are permitted to stich the chithol. It is decorated with embroidery works showing Cross , Dove, Vine and Wheat.

While the cross signifies Jesus, the Dove denotes the Holy Spirit. The Grape stalks shows the blessings of God, the bread made from wheat, and the wine taken from the grapes are used for the Holy Mass.

Chalice

One of the Vessels that is used in the Holy Qurbana. It holds wine for the Holy Mass. It has a long handle.

Paten

Paten is a flat small plate. It is used to place bread for the mass. When it is arranged for the Holy Qurbana the chalice is kept in the east while paten is kept in the West.

Kaucbo (Star)

The is a star shaped frame made up of Gold or Silver. It is placed over the paten to hold the Mkablono (Paten's cover) from touching the bread. It Symbolizes the star of nativity, the star which appeared to the wisemen, that stood above the manger where Jesus was born. (Mathew 2 :10- 11)

Mkablono

The cover made of cloth used to cover the Holy vessels when they are not covered by *Shooshepo*. It symbolizes the cloud that foreshadowed the Tabernacle.

Shooshepo

The white silk cloth that cover the Holy vessels. There will be embroidery work showing dove or cross on it. After the *Thuyobo*, the priest covers the chalice and paten with this cloth. *Shooshopo* represents the hard rock which gave forth water to the twelve tribes of Israel, the stone which closed the tomb of Jesus and the great sheet which descended before St. Peter in his vision.

Gmurtho

A small cushion of 3 inches x 1.5 inches

Tharvodo

This is a small spoon used to drink the holy eucharist from the chalice. It represents the tongs which the angel used in giving the coal to the mouth of Isaiah in his vision.

Finger bowl (Mshamshanito)

This is used by the priest to mix wine with water and also to clean his fingers at the fraction and at the conclusion of the celebrant's communion. This water is consumed by the priest along with the eucharist at the end of the Mass. The chalice and paten is washed many times at the end of the Mass. And the priest drinks the water, so that not even a small fragment of the Holy eucharist is lost.

The Cross

A cross is placed in the middle to the eastern end of the Altar. It should have *Oororo* (a small strip of red silk) and a superscription

Oororo

A small and narrow strip of red silk put on the cross is called *Oororo*. It is an evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. While Jesus was buried his head and face was covered with a special cloth, a custom practiced by the Jews. The body is wrapped with cloths only after covering the face and head with this special cloth. This special cloth will put only on the face of a dead man not on the face of an alive.

When Peter and John heard the good news of the resurrection of the Lord, they ran to the tomb, entered and searched it. They saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. The removal of the cloth from the face is the symbol of resurrection. This cloth was the best evidence that the disciples received to prove the resurrection of the Lord from the dead. This cloth is used as *Oororo* after making alterations in shape. Though Jesus and thieves were crucified on the cross only Jesus was resurrected. *Oororo* as an indication of the resurrection of the Lord.

Inscription

Pilate had written the reason for the crucifixion of Jesus on the top of the cross. It was “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of Jews”. INRI is its latin abbreviation. The cross placed on the Altar should have this title and *Oororo* on it.

Candles

Thirteen candles are to be placed in the Altar, six each on either side of the cross and one in front of the cross. The twelve candles on either side represents the twelve disciples of Jesus. The disciples never walked in front of their Guru, Jesus always kept themselves on either side or back.

The one candle in front of the cross represents St. John The Baptist. Since he is the forerunner of Jesus, the candle that represents him is kept in front of the cross.

The open celebration of the Holy mass marks the public ministry of Jesus. At the time of the public ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist was in jail and was later executed. So at the beginning of the open celebration of the Holy mass the thirteenth candle in front of the cross should be removed.

The candles remind us that we should be prepared to sacrifice ourselves to light others.

Bells

Two types of Bells are used in the church, Big bells (Church Bell) and Hand Bells.

Big Bells

Ringing of the big bell is a reminder to the people that the Holy worship is about to start. Under no circumstances the big bells can be used while the worship is in progress. This was originally, striking on a piece of wood, in the early church. Moses Bar Keepho says that “When we hear its voice it reminds us about the death of Jesus on Cross.” Mor Jacob says, “When you hear the sound of bell hasten your run to the holy church”

When we hear the ringing of the bell we sign ourselves with the cross bow our head.

Hand bells- are rung during the Holy mass, along with *Marvathso*, to call the attention of the people.

Marvahtho

It is a small metal fan mounted on a large pole, and has many small bells on the rim of the fan. In the centre is seen the Seraphic face and wings represented. It reminds us that angels are present in the Holy Mass.

B. HEIRARCHICAL ORDER OF THE PRIEST-HOOD

The Heirarchical order of the priest hood in the Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church is given below

1. Qoruyo (4th order Deacon)

2. Apodyaqno(5th order Deacon)
3. Shamosho(6th order Deacon)
4. Kaseeso(7th order - The priest)
5. Episcopa- Metropolitan - (High priest)
6. Catholicose (Head of the Region)
7. Patriarch (Supreme Head of the Universal Church)

The first 3 orders of Deaconry can be given to all laity. They are Hymano , Moumyono and Msamrono.

The present regional Head of our church, the catholicose, is His Beatitude Baselius Thomas I.

The present supreme head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox church, the patriarch of Antioch, is His Holiness Ignatius Zakka Iwas I

C. VESTMENTS OF THE PRIESTS

1. Camees or Casak

From the time on which a laity is ordained to priest hood (Korooyo) there occurs changes in his dress. A white dress, camees, or casak is put over their ordinary dress. This dress should be used by the priest attending all religious services or in a journey or attending a public function. It helps to indentify the priests from others or to remind him of his special postion. The priest of all ranks up to the high priest should wear this dress. An ordained high priest puts on a red comees or casak.

2. Black gown (kutheeno)

All ordained priest from fourth order deacon should have a black camees. Whenever they are attending services , they are bound to wear it. When they are celebrating the Holy mass or performing other sacraments, they must wear other specific dresses in addition to the black casak or camees

3. The priest offering the Holy Mass and the Deacon who attends it, are to wear a white gown above the black camees. It is known as the sevice gown or alb.

4. Oororo - The long strip of cloth put above the service gown by all deacons below the rank of a priest while serving in the sanctuary.

5. Hammico is the breast plate put on by priests high priest above the service gown. It is a modified form of oororo used by the deacons. It is a chest armour to resist the enemy. It reminds us that the life of a priest is a continuous war against the world, flesh and satan the three enemies

6. Zenoro This is the girdle or belt worn by priests around the waist. It shows the preparedness to fight against the enemy at all times.

7. Zendo These are the sleeves worn over the forearms .It symbolizes the priest's readiness

to keep God's Law and do works of righteousness.

8. Phayno The outer vestment worn by the priest and High priest while celebrating the Holy Mass. It is the robe of holiness and righteousness. It represents the overcoat of the Lord which the woman with the issue of blood touched and was healed and also the mantle of Elisha which fell on the prophet Elisha.

9. Shoes .The special ceremonial footwear used by priests of all ranks while celebrating the Holy Mass. It shows the readiness to tread down the opponent, the evil one.

D. SPECIAL DRESS OF THE HIGH PRIESTS

1. Masnapso is the black head cover worn by all the High priests always. It is the official head cover of a Monk. It symbolizes that when a person accepts hermitage he relinquishes worldly life. Once it is accepted it can be removed only during bath or other personal daily routines.

2. Veil- Mitre - is the Head veil worn by prelates while participating in important sacraments. It is compared with the veil of Moses. On Easter Sunday Peter who entered the tomb of our Lord first saw the shroud folded and kept separately. He took it as a mortal remain of our Lord and wore it while consecrating priests. Dionysius Bar Sleebi says that it was a practice in church that the prelates began to use the Head veil while administering the sacraments.

3. Patrasheel or Pallium. It is similar to the Hamnikho but extends both front and back.

It symbolises the chest robe of Aaron decorated by a studded chest medal where in is grafted the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. It illustrates the fact that the prelate is the protector of all sacraments and true faith, the performer of all holy sacraments and the governor of the church.

E. THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED IN WORSHIP

Entering the church - Before entering the church either for worship or for any other purpose we must remove your sandals. We should enter the church with all respect, bow our head, making the sign of cross upon us and do the pray, " With reverence do I enter thine house and make mine offerings unto thee".

Since the church is the abode of God, the king of kings, it is a mansion that should be honoured with all reverence. So one should enter the church with all humility .

Since we are swearing that we will dedicate our offerings, one should not enter the church with an empty hand, but with a share of his fruits to the God. God has demanded from Israel the tithe and they paid it.

Before entering the church one should make their body, mind and soul pure and should wear their finest clean dress. Women should cover their head.

All sextons serving in the Altar are to wear pants and white Service cloak.

Attending the service outside the church or in Church office is a serious offence. Officials

of the church are not permitted to transact any business during worship. Believers are expected to give the names that are to be remembered in the Holy Qurbana before the beginning of the service.

Prayers

Midnight, Morning , Third hour and Sixth hour prayers are to be completed before the the Holy Qurbana. If the Midnight and Morning Prayers were completed at home, the Holy Qurbana can be offered after completing the Third hour and Sixth hour prayers in the church.

Resurrection - Sleeba prayers

The worship calendar of the church is divided in to two periods- *Kyomtha* period and *Sleeba* period. The period from Easter Sunday to Sleeba Festival (September -14) is known as *Kyomtha* period.

Preparations by the priest

The priest offers the Holy Qurbana after completing all the canonical prayers. These prayers are conducted by the priest in Kesthromo (*Azhikkakam*) wearing *Kutheeno* (black gown) By reciting specific prayers he wears the particular shoes to be used in Altar. After kissing the hands of the prelate (if present) and offering peace to all associate priests he moves to the southern side of Kesthromo, offers special prayers and after kissing the sanctuary he enters the sanctuary through right side. Then the priest turns to the west and bows the people requesting for their prayers. After this the priest turns to east , bows the altar walks around the altar, kissing its four corners. The sexton then pulls the veil.

Thuyobo - prepration

Then the celebrant arranges the things on the altar for Holy Qurbana. This preparatory service is done inside the veil only. This is known as *Thuyobo*. These preparations are to be made by the same priest who offers the Holy Qurbana. Thuyobo consists of two orders of prayers such as *order of Melchizedek* and *order of Aaron*.

Order of Melchizedek.

When Abraham returned after defeating kings, he was received by Malchizedek the king of Jerusalem by presenting Bread & Wine. He was the priest of the Most high God. Abraham paid him tithes of all that he had and Melchizedek blessed Abraham. The arrangement of bread and wine for the Holy Qurbana by the celebrant remembering the service of Melchizedek narrated in chapter 14 Book Genesis, is known as the order of Melchizedek. The celebrant place the bread in the paten and wine (wine mixed with water in equal amounts) in chalice with specific prayers . All these time the priest wears the black gown.

Order of Aaron

After completing the order of Melchizedek, the celebrant washes his hands and wears the vestments. The he kneels before the Altar and pray in silence. Through these prayers he request for the mercy from God for any of his weaknesses and sins that he might have committed and to make eligible him to celebrate this Holy Qurbana.

After the Secret prayers the celebrant enters the Durgo (Altar Step) and begins the order of Aaron.

In the old Testament, until the comming of anointed Aaron, nobody had the right to offer a blood sacrafice or to touch the sacrificial blood. It is only after the anointment of Aaron as the anointed high priest, that the priests began to touch the Sacrificial blood. Preparatory prayers to transform the Bread and Wine into the body of Jesus Christ are performed here. That is why it is known as the order of Aaron. In this preparatory prayers he prays for the whole universe and all men. This clearly shows the universality and oneness of the Holy Qurbana.

Introductory prayers are offered, remembering the salvation works of our Lord . The order of Aron begins by remembering the first father Adam and mother Eve, St. Mary the mother of God, Prophets, Apostles, Authors of the 4 gospels, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics, Saints, Priests, Holy Fathers, True Sheperds, True Preachers, *Ihidayae* (Ascetics), Monks, Teachers, Parents, Brothers, Fellow Believers, Departed Priests and Relatives, all those who had helped in the construction of the Church. The order of Aaron is completed by remembering, dedicating and requesting the intercession of, St. Mary, the patron saint of the church (the saint in whose name the church is dedicated), patients, repenters, deceased parents of the celebrant, living parents of the celebrant, the known and unknown departed souls , brothers, teachers.

Then the celebrant places the Chalice in the east and paten in the west on the top of the Tabalitho and covers them with the *Shooshepo* and descends from the *durgo* (Altar step). Then he offers incense and recites the general *Promion* and the *Sedro*.

He again ascends the *durgo* and incenses the holy vessels. Then he descends from the *dugro* and offers incense and kisses at the middle of the Altar in the name of Holy Father by saying ‘worship be to the kind Father’, then at the northern end in the name of Holy Son by saying ‘worship be to the merciful son’. Here he folds the north coner of *the Shooshepo*. It symbolizes the dual nature in Christ - the divine and human and it reminds us that our Lord Jesus who assended to heaven is sitting on the right side of Holy Father. Finally the celebrant offers incesnse and kisses at the southern corner in the name of Holy Son by saying ‘worship be unto the living and Holy Ghost. Then he gives the Censer to the server or deacon and finishes the Seal or conclusion prayers. Thuyooobo is concluded with prayers to Lord God the

Almighty to have mercy on us, the whole world and all the departed souls with the intercessions of Hail Mary and all the saints . Then after reciting the Lord's prayer and nicene creed, kisses the Altar and completes the Thuyoobo. By this all preparations are completed for the open celebration of the Holy Qurbana.

Preparation by the Congregation

While the celebrant is engaged in Thuyoobo, the congregation completes the prayers, deacons read chapters from the old testament and sings the hymns. Reminding the congregation that it is time to start the Holy Communion, Sextons rings the third bell and pulls back the Veil(curtain) and the celebrant commences the open celebration of the Holy Qurbana..

Remembering the names of persons in the Holy Qurbana

The members of the congregation are required to reach the church before the commencement of the Holy Qurbana. The names that are to be remembered in the Holy Qurbana should reach the celebrant before Thuyoobo. Celebrant remembers these names first during the *thuyoobo*. Hence if it is not received earlier it cannot be remembered.

The celebrant remembers these names again during the recital of the Nicene creed. He kneels before the Altar and puts a cross mark for each and every name as if entering them in the book of life. If the names are not given before that time, it will not be remembered in that Qurbana.. Given names are again remembered during the recital of *Thubden/Diptycs*. The names that are not remembered during Thuyoobo or the nicene creed will not be remembered during Diptych. It will be kept away for the next Qurbana. So the names that are to be remembered should reach the celebrant atleast before the nicene creed.

Lighting the candles in the Cemetery

Now a days a custom is seen in some places that few people coming for the Qurbana first visit the cemetery and light the candles on the tombs of their departed one's. It cannot be treated as wrong. But visiting the cemetery during the Holy Qurbana is highly wrong. While transubstantiation, Even when the Angels are looked upon the Holy Qurbana with awe and fear and the departed souls are attending the Holy Qurbana any act like praying and lighting candles on the tomb or cleaning the tomb area is highly unjustifiable.

***Kurbana Panam* (Donations for Qurbana)**

In the Jewish Church it was customary that the believers must bring their offerings and should be given to the priests. They have to co-operate with the priest in the sacrifice and they were received and ate a portion of the offerings.

Likewise in the early church the believers used to bring wheat flour and wine as offering and the priest used a portion of that offering for the Holy Qurbana and all the congregation shared the eucharist. Later it was found that payment of money is easier than bringing

objects and thus people began to pay money for the offerings instead of objects. Later it is known as *Kurbana Panam* or donations for Qurbana'.

The Offertory Box (*Bhandaram*)

Believers are not allowed to drop money in the Offertory box or pour oil in the lamp while the Qurbana is Celebrated. All are expected to associate with the Qurbana with awe and respect and is not permitted to do other unimportant things.

Children & Aged People

Children, laughing and crying, running around and making noises with anklets and shoes will distract the attention of the congregation. It should not be allowed. Likewise elderly members should not obstruct the young ones by standing in front of them. Separate arrangements may be made for the elders so that their presence will not disturb others.

Sitting during Holy Qurbana

The people are not allowed to sit in the Church except during the Diptychs or any time by the consent of the priest. On the contrary, elders and patients can sit without disturbing others.

Receiving the Holy Eucharist

The communicant has to prepare themselves from the previous day to receive the Holy Eucharist. They have to complete all the canonical prayers and should reach the church earlier, to attend all the prayers. Before receiving the Eucharist one has to confess before the priest, if they felt that they have committed a sin. Once confessed it is not necessary to do confession for next 40 days. However if one has committed any sin within these 40 days, he has to undergo confession before accepting Eucharist. Even though one felt that he has committed no sin one might have committed many wrongs without his own knowledge. One has to receive atonement for that sin before receiving Eucharist. So those who need no confession, has to receive atonement prayers (*Husoyo prayers*) from the priest before the Holy Qurbana. All the faithfuls should take a confession once in 40 days before accepting Eucharist. They are not allowed to take any food or water, after the previous days supper. However serious patients may get cession from these norms. The belief that anybody can accept Eucharist provided he has fasted after the last supper is wrong.

Reading of the Bull(*Kalpana*)

The believers are not allowed to sit while reading the bull of the prelates. Two aids, with lighted candles, has to stand on either side of the priest while reading the bull of the Patriarch. Only one lighted candle is required if the bull is from the Catholicose. No candle is

required if the bull is from the Bishops.

Readings from the Old Testament & Hymns

After completing the 6th hour prayer (noon-prayers), before the commencement of the open celebration of the Holy Qurbana Old Testament readings are done. Incarnation of Jesus, God's plan for the redemption of mankind, How God protected his chosen people in Old Testament times, Predictions made by God through the prophets regarding the future are all remembered here. The Holy Qurbana begins with the remembrance of the beginning of the public ministry of the Jesus, the redeemer. The person who read the Old testament should stand in the north east corner of the prayer table facing the congregation.

Serving the Holy Eucharist to the sick at home

Sick persons, who are incapable of attending service in the Church, are given the Holy Eucharist at home. For this, both the patient and members in his home should be prepare themselves. The priest or sexton should be informed of this matter in the morning itself. If the Holy Unction (anointing with oil) is also given along with this it should be informed well in advance.

The sick person after a nice bath, wearing clean dresses, should be seated or laid in a neat place, a room set apart for the same, dirty clothes and other materials should be removed from there. The house and the surroundings should be kept neat and tidy.

Arrangements are to be made, if the Holy unction is also performed. After completing the Prayers of the Holy Unction, water for washing hands of the priest , a basin for collecting water, a small cup for pouring water, a new soap and a neat towel should be provided. If the sick is incapable of taking solid food, the priest should be informed of it in advance; Such patients are given Eucharist wine rather than Eucharist bread, If the sick is incapable of consuming the whole Holy Eucharist, the priest should consume the whole balance . The Casket vessel used, to bring the Holy Eucharist should also be washed and the priest should drink that water. The priest is not permitted to consume anything, not even water until the patient is served with Holy Eucharist . Since the priest has not broken the fasting, the family should prepare breakfast for him and the accompanying sexton in advance and the priest may be allowed to return as early as possible since he has to attend other engagements in the Church.

PART VII
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
LESSON 18
THE SYNOD OF MULANTHURUTHY

The Holy Synod of Mulanthuruthy is an important event in the History of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church. The Synod was summoned by His Holiness Ignatius Peter III - Considering St.Peter as the 1st Patriarch, His Holinesses is counted as Peter IV in certain documents. The Holy Synod met at Mar Thoman Church Mulanthuruthy in Kanayannoor Thaluk of Ernakulam District (old Cochin State). It lasted for 3 days - 28, 29 and 30th of June 1876 (15,16,17 of Midunam 1051).

Three weeks before, His Holiness Patriarch Peter III had sent a summons bull to all churches informing the meeting of the Holy Synod, to discuss and decide on the general spiritual matters of the Church. 130 priests and 144 laymen from 103 churches attended the Synod. It was also attended by two metropolitans - His Grace Abdulla Mar Gregorius of Jerusalem (Later H.H. Patriarch Ignatious Abdulla) and Joseph Mar Dionysius from Malankara Church. The arrangements for the Synod were done by the secretary to His Holiness, Very Rev. Geevarghese Ramban Chathuruthil of the Mulanthuruthy parish (the great sacred saint, Geevarghese Mor Gregorius 'Kochu thirumeni').

On the first day of the Holy Synod, the registration of the representatives took place. The *agreement papers* brought by the Church Representatives were submitted before the Holy Father. The inaugural speech by His Holiness also took place on the same day.

The *Apostolic Bull* of the Patriarch was read on the second day. The consequences of the ordination of Palakunnath Mathews Mor Athanasius in the Malankara Church and the measures taken by His Holiness to eliminate them were narrated by His Holiness in detail. The bull also mentioned on the need of a powerful administrative machinery to avoid such occurrence in the future. Detailed discussion took place for giving a suitable replay to the bull.

The reply was submitted by the Holy synod on the 3rd day to the Holy Father. It declared the obedience, attachment and obligation of the church to the Holy see of Antioch.

1. The members of the Malankara church, maintaing the past true faith shall unitedly stand

behind the Holy see of Antioch. Accordingly, those who violates that Holy faith shall have no position either in the congregation or in the Church. In the light of this the reformers who move away from the holy faith became alien to the Church.

2. It was decided to provide the printed canon law of the Church to all the congregations

3. It was decided to keep separate registers for baptism, marriage and burial in all congregations.

4. It was decided to create a permanent fund for the common use of the church.

5. It was also decided to constitute a committee of priests and lay men under the Chairmanship of Metropolitan to look after the general administrative system of the Church.

Thus a communal democratic administrative system under spiritual leadership came into existence in the church.

It was decided to record the minutes of the decisions of the Holy synod, undersigned by all the members who attended the meeting of the Holy Synod and to submit one copy of the same to His Holiness and to keep another copy in the Head quarters of the Church. An Affidavit recording all these decisions were submitted by the members of the Church to His Holiness. This is the famous document known as *Mulanthurthy Padiyola*.

Realising the vastness of the Malankara Church and the difficulty to administer it by one Bishop, the Holy Father decided to divide Malankara church into Seven diocese. It was decided to continue the H.Q. of the Malankara metropolitan at Kottayam itself and to create 3 dioceses each in the north and south of Kottayam. The new dioceses were Angamaly, Kochi and Kandanad in the North and Kottayam, Niranam and Thumpamon in the south. For administering these dioceses six more Bishops were consecrated by this Holiness.

The Dioceses and Their Bishops

Angamaly	-	Geevarghese Mor Koorilose (Ambat)
Kochi	-	Simon Mor Dionysius (Karottuveetil)
Kandanad	-	Paulose Mor Ivanios (Murimattom)
Kollam	-	Paulose Mor Athanasius (Kadavil)
Niranam	-	Geevarghese Mor Gregorios (Chathuruthiil)
Thumpamon	-	Geevarghese Mor Julius

The Malankara Metropolitan, Joseph Mor Dionysius (Pulikottil) was also in charge of Kottayam Dioceses. Later taking into consideration, the heavy work load of Malankara Metropolitan, His Holiness ordered the Mutual exchange of Kollam Dioceses to Joseph Mor Dionysius and Kottayam Dioceses to Paulose Mor Athanasius.

As per the discussion of the Holy synod, a committee of 8 priests and 16 laymen from different parts of the Malankara Church, was constituted for administrative purpose. This committee under the chairmanship of Malankara Metropolitan is known as Syrian Christian

Association. This Holy father who worked for the unity and existence of the Malankara Church with his spiritual and temporal action will be remembered ever as its saviour. His Holiness returned to the Holy See in 1877.

His Holiness who was born in Greece, the cradle of democracy, have had no difficulty in taking such a decision. By this the Jacobite church succeeded in keeping and maintaining the true faith even in the lack of the leadership of a Bishop.

LESSON 19

MOR DIONYSIUS V

Dionysius V (Joseph Mor Dionysius Pulikottil) was the foremost - Bishop among the celebrated Metropolitans of Kerala. He was consecrated by His Holiness Patriarch Yacoob II in 1865. He managed the most difficult cases for the Church and the court accepted him as the Head of the Malankara Church. In 1879, he filed a civil suit against Thomas Mar Athanasius (Palakunnath) in Alleppy District court to get release of the properties of the community. The Old seminary and the adjunct properties were the main items of the case. Hence this case is known as "Seminary Suit". He became eligible to receive the interest of the lent money (*Vattipanam*). All the Churches were taken back from the Marthomites.

The Parumala Seminary and the printing press in Old seminary were started by him. It helped the social development of the church. Many schools, including MD Seminary schools were started by him. He established the church Thiruvananthapuram and Vettikkal Dayara. Holy book and books on rites were printed. He also started Magazines like '*Edavaka Pathrika*, and '*Suviseshakan*'.

Since all the Bishops, except Mor Dionysius and Mar Ivanios (Murimattom) passed away, the representatives of the church met and decided to elect Paulose Ramban (Kochuparambil) and Geevarghese Ramban (Vattasseril) to Bishopricks in the Malankara Church. They were sent to the Holy See of Antioch and were duly consecrated as Bishops on May 31st 1908 by the then Patriarch H.H. Adulla II, as Paulose Mor Koorilose and Geevarghese Mor Dionysius respectively. They were returned to the Malankara Church along with the representatives of the Holy See, Sreeba Mor Osthathius. Joseph Mor Dionysius expired on July 1st 1909 and was buried in Old Seminary at Kottayam.

Division in the Church

Vattasseril Geevarghese Mor Dionysius was elected as Malankara Metropolitan after Joseph Mor Dionysius. It received consent from H.H. Abdulla II, the Patriarch of Antioch.

He is also known as *Mallappilly Methran*, *Vattasseril Thirumeni* or Mor Dionysius VI.

Schism began to develop in the Malankara Church when Mor Geevarghese Dionysius became selfish and self willed. Very Rev. Konatt Mathen Malpan and Sri. C.J. Kurian were joint Trustees. When Malankara Metropolitan began to handle the church possessions without consulting the joint trustees there developed a conflict between, the Metropolitan and the joint trustees on their respective powers and rights. This difference of opinion led to a division in the church. Two parties came into existence, one supporting the Patriarch and the other supporting Mor Dionysius, they were known as Bhava Party and Methran Party respectively. Very Rev. Konattu Malppan and Sri.C.J. Kurian the joint trustees along with Mor Dionysius declared their allegiance to the Holy see of Anthioch.

LESSON 20

MALANKARA VISIT OF H.H. ABDED ALOHO (ABDULLA) AND ITS LINKED INCIDENTS

His Holiness Ignatious Abdulla, the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East reached Bombay on September 24th 1909. H.H. was received at Bombay, with all devotion and reverence by His Grace Dionysius VI and was brought to Malankara. H. H. was given a royal welcome at Kottayam. H.H. then proceeded to Trivandrum to meet His Highness Sree Moolam Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore and returned to Kottayam. To bring an order in the administration in the Malankara Church, H.H. demanded from the two Bishops, whom he had consecrated to give an agreement as per law. The Bishops who were consecrated by H.H. Peter III had given such an agreement. Even though H.G. Paulose Mor Koorilos readily made such an agreement while H.G. Mor Dionysius VI refused. Not only that he also spread blasphemous charges against His Holiness. His Grace instigated his supporters to insult His Holiness by calling him power greedy. As a result His Holiness convened a meeting of the representatives of the church at Kottayam on November 28th 1909. (On the instigation of Mor Dionasius VI his supporters raised an uproar in the Meeting.

His Holiness consecrated Painadath Paulose Ramban, as the Metropolitan of Angamaly in the name of Paulose Mor Athanasius, at Akapparambu Church. A separate diocese was created for Cananites and Edavazhikkal Geevarghese Kaseesa was consecrated as Mar Saverius for that diocese on 28th August 1910.

Since Mor Dionasius VI continued his quarrel. The atmosphere in the church has become agitative. This prompted H. H. to suspend H.G.Dionasius VI from all his temporal duties in the Malankara church.

In 1911, H.H. consecrated Mooron at St. Thomas church Mulanthuruthi. He also convened a meeting of the representatives of the church at Alwaye in the same year. The meeting elected Paulose Mor Koorilose as Malankara Metropolitan and Very.Rev. Konattu

He was succeeded to the Holy see of Antioch by H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Elias III. The next move by H.G. Dionasius VI, suspended by H.H. Abdulla, resulted in permanent schism in the Malankara church. He was well aware of the fact that, the relationship of Malankara church with the Holy see of Antioch is very much needed for its perfection. However he refused to follow a proper way to achieve it. Mor Abdul Messiah, a one time Patriarch of Antioch who dismissed from the throne of Holy See by the Holy synod due to mental disorders and vanishing memory, was brought to Malankara in 1912. Abdul Messiah consecrated, Kallisserry Punnoose Ramban as a bishop and Murimattom Mar Ivanius as Catholicose. Rev: Fr. P. T. Geevarghese the close aide of Mar Dionasius VI, was responsible for bringing Mor Abdul Messiah to Malankara. He later became a Bishop in the "Methrhan Party" in the name of Mor Ivanius and started the "Reeth" under the cover of christain revival and joined the Roman Catholic church. Dionasius VI, who was well aware of the fact that a consecration done by a suspended Holy father is illegal, kept himself aloof from the consecration ceremony under the pretext of eye disease. It is to be noted that these title holders were neither elected by the representatives of the Malankara church nor the Holy synod. They were consecrated to Bishoprics by a disgraced Patriarch. The tradition in the church that at least two Bishops should be present at the consecration of a new Bishop was also violated. The interest of the lented money (*Vattipanam*) was not collected by anybody after 1908. In 1913 the British Government filed a suit in the District Court at Trivandrum to decide on, to whom the interest should be given. Later this suit changed into a suit representing the whole community. Mor Dionasius VI and the joint trustee were the plaintiff and Mor Koorilose and joint trustee were respondents.

Paulose Mor Koorilose, a supreme devotee and Malankara Metropolitan expired on 15th December 1917 and was buried at Panampady Church. The meeting of the representatives of the Malankara church held at Alwaye elected Paulose Mor Athanasius as the Malankara Metropolitan in his place. But due to the 1st world war and the chaotic political conditions in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, confirmation could not be obtained for this election from the Holy See of Antioch. Hence the court ordered that Paulose Mor Athanasius has no right to succeed to the office of Paulose Mor Koorilose. In the mean while H.G. Dionasius VI approached H.H. Elias III at the Holy See to get his suspension revoked. He showed grief and agreed that he and other Bishops would submit an agreement as has been done by H.G. Mor Koorilose. He also agreed that such an agreement will be signed in Malankara and will be submitted to H. G. Elias Mor Julious the representative of the Holy see in Malankara.

However later reaching in Malankara he refused to oblige his words. So his suspension remained. He continued with civil suits. In 1926 H.H. Elias III consecrated Michael Mor Dionasius as Metropolitan for Kottayam, Niranam, Thumpamon and Quilon diocese and Thomas Mor Dioscorus for the Cananite Diocese in 1927. H.H. also consecrated Augan Mor Timotius as the metropolitan for Kandanad diocese.

CHAPTER 21
Malankara visit of His Holiness Moran Mor Elias III
Patriarch of Antioch

Though His Holiness was a heart patient, His ambition to end the schism in the Malankara church, forced him to visit Malankara in 1931. His Holiness visited India on the invitation of the then Viceroy Lord Irwin, who made all arrangements for the Holy visit. His Holiness who reached Delhi Via Karachi as an honoured guest of the Viceroy. He continued his journey via Madras and reached Alwaye on 20 th March 1931. Without any delay Mor Dionysius VI reached Alwaye, met and kissed the hands of His Holiness, and entreated his desire for peace. His Holiness who desired peace, was ready to withdraw the suspension of Dionysius. However from that moment Mor Dionysius became obstinate and demanded that His Holiness should recognize the establishment of the Catholicate. But H.H.refused this. From this one can deduce the fact that Mar Dionysius was realised that the powers and authority of the patriarchate and that the title of Catholicose that he had defended is against traditions and canon laws and that it requires approval from the Holy father. All repeated attempts by His Holiness ended in failure due to the obstinacy of the Mor Dionsaius. Mean while many churches in Kerala gave pious and royal welcome to His Holiness. In February 1932 His Holiness reached St. Stephen church Manjnikara. On 13th February 1932, He had a heart attack and succumbed to it. His holy remains are buried in Manjinikara . His Holiness is a martyr who sacrificed his life for attaining peace in the Malankara church. His tomb in Manjanikara is a place of consolation for thousands all around the world . He is remembered in 5th Diptych during the Holy Mass.

Mor Dionysius expired in 1934 and was buried at the old seminary Kottayam. His Knowledge and expertise was never beneficial to the church. It is he who started the litigation culture in the church which is still continuing.

We have already mentioned earlier about the election and approval of Paulose Mor Athanasius to the office of the Malankara Metropolitan. A meeting of the representatives of the Malankara church was convened on 22 August 1934 at St. George church Karingachira and elected Paulose Mor Athanasius as the Malankara Metropolitan. This election was confirmed by His Holiness. At the same time the representatives of the 'Methran party under the chairman ship of their Catholicose, Baselious Geevarghese II, met at Old seminary Kottayam and accepted a new constitution and decided to unite the office of the Malankara Metropolitan and the title of Catholicose under one person thereafter. This meeting was not attended by the representatives of the Bava party. Mean while, Augan Mor Timotheous, consecrated by H . H. Elias III for the Kandanad diocese crossed over to the Methran party. He was suspended by his Holiness and the administration of the Kandanad diocese was given to H G Paulose Mor Athanasius.

Very soon Vayliparambil Thomas Kasessa and Mulayirickal Paulose Ramban were consecrated as Bishops by H. H. Ignatius Aprem I for Angamaly and Cochin dioceses respectively in 1946. It was followed by the consecration of Abraham Mor Clemis and Paulose Mor Philoxinos for Knanaya and Kandanad Dioceses respectively.

Paulose Mor Athanasius, the Malankara Metropolitan expired in January 25, 1953. Later the meeting of the representatives of the Malankara Church held at St.Mary's church Manarcad on 21 st of June 1957 elected Abraham Mor Clemis as his successor .

CHAPTER 22

St. James of Sarug

St.James, the renowned scholar, a great poet and a great preacher was born in Kurtam, a village in the banks of river Euphrates in Sarung district in 451 A.D. He was the son of a priest in his old age. There is an interesting incident about him at the age of 3. He along with his mother went to the church for the Danaha festival. . While the prelate was singing the prayers of summoning the Holy spirit, the boy went to the sanctuary, bowed the Altar 3 times and returned to his mother through a large crowd.

St.James in his youth made hardwork to teach the true faith through his letters and sermons. At the age of 22 he was ordained as a priest and later cor- episcopa (bishop of the village) later he was consecrated as the Bishop of Batnae Sarug .

St James who is also known as “ the flute of the Holy Spirit” has decorated the prayers of the Church with his poems and supplications. He had written 760 such poems, copied by 70 copy writers. He had also written many moral letters based on practicality rather than principles. His poetic writings include treatises on the great men of the old Testament, of angles, the mysteries of the Son of God, moral lessons for festiveles, sermons, funeral orations, hymns codyfying biographies and many others. He has also written two books on Baptism rites and the biographies on Mor Daniel and Mor Hananya.

His poems are very easy for the common people to understand . His Ideas are very simple. In the wealth of words and ease of expression, he ranks next to Ephraem. He died on 29 th november 521 A.D.His tomb in the Sarug church reads “Yacob of Sarug, spiritual scholar and compiler of faith”

CHAPTER 23

Mor Ivanios, the Golden mouthed

Mar Ivanios was the Patriarch of Constantinople. He was born in Antioch in 344 A.D., and was named John. He studied Theology under Mar Miliatheos, Patriarch of Antioch; law, philosophy and rhetoric under Libanius. He was ordained as a priest in 386 and consecrated to Bishop and later Patriarch of Constantinople in 398 AD.

His eloquent rhetoric earned him the nickname "Golden mouthed" Ivanios. He had received universal support for his attempts to reform priests and the elevation of the destitutes. He had opposed the extravagance of the wealthy, attacked vehemently the misuse of wealth. He believed that a person's wealth is not his private property. It has been faithfully entrusted to him to help others and excess wealth if any, should be shared with the needy. He always rebuked the lazy clergy, punished guilty bishops, advised the monks, criticised the rich and warned officials and members of the royal family. Eudoxia the queen of the Eastern Roman emperor, who wished to erect her statute near the church was prevented by His Holiness and nick named her as 'Jezebel' for which she desired to take revenge up on His Holiness. He also became the enemy of Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria since Mor Ivanios refused to co-operate with the acts of Theophilus. Theophilus convened a meeting of the bishops who supported him and deposed His Holiness. The Holy father was banished from the country by the emperor due to the compulsion and Theophilus and Eudoxia. Even though his Holiness was recalled due to earth quake and other unpleasant incidences in the palace later He was banished again.

From the exile he wrote more than 200 letters to the believers in Constantinople. He was removed to a remote area to prevent his friends from meeting him. Exhausted by difficult journey and unbearable weather His Holiness expired on September 14, 407 A.D.

Mor Ivanios was popular as a great preacher and commentator. His main topics of lectures were the Gospel of St. Mathew and St. John and the eight letters of St. Paul. One of the rites for the Holy Qurbana (*Thaksa*) is in His name. He used analogies of Moses & Christ, crossing of the Red sea & baptism, passover lamb & The lamb of God in his lectures. He brought back many drunkards, dishonests, friends of jews, nominal christians and idol worshippers to real christianity. His books that deals with the nobility of priesthood, and his lectures on baptism are very popular.

When he heard that queen Eudoxia is making plans to banish him from the country He wrote a letter to his friend like this: "when I was driven from the city, I felt no anxiety, but said to myself: If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; 'the earth is the Lord's.' If she wants to have me sawn asunder, I have Isaiah for an example. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, I think of Jonah. If I am to be thrown into the fire, the three men in the furnace suffered the same

If cast before wild beasts, I remember Daniel in the lion's den. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me Stephen, the first martyr. If she demands my head, let her do so; John the Baptist shines before me. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world'. Brave words indeed. Let his prayers be our fortress.

CHAPTER - 24 **Mor Koorilose (St. Cyril of Alexandria)**

St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria is described in the 5th Diptych as “ Particularly St. Cyril exalted and veritable tower of knowledge who declared and made manifest the incarnation of the Word God who took flesh” Because of his deep and meaningful interpretations he was known as “ Doctor of incarnation“

St. Cyril was born in Egypt (Alexandria) in 376 A.D. He was consecrated as a bishop by his paternal uncle ,Theophilose, the patriarch of Alexandria. After the death of the latter St. Cyril was elevated to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. He is also known as Cyril of Alexandria .

He was the chairman of the Holy synod of Ephesus convened by emperor Theodosius II in 431 AD .The Holy synod of Ephesus was summoned to discuss the teachings of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople against the Holy Virgin Mary. Nestorius stated that Virgin Mother was only the mother of Jesus for his human incarnations. Jesus attained Godhead after his human birth. It is not proper to call Virgin Mary as the mother of God; she is to be addressed as the “Mother of Christ”. The Holy synod discussed this interpretation of Nestorius and stated that “after the miraculous conception, our saviour Jesus Christ has got only one individuality, one character and declared without doubt that Virgin Mary is the ‘Mother of God ‘. He has encouraged only the true creed that which the church received from the early fathers.

St. Cyril, the guardian of true faith, had to face many harassments from the supporters of Nestorius since he objected the heresy of Nestorius. However he was not ready to surrender holy faith for peace.

Comments on the Gospels of St. Mathew and St. John and the true faith on the incarnation of Lord are his great publications. He died on 27 June 444 A.D.
