

PART – I
OLD TESTAMENT
Lesson – 1
Compilation of the Pentateuch

Introduction

You may be able to recall how the first five books in the Holy Bible came to be known as the Pentateuch. It deals with the history of Israel, the descendants of Abraham and how they were elected as the chosen people of God. They strongly believed that they are the ‘select’ people of God and that the Almighty God intervened in history to make them his own people. It also contains an account of creation, the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, their liberation under the leadership of Moses, their wandering through the desert and their arrival at the threshold of Canaan, the promised land.

The Pentateuch as a Book is incomplete, but it contains a number of promises. The most sublime of all these promises is the promise of Canaan, the land where milk & honey flows. The narration in the Pentateuch ends with the arrival of the chosen people at the threshold of Canaan, the promised land. The book actually points to Christ in whom all the promise and prophetic sayings are fulfilled. While we are on earth we have to live according to the teaching of Christ. It is the law of love that Christ taught us. It is the first phase of the salvific mission or redemption of mankind through Christ that is depicted in Pentateuch. The entire Mosaic law and prophetic utterances are fulfilled in Christ, The redeemer of the world.

The Compilation of the Book

The first five books in the Old Testament are known as the Books of Moses. This doesn't imply that each word in the P. is written by Moses himself. Pentateuch includes the teachings of Moses both written by himself and the collections of his teachings that were orally transmitted. It took some 500 years to collect, arranged and compile the written and oral traditions into books which are now known as the Pentateuch. Tenth century B.C. to Fifth Century B.C. is supposed to be the period in which these books were formed. Pentateuch deals with the ancient history of Israel. The authorship of these books may be attributed to Kings, Priests and Prophets.

Traditions

We can discuss the influence of four major traditions in the writings of the Books of Pentateuch. By traditions we mean both the oral and written traditions that helped in writing the books of the Pentateuch.

Doublet

The Pentateuch is a combination of four major traditions. Hence the same incident can be found in more than one traditions with slight differences. The repetition of an incident / event is known as doublet. There is repetition of events or incidents, but they are not exact renderings. They vary

in style and presentation but not in the matter of the central idea. These differences are due to the fact that they are written in different circumstances by different authors and at different historical periods. Let us see some examples of doublets.

1. The flight of Hagar (Genesis 16:4-6, 21:8-21)

Hagar was Abraham's wife Sara's Egyptian house – maid. When Hagar conceived, she had contempt for Sara who was barren. So Sara dealt cruelly with her & Hagar fled from the Presence of Sara. This incident is described in Genesis chapter 16. But in Chapter 21:8-21 she flees with her son. That means she flees after giving birth to her son -

The difference is style (description) narration and date of narration only. Hagar had to run away from Sara because of her son.

2. The Oracle concerning the birth of Isaac (Gen.: 17 :15-22, 18:6-15)

There are two references about the birth of Isaac in Genesis. In one such reference God does not speak directly to Sara (Gen.: 17: 15-22). But in 18: 6-15 when God proclaims the birth of Isaac, we see God speaking directly to Sara.

Thus the same incident is treated differently in different circumstances. These are concrete evidence to prove that different authors and different traditions at different periods worked together in the writing of the Pentateuch. Doublets of this kind can be seen in good numbers in the Pentateuch.

The Four Traditions

1. Yahwist Traditions or Jahwist Tradition

The Jahwist tradition is the oldest tradition in the Pentateuch. As God is known by the name of Yahweh from the very beginning this tradition came to be known as Yahweh, the letter 'J' is used to refer to this tradition as J is the first letter of the German word Jehova (God).

The biblical portions Genesis 2:46- 4:21 belong solely to this tradition. The following passages are seen only in 'J' tradition – 6: 1-8, 12:1-13, 18, Exodus 1:6-14, 3:2 :1-24,28, Deut 34:1-12. The 'J' tradition is mostly found in the Book of Genesis (more than half of the 'J' tradition is found in Genesis). The remaining portions in the 'J' tradition are seen in Exodus and Numbers. The account of the death of Moses is the only 'J' tradition in Deuteronomy. There is not even a single word that belongs to the 'J' tradition in Leviticus.

Date of Composition

These books must have been written somewhere in Jerusalem during the 10-9 centuries B.C.. It tells us about the promises and blessings conferred upon the forefather and the central character here is Abraham.

2. Elohist Tradition

The Elohist tradition is so called because of the reference to God as Elohim. 'E' the first letter in Elohim represents this tradition. There is great similarity in the narrations of E and J when they relate history from the calling of Abraham till the death of Moses. 'E' 's writings can mostly be found in Genesis. There is not even a signal word of 'E' in Leviticus.

Genesis 15:1-19, 20:1-18, 28:10-22, Exodus 5:1-4, numbers 11:4-34 and Deut 34:1-12 belong to the Elohist Tradition.

3. Deuteronomistic Tradition

In Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic tradition is seen in Deuteronomy only. The letter 'D' symbolizes this tradition. The 'D' tradition is found in chapter 1-30 of Deuteronomy only. Chapter 31-34 of Deuteronomy belong to the J E P traditions. The 'D' tradition mainly deals with the order of worship. There is a good deal of similarity between the E and D traditions.

Date of composition

This is written in the northern Kingdom of Israel in 70 BC Dt. Mainly tells the story of the selection of Israel and God entering into an eternal covenant with Israel. Moses is the central character here.

4. The priestly Tradition

The priests of both northern and southern Kingdoms played a vital role in preserving the ancient tradition of Israel. The children of Israel, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, had to revive the faith of their forefathers and to follow the order of worship followed by their ancestors. The present tradition is a code of conduct formulated by the priests. The letter 'P' represents this tradition.

'P' starts with the history of creation. Genesis 1:2-4 is found in P alone. The account of creation in Genesis 2:4-25 belongs to the priestly tradition. The following passages are recorded by P alone. Genesis 5:1-32, 9:1-17, 36:1-37, Exodus 1:1-5, 6:2-7:13, Leviticus 11:27-34, Numbers 1:1-10; 28, Deuteronomy 32:1-52

Period of Composition :

This must have been written in 6th and 5th centuries B.C. some of it must have been written during their captivity in Babylon and the rest in Jerusalem in the Northern Kingdom. It aims at inculcating a life of worship or devotional life. The main personalities mentioned in this tradition are Adam, Noah, Abraham & Moses.

Conclusion

It is worth remembering that the profound insight gained from centuries long life experience and great effort on the part of great souls – all contributed in the making of Pentateuch. The authors and groups who worked behind the composition of the Pentateuch had neither seen nor heard from each other. 'J' is the first written document. 'E' was added to that later D was added to the JE traditions & finally P also was joined to these traditions – Pentateuch is a combination of all the four traditions. Naturally there were repetitions as the different traditions were joined together. Hence we have doublets. We can understand or interpret the text more correctly and vividly with the help of these doublets. Though composed in the ancient times (ie before half a millennium) by different authors this tradition upholds the central idea that God their creator is one who intervenes in history to redeem. His people and that he is worshipped properly. The different traditions by

various authors dealing with God, His name and attributes, sin and its origin, the election of Israel as the people of God, the worship of God and the resultant grace all these are systematically presented in the Pentateuch., It is the spirit of God who worked through the hand of man in this work. The same spirit of God intervenes even today in the lives of people. Let us pray that the same spirit of God intervenes in our lives and lead us in the right path.

Lesson – 2

Psalms

The Psalms or hymns are the prayer songs ensued out of the mouth of the people of Israel. The Book of Psalms is also the biggest book in the holy Bible and the most widely used one. Psalms are not written by a single author. They are written at various periods by different authors. It took more than a millennium and more than eight authors to compose and compile them in the present order. It is surprising to note that a Greek translation of the O.T. which dates back to 200 B.C., contains all the 150 Psalms. So it is evident that the Psalms had been compiled and arranged as a single book even before 200 B.C.

The Division of the Book

All the 150 Psalms depending upon the content and style of presentation Psalms can be classified under several heads. Some of them are songs of praise or hymns, yet some others are lamentations and we have hymns of thanks giving all the 150 Psalms have been divided by theologians into five books. Psalms 1-41 form one Book. There is not central idea or single theme running through all these Psalms. Each Psalm is unique or special. For example, Psalm one compares the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. It clearly states that the righteous will be blessed by God and the wicked (people) will (perish) be destroyed by God – Similarly Psalm 41 says that those who are kind and compassionate to the poor are the blessed ones. He will enjoy divine providence at the time of troubles and sorrows. He delivers those who trust him from the hands of their enemies. The Psalm ends with a song of prayer to the Lord. Each Psalm is special in the treatment of the subject matter. But on the whole we can say that they are songs of worship.

Relation to the Pentateuch

The first book of the Pentateuch has similarity with the first book of the Psalms. Both contain references to the creation of the universe and creation of man (Ps. 19). Man is depicted as the glory of creation by the Psalmist in Psalm 8 (8.5,6)

The 1st Book : - Date of composition its arrangement

According to ancient tradition it is king David who arranged the psalms in the first book. Between 1020 and 970 B.C this must have been done.

The 2nd Book

Psalms 42 – 72 form the second Book. A cry for liberation or salvation is seen in most of the psalms – god is depicted as the Redeemer or savior of the people. And the second book is known as Hymns of National Intrest/

Similarity with or Resemblance to Pentateuch

The second Book has much in common with Exodus, the second book in the Old Testament. Both Exodus and the second Book of Psalms deal with liberation from slavery and suffering redemption by the Lord. Eg. Ps. 42:9, 44:1-3 66:4-6.

The psalmist cries for divine intervention in his life to save him from travel to save him from twals tribulation from as. He had intervened in the history of Israel to save them from Egyptian slavery. The cry for eternal salvation the intense desire to be in the kingdom of the god are clearly seen in the second book. Eg. Psalm 42 :1, 57: 2, 65:4

Compilation and date of composition

According to learned theologians the psalms second Book was collected, compiled during the reign of king Hezekiah or king Josiah who ruled Judea between 790 and 597B.C

The 3rd Book

This book consists of 17 psalms (ps. 73 – 89). These psalms deal with various themes. The third book like the second book is also known as Hymns of national Interest.

Percentage the second book

The book has similarity with the Book of Leviticus in the O.T sanctification / purification of the people and worship of the people loved god are the central themes in both these Books. The people both individuals the nation must purify I sanctify themselves when they come to worship the lord. Eg. Psalm 78: 5 – 8, 84:1, 2,4,10. Thus it deals with the worship pattern ie, how they should lead a life of innocence virtue to receive the blessings of God.

The period of compilation

It is commonly delivered that the third book like the second book has been compiled by king Hezchia or king Josiah during their rule. This must have taken place between B.C 790 and 597.

The 4th Book

Psalms 90 – 106 form this unit. The term / idea various from psalm. But they can be called as Hymns of praise. As their authorship is unknown they are (treated as) considered as anonymous psalms. But psalm 90 is believed to be a prayer offered to god by mosses, the man of god. Psalms 101 103 are attributed to David.

Pentateuch the 4th book

There is great similarity between Numbers in O.T the 4th book. The toilsome wanderings of the people of Israel after this escape from Egypt, their affliction thus help lessons are all movingly narrated in the numbers. The psalmist due compares the life of a believer to that of the Israelites during their exodus to the promised land the true believers too has to suffer this desert experience ie, loneliness, rejection, afflictions. But god is a true refuge redeemer to those who call upon him. The Psalmist offers adoration of God who delivers those who seek him. Eg. Ps. 91:1, 2,5,6. ps.105: 12-14.

The psalmist reminds us again how he should have been in the dust. This idea is explained in Psalm 95 vs 6 – 11. We, like the Israelites, are also making a journey to the heavenly Jerusalem; we have to undergo this desert experience. While we are on earth we must trust God, live in a spiritual communion with God. If not, (divine punishment will be upon us) we will perish like our forefathers who rebelled against God. The psalmist exhorts us again to live in fear of God.

Compilation the date / the period of compilation

According to tradition, Ezra and Nehemiah are believed to have compiled the book. Between 457 and 425 B.C. these psalms must have been collected or compiled as 2 books.

The 5th Book

Psalms beginning with 107 to 150 form the fifth book. In this collection also there is no central idea running through all these books. Each Psalm has a separate idea or theme. The Psalms in this collection are also known as anonymous. As the psalmist repeatedly exhorts people to offer praise and worship to God they are known as Hymns of praise.

Similarity with the Pentateuch

The close resemblance between Dt. in the Pentateuch and the fifth book can be seen. The Deuterist rapidly reminds the people of their calling; how God selected them from the rest of the people as His chosen ones; how they were liberated from the Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses; how they were led to Canaan, the land where milk and honey flows.

Deuterist reasserts their fundamental belief in God who chose them and repeated them from the gentiles; lead them to Canaan, the land where milk and honey flows. He wants them to realize that they are the people of God; that He is the God of the Israelites; Israelites alone they have to reiterate their belief in their God. Likewise the psalmist also repeats the Deuterist's aspect of divine-human relationship and the various dimensions of divine-human relationship that is portrayed in the other psalms can be seen in these psalms in all its diverse aspects. (The same ideas or thus fundamental beliefs (basic beliefs) are repeated in both these books). There is close relation between the two books as the two books repeatedly affirm their belief in their God. Let us examine some of the examples. Psalm Nr. 4 is an evening prayer. This is a prayer one offers to God before one goes to sleep in the night. The psalmist concludes saying, "I will both lay him down in peace, and sleep: for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety (4:8) Ps. Nr. 133 is also an evening prayer. Ps. 42 is an ardent prayer of a devotee who longs for God (Ps. 42:1). The same idea is presented in a different manner in Ps. 130.

Date & Compilation

Scholars are of the opinion that the fifth book also has been compiled by Ezra & Nehemiah & this must have taken place between 457 and 425 B.C.

Christ & the Psalms

The Psalms abound in references to Christ. Psalms contain direct and indirect allusions to Messiah. Psalms that contain references to Christ can be divided into 5 groups.

1. Psalms that contain direct ref to Christ.

Christ is symbolically presented in thin kind of psalms. Ex. Ps. 34: 20, 69: 9.

2. Psalms that directly prophesy about Christ.

The psalmist actually relates his own intense experiences. But ultimately they refer to those things that are full filled in Christ. Eg. Ps. 22:1, 22:12, 22: 16 – 18, 110 : 4

3. Psalms that figuratively tell about Christ.

These psalms seem to represent ruler of Israel especially Kg. David. But the prophetic sayings in them are accurately full filled in messiah. Eg. Ps. 2: 1-2, 45 72 :11

4. psalms that indicate the second coming

They contain references to the last intendment, the new heaven the new earth where god reigns. Eg. Ps. 96: 1, 13, 98:3, 8.

5. psalms that are full filled in Christ.

(Many of the prophecies that are mentioned in the psalms are full filled in Christ. It is both difficult and not necessary to mention all of them. Some typical examples are given below. Ps. 2:6. According to St. Mathew. This psalms has been fulfilled in Christ St. Mat 3:17) St. Mat. In his gospel states that ps. 69: 21 has been full filled in Christ). Many of the prophecies in the psalms are fulfilled in Christ. St. Mathew 3:17 is a fulfillment of ps. 2:6. Then ps. 69:21 is also fulfilled in Christ (St. Mat. 27:34). You may try find out such instance the N.T

Selah – not found in the Holy scripture.

a word which appears 71 time in he psalms. It is actually an instruction given to those who ring the psalms not meant to be read. It Selah appears at the end of a verse, it means either to sing loudly or to sing with the accompaniment of musical instruments. While reading psalms, one need not read selah.

Exercises:-

1. Mention the five books in the psalms / which are the five books in the psalms.
2. How (should) can the first book in the psalms the commonly named ?
3. What does psalms 19 describe about ?
4. What is the name given to the second book ?
5. Draw the similarity between the second book the Pentateuch.
6. which book in the Pentateuch has resemblance with the third book?
7. What is the name given to the 4th book ?
8. Mention the book in the Pentateuch that has close relation to the 4th Book ?
9. What is the name given to the fifth book ?
10. Draw the parallel between fifth book. The Pentateuch
11. How will you divide the prophetic allusions to Christ into group?
12. What is the mean by Selah ?

Lesson - 3

Proverbs

Proverbs belong to the wisdom literature. Proverbs, like psalms, cannot be considered as a single book. Its main objective is to impart wisdom to people so that they can tackle the problems that arise in daily life. This book is not only for those who have less wisdom but also for those who have wisdom. The book teaches how a wise man should conduct himself in different life situations. It advises people how to conduct themselves with equanimity of mind in religious, social and family life. Among other matters it also deals with topics like immorality, patience, respect for the poor, loyalty (faithfulness) among friends, sanctity (sacredness) of man – woman relationship. He also draws a parallel between the wise and unwise

(Solomon, the wise, is supposed to be the author of proverbs.)

The authorship of proverbs is attributed to Solomon, the wise. This is not wholly written by Solomon. But it mostly contains the sayings of Solomon. The contributions of other wise men like Agur, Mule etc. also can be seen in it.

Date of composition

There existed a tradition of wisdom literature in the middle east even before the period of Solomon. It is difficult to determine the period of composition of these teachings. The maxims or wise sayings that were prevalent during, before and after the reign of Solomon were collected and compiled into a single book around 350 B.C. The reign of Solomon stretched from B.C 977 – 937 B.C.

The Division of the Book.

Proverbs which contains 31 chapters can be divided into 7 parts for the sake of study.

1. Hymns to Wisdom :- 1 : 1-9 : 18 (proverbs of Solomon)

Hymns of wisdom forms the first part of the book. The first few chapters of the book (1:1-9:18) are a hymn to wisdom. The prologue deals with the necessity and relevance of acquiring wisdom. The book is written so that “men may know wisdom and instruction, Understand words of insight, Receive instruction in wise dealing, Righteousness, justice, and equality; That prudence may be given to the simple, Knowledge and discretion to the youth – The wise man also may hear and Increase in learning, And the man of understanding Acquire skill, To understand a proverb and a Figure, The words of the wise and the riddles”. (1:2-4)

The author personifies wisdom as a noble lady and exhorts people to seek her. Those who seek her will be weekly rewarded. Then he gives warnings, ‘Wisdom’ warns a person against immorality, idleness etc., then tells us that it is eternal. Next wisdom and folly are contrasted and shows the merits and demerits of each. A man of wisdom knows that adultery is a great sin and that one should keep away from the snares of the adulteress for the adulteress is a great snare / trap.

Ch 5, 6:20 – 25, 7.

Repeatedly he wants the people and says that one should keep one's way from the adulteress and that her house is a death trap. "And now, O sons, listen to me, And be attentive to the words of my Mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her Ways, Do not stray into her paths; For many a victim has she land low, Yea, all her slaves are a mighty host. (7:24-26)

The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16)

There is no common idea running through the verses in this part. But there are many references to the concept of justice. Verses that have no relation to each other are joined together to form a part. The author here does not deal with a particular topic or theme. Instructions or a code of conduct to be followed in daily life to lead an upright life is found in this part. We find many such instructions to be followed in daily life. We can see many doublets also here.

Sometimes the very same verse is repeated. At other times slight variations verses are repeated. Note the examples :

"A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (10:1) A wise son maketh a glad father : but a foolish man despiseth his mother (15:20) But righteousness delivereth from death (10:26) But righteousness delivereth from death (11:26) 10:66 = 10:116. We can find such several examples Repetitions may be due to the different sources that are used in the compilation of the Book.

3. Words of the Wise 22 : 17 – 24:22

The part known as the words of the wise got its name from verse 17 chapter 22. It reads :- "Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind of my knowledge".

Modern research has brought to light the close similarity between the thoughts and idea found here and the thought and ideas found in "Ameope", the Book of Egyptian Wisdom 'Wisdom of Amenope' preserved in the British museum and first published in 1923 – 24 (ANET 421 – 424). This may be due to the fact that they both were collected from the same source, opines theologians. No definite peroration is followed in the compilation of this part. We find many precepts concerning life and conduct; stresses the importance of cordial relationship neighbors, then the importance in our lives – book at the following examples:-

"Do not rub the poor, because he is Poor Or crush the afflicted at the gate " (22:21) Remove not the ancient land mark Which your father's have set (22 : 28) "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And let not your heart be glad When he stumbles " (24 : 17) This part tries to inculcate a sense of justice concern for the poor.

4. Words of the wise – part 11(Additional collection of words of the wise'. (24 : 23 – 34)

This part contains 'the words of the wise' (24: 23). The verse in this part exhorts people to lead a life of integrity. We should be truthful in word deed. The kings should be impartial in their judgments for it is written, "(Partiality in judging is not good, It is not good to have respect of persons in judgement)" (24 : 236) and further he says – "He who gives a right answer kisses the lips " (24 : 26)

5. Proverbs of Solomon.

Even though this part is attributed to Solomon, verse one of the chapter 25 says that it is written by the friends of King Hezekiah. We find moral instructions / moral lessons in this part.

6. The words of Ague Ben Jacket

Chapter 30 which contains 30 verses are the words of Ague son of Jacket. Moral instructions are conveyed through riddles similarities. E.g (30 ; 4), (30 : 15) (30 : 23) (30 : 25). There are several other riddles their answers in this part.

7. The words/ teachings of Lemuel

The 31 verses of chapter 31 deals with for important topics. The first part contains advices to kings ie, how an ideal king – should conduct himself. Then the picture of an ideal house wife – intelligent clever is portrayed.

Kings are instructed to lead a pure life. They should not become addicted to alcoholic drinks. Association with immoral women will rain the life career of a king. He must carefully avoid contact with such, women His verdicts must be fair just. It is the duty of the king to administer justice to the lowly the poor.

The second part explains the qualities of a clever woman. She is more valuable than the most precious stones. Her husband places absolute trust in her; she is hardworking and she looks after (take care of) her family with utmost diligence. She talks wisely; she is compassionate to the poor and the lowly. She is god- fearing and she will be respected by all. She is worthy of respect and admiration.

Image of Christ

The theme of proverbs chapter 8 is wisdom. All the created things have their origin in wisdom. This wisdom is the fountain head of our spiritual of material life. The very same wisdom is the fount of sublime wisdom, mortality and eternal life. St. Paul in his epistle to the Colossians asserts that Christ is none other than this very same wisdom (col. 2 : 3). He makes this point very clear, ie, Christ is the incarnation – (1cor . 1 : 22 – 24, 1.30).

Lesson 4

Ecclesiastes (kahalath)

In the Jewish Holy Bible this book is named as Kohalath. It means one who speaks in the synagohne . the one who speaks in the synogone is in smally the one who preaches there . Hence in Malayalam the book is know as sabhararangi and in the English Bite it is called ‘Ecclesiastes ‘. The word means a member of the church, one who preaches there etc.

Author and Date of Composition.

There is no consensus of opinion among scholars about the date composition of this book .It is generally held that the book is written around 9365 B.C Solomon, king of Israel, is commonly believed to be the author of the book.

The central idea of the Book

There is no consensus of opinion among states that every thing is verify and that one should fear god. The world what ever is in it is vain or magaand those whose sole delight is in it will not be able to enjoy eternal happiness . the author argues that eternal bless will be conferred upon those who fear god, those who place absolute faith in god.

The Book he divided into 3 heads

Part 1- The philosophy that everything is verify 1:1-11

a. Preface/ introduction to verify 1:1-3

The first these verses are a preface to his philosophized outlook That “All is verify” It reads like this: The words of the Preachers, the Son of David, Kin in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities ! All is vanity that does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun ?

b. Description of Vanity 1 : 4 – 11

“The sun rises and the sun goes down,..... here is nothing new under the sun. In the very beginning itself, the author presents certain philosophical views that are contradictory to each other.

Part II - Evidences to show that all vanity 1 : 12 – 6 : 12

He provides concrete evidence to show that everything under the sun is vanity. His arguments are based on two factors.

1. Evidences based on personal experience 1 : 12 – 2 : 26

a. Acquisition (worldly) wisdom is vanity 1 : 12 – 17

I had earned knowledge more than all my predecessors Jerusalem. My heart had recurred much knowledge and understanding. I decided to secure knowledge and similarities. I found this also is a fruitless toil. Greater the knowledge, greater will be the sorrow. One who increases sorrow as well. The earning of knowledge without god is vain.

b. worldly pleasures are also vanity, 2 : 1 – 3

All men toil and work hard so that they can enjoy worldly pleasures to the maximum. The author is one who has enjoyed all the pleasures, which he wished to enjoy, to maximum. From his personal experience he certifies that that too is vanity or maya. “ I told myself, I will tempt you with pleasures, enjoy it. But that again is vanity”(2 : 1). The greatest enjoyment is derived from spiritual communion with god.

c. Acquisition of wealth and great deeds are in vain - 2 : 4 – 17

The author of Ecclesiastes is a person who has performed great feats which no one else would have performed. He was also the richest person of his times for he says, he had the wealth of sheep and cattles more than all my predecessors in Jerusalem. I possessed myself silver and gold, and treasures of king and countries what ever my eye coveted for, I did not refuse ... All are vain and fruitless striving (2 : 7 – 11). The noblest thing one can do is to acquire knowledge of god and spiritual wealth.

d. Hard Toiling is in vain 2 : 18 – 23.

The author reminds us that it is vain to toil hard to amass wealth.

one makes use of his wisdom, knowledge and skill to become rich. But he has to leave everything as an inheritance to some one who has not at all toiled in this world must be handed over to some one. But the grace of god which one earns through hard work need not be given to some one else.

Hard wealth possessions if they are won by leading a life in communion with god will last for ever.

e. Advice 2 : 24 – 26.

The author of Ecclesiastes who had enjoyed all the goodness of this world gives the following advice to those who pursue worldly and pleasures. God grants wisdom, knowledge and happiness to those with whom. He is pleased with. The sinner, through his hard work and toil acquires wealth which is to be handed over to the blessed of god. So that they can enjoy it (2 : 26). So one should strive to receive the blessing (grace of god).

2. Evidences based observation 3:1-6:12

The author Ecclesiastes through his keen observation and intelligence makes it explicit the vanity of worldly pleasures. There is a time for everything a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time harvest , a time to smite and a time to cry . Everything happens according to the will of god .He judges those who deal justly and those who deal unjustly .He will judge both the oppressed and the oppressor and those who overthrow justice righteousness, the author wants those who are in the pursuit of immaterial pleasures and pomp and glory to realize the vanity of all these things .

Part III - Advice to those who pursue worldly pleasures

It is impossible it is in vain for man to examine or to question the ways of god . As there is judgment for all, one should fear god and obey his commandment and consider his philosophized views.

Christ and Ecclesiastes

There is no direct reference to Christ in the Ecclesiastes. But Christ is allegorically portrayed through Ecclesiastes. He reminds us that a life without communion with god is vain and the wealth we acquire without the blessing of god cannot confer real happiness to us. It is Christ who grants blessing and eternity which man seeks. Eternal life is the most valuable asset which a man can possess (12:11). We receive eternal life only through Christ .

1. Name the author of Ecclesiastes.
2. Describe the main ideas of the book
3. What is Solomon's opinion about vanity ?
4. Explain the statement, " All is vanity."
5. Trace the connection between St. John 10: 9,10 the portrayal of Christ in Ecclesiastes.

Lesson 5

Songs of Song

The very name suggests that this song is the most melodious of all songs. There are very few instances in the Bible where the relationship between god and the people of god (Israel) are so beautifully depicted. The covenant relationship between Israel and god is compared to a marriage contract elsewhere (Hosea) in the Bible. There are eight songs in the form of dialogue between a man and a woman who are in deep love. It is a custom prevalent among the Jews to sing these songs on the 8th day of Passover. For the early Christmas the song symbolizes the spiritual relationship between Christ and the church.

Author and date of composition

Authorship is attributed to Solomon, king of Israel, by most scholars. But according to modern scholarship the book in its present form must have been compiled in the 30 B.C.

CHARACTERS AND PLACES DEPICTED IN THE BOOK

There are six songs in the form of dialogue and are sung by men and women who are in deep love with each other. The three main characters are the bride from Salem, Solomon, the bridegroom and the daughters of Jerusalem, the maids of the bride.

THE SCENE OF ACTION

There are 15 locations in this story. It is spread over vast distances like Lebanon in the north to Egypt in the south. The following are the places where the scenes are laid.

Kedar(1:5), Egypt(1:9) Engad(1:4), Sharon (2:1), Jerusalem (2:7) Lebanon(3:9), Mt. Gilead (4:1), Amanah(4:8) Saron(4:8) Mt. Hermon(4:8), Beersheba(6:4), Bessur (Hebron) (7:5), Demasnes (7:5) Carmel (7:6), Baal Harmon (8:11), The Holy temple does not record all these place names. But these names are found in the other Bibles.

THE BOOK CAN BE DIVIDED UNDER SIX HEADS.

The first song :- 1:1-2:7

The bride's intense longing to get united with the bridegroom is described in the first part of the song with ardent love she requests "o King, permit me to enter your sleeping chamber". In the second part of the song we see the bride & bridegroom exchanging their love for each other and paying compliments to each other. (1:15,16)

Second Song :- 2:8-3:5

The first part relates the king's arrival to behold his beloved. The latter part vividly describes the bride's intense longing to be united with her lover.

Third Song :- 3:6-5:1

First it narrates the marriage procession of the bridegroom to receive his enchantingly beautiful bride. Then the king, who is enamored by the beauty of his bride, praises her celestial beauty, the song ends with their final union with each other.

Fourth song :- 5:2-6:3

This song reveals the bride's deep love for her bridegroom. She who has been eagerly awaiting

the sound of the foot steps of her bridegroom is highly thrilled by his knocking at her door. She was too excited with happiness, at the arrival of her bridegroom that she stood perplexed for a while and slowly with throbbing heart shyness she went to open the door. By the time she opened the door, the bridegroom has gone away. With deep felt sorrow she went in search of him. As she was wandering in the city, desperately looking for her beloved, the watchmen found her and even beat her. They robbed her clock, humiliated and presented & tried to dissuade her from wandering in the streets looking for her beloved. But she went on looking for her dear one. She tells her maids that she is passionately in love with her beloved and that they should inform him of her profound love for him.

The maids extol (praise) her exquisite beauty. They ask her why she is enticed by this man what accomplishment has he got over other men? Or what is unique about him? They too don't want her to run after him?

She is full of praise for him and tells that he is the most handsome person. He is as radiant as the sun he is greater than ten thousand of his kind that no body is equal to him in any aspect. She declares, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine (6:3). With this the song ends.

Fifth song:- 6:4-8:4

This song describes their mutual fascination for each other. They are full of praise for each other. The bride and the bridegroom pay compliment to each other beauty and noble qualities of each other. The bride's ardent desire to get united with him and be one with him is poignantly described here (8:1-3).

Sixth song:- 8:5-14

The last song deals with the union of the bride with the bridegroom. The song begins with the question "who is that coming from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" After their temporary earthly life, the bride is eagerly waiting to be united with him in eternity (for ever). With this hope the song ends.

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SONG OF SONG

In the old testament Israel is depicted as the bride of the loved (Hosea 2:19-20). the bride's extreme anxiety and her intense desire to be one with her beloved, the obstacles, fortunes, torments and temptations which she is subjected to are all beautifully sketched here. The bridegroom is in love with his beloved (Israel) the bride, if she is faithful & true to him in love, she will be able to overcome all the obstacles & will be united with him forever. Like wise the church is the most beautiful & chaste bride of Christ she belongs to him and to him only. She should prayerfully wait for her beloved; keeping herself chaste unpolluted resisting all temptations. The book exhorts the believers' to remain pure faithful.

IMPLICATIONS TO CHRIST

The bride and the bridegroom represent the church & Christ respectively in the O.T. Israel is the bride of the lord (Is. 54:5, 6. Jer. 2:2, Zg: 16-18-14, Hos: 2:16-20). The Christian church in the N.T. is the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2, Eph. 5:23-25, Rev. 19). Thus it points to the mystical (spiritual) relationship between the church & Christ.

Lesson 6

OTHER CANONICAL BOOKS

Preface

There is difference in the number of books in the old testament of Protestants and the Catholics and Syrian Christians. The books known as 'Other Canonical Texts', eleven in number are included / found in the Protestant Bible, but they are considered part of the Holy Scripture by the Catholics and Syrian Churches. These books are also known as Deuterocanonical Texts. The Protestants call these texts Apocryphal books because they are of doubtful authority or ownership.

The following books included in the Holy scripture are considered other canonical texts :-

1. Tobias
2. Judith
3. Esther
4. Wisdom
5. Ecclesiasticus
6. The Epistle of Jeremiah
7. The first & Second letters of Baruch
8. Second part of Daniel
9. Maccabees – Books I & II

There are many books which are considered as Apocryphal books both by the Catholic and Syrian Christians.

The following O.T books are considered Apocryphal books.

1. Esdras - Books of Inbilies
2. Book of Adam & Eve
3. Martyrdom of Sarah
4. Book of Enoch
5. Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs
6. Story of Susanna
7. Song of three children

In the N.T. also there are many apocryphal books. The gospel according to the Hebrew, the gospel of the Egyptians, the gospel of St. James, The childhood gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of St. Thomas, the gospel of St. Peter, The gospel of Bartholomew, The gospel of Nicodemus, Acts of St. John, Acts of St. Paul, Acts of St. Peter, The letters of the Apostles, The epistle of Abgar, the letter to the Laodiceans are some of the Apocryphal books found in the N.T.

Other Canonical Texts

1. Tobias : Was a member of the tribe of Naphtali, and one among the Jews exiled to Nineveh in B.C 721. He is presented as a model of staunch faith and virtuous life. The book teaches that for a blessed family life strong faith in God and the blessing of the Almighty God are essential. Those

who are compassionate to the poor and the deceased will be assisted by God in times of affliction or misfortune.

This book reveals the importance of looking after one's parents, doing acts of compassion towards the poor and the deceased and to have unshakable belief in God and to render devout & heart-broken prayers. It also teaches that in married life the husband & wife should pray in unison. God will help such people in times of distress and affliction.

2. Judith :

It is blessed to be written in the second century B.C. In a didactic manner the book relates a minor historical event. It is the story of the victory of the Israelites over their enemies through the intervention of Judith a pious woman of Bethulia, who was deputed to wreak vengeance on the Jewish people who did not co-operate with King Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded Bethulia with a huge army and the city was besieged by them. Judith, the widow prevented the surrender of the Jews. She boldly went to the tent of Holofernes and assassinated him. Hearing the murder of their captain, the enemy army took to their heels.

The Book points out that the victory was due to her fasting & prayer. This book assures the faithful that God will miraculously redeem His people even when there is insurmountable (great) difficulties.

3. Esther Part II

The book of Esther part I has 10 chapters and book II has 6 chapters (11-16). If we read the two parts together we understand that the second part deals with certain historical events that occurred before the events in the first part. A one should read together certain happenings that took place in between the events that took place in the first part and event that followed afterwards.

Chapter 13 is a continuation of the 3rd chapter with view to eliminate the Jews, Haman prepares an order in the name of the King and sends it to all the rulers and chieftrains (ch.3). But chapter 3 does not say much about the content of the order. But chapter 13 gives a full length description of the order. Chapter 4 records Esther saying that she will fast and pray for 3 days. Again her prayer is not recorded in this chapter. We see it recorded in chapter 14. Chapter 5 begins with the description of the King extending his golden scepter towards Esther chapter 15 deals with the events that took place before this event. Chapter 8 mentions the order of the King to the Jewish people and a detailed account of this can be seen in chapter 16.

To be brief, only we read the two parts together do we get a complete idea of the things that are related in the book of Esther.

4. (Great) Profound wisdom

Although the book is attributed to Solomon it is generally held that the book is written by an Alexandrian Jew in Greek language in 1c. B.C. The reason why it is attributed to Solomon is chapter nine vs 7,8,& 12. The author points out that wisdom is a divine gift and it is the greatest wealth. The first 5 chapters expound the importance of wisdom and the relation between wisdom and human life. It speaks about the fate / destiny of virtuous and sinful people. Chapters 6-9 explain the origin of wisdom, its growth and how it is to be acquired by people. Chapters 10-19

gives a detailed description of the role of divine (Godly) wisdom in the history of Israel. We also find a discourse/reflection on idolatry in chapter 13, 14 & 154.

5. Esm bar Aasire

This again is another book of wisdom in the other canonical books. It is written around B.C. 180 and the another is believed to be Esn bar Simoun. He lived during the time of the Maccabeans.

The central idea of the book is wisdom. Devotion to God & wisdom are closely realltedy the book says. Content wise the abok has similarity with proverbs. Those whgo follow the teachings of this book will be blessed and will enjoy abundant life.

6. The Epistle of Jeremiah

This is a letter which Jeremiah wrote to the Jews who were in exile in Babylon and were treated as laves there. He warns them that they will have to live there as exile for 70 years but should not worship the idols there, rather they should worship only the true God. Through the letter he tries to convicen the people of the importency of the idols and exhorts them to wait for the Lord.

7. The first & Second letters of Baruch

Baruch the son of Neri was an assistant of Jeremiah. It is held that Jeremiah dicated the prophecies to Baruch and it is Baruch who inscribed it on the parchiment. Baruch tells the exiled ones that God loves Israel with infinite love and that exile suffering are due to their ingratitude towards their God. Bad times or times of affliction are meant to purify the people through repentance and righteous Gopd will not forsake his people. If they repent God will restore them and will grant glory and well being to the people, their enemies will be punished and destroyed. This is the content of Baruch's writings.

8. Second part of Daniel

In standard VIII you have studied about Daniel the prophet. There are 12 chapters in the book of Daniel. In part II there are only 2 chapters. Chjapters 13 & 14 are a continuation of the happeninhgs in chapter 13. This tells the story of a pious girl Susanna and how miraculously she was saved by God through Daniel the prophet.

In chapter 14, 2 instances are given through which Daniel convinces the king that his God is the true God. (Baal and the great serpent).

9. Maccabeaus – Books I & II (Try to recall what you have studied in Standard IX)

These books ideal with certain incidents that happemned in second and third ie. B.C. The Greeks tried to impose their religious beliefs and traditions upon the Jews. Among the Jews, there were some who supported the gks. Antioches Ephiphanes succeed Alexander the Great in B.C 175 and during his seign the persecution of the Jews became more severe. The Jews were forced to eat the flesh of Swine, indulge in idolatry. As a result of religious persention many Jews had to lay down there lives There were Jews who were ready to fight agnist such cruel practice. It was Judas Maccabear son of Mathvas, the priest, who gave leadership to these people the who followed Maccabear came to be know as Maccabeani.

The resistance organised by the Jews against the Greeks under the leadership of Maccabeas is the central theme of the first book. The second book tells the story of the Jews who died a heroic death and won martyrdom because they wanted to remain faithful to their Jewish laws. This book tells a lot about their belief in life after death.

Reading and interpreting the other canonical texts will enable a person to understand God better and strengthen his belief in God.

Exercise

1. What name does our church give to the Epitaphial book ?
2. How does the book of Job emphasize the importance of prayer ?
3. Mention the reason as to why a section of the Jews came to be known as 'Maccabees'
4. How many days did the sister pray and fast ?

PART – II
NEW TESTAMENT
LESSON – 7
The Epistles of St. Paul

The New Testament consists of 27 Books, out of which 21 are epistles. The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation are the other Books. (You have studied the 4 Gospels & the Acts of the Apostles in the 8th & 9th Classes respectively). Out of the 21 Epistles, the first 14 are written by St. Paul. These Epistles are known by the persons or the people to whom they are written. The remaining 7 letters were generally known as common letters or universal letters.

St. Paul's letters are richest legacy which the church possesses. The essence of Christian Theology is summed up in these letters. St. Paul had not intention to write a treatise on Christian Theology. Through these letters he gives specify instructions to solve the problems which arose in those churches where he preached the Gospel. These letters may seem personal, but they contain great theological insights; and so we cannot consider them as mere private letters.

All his letters follow a definite pattern. The sender's and receiver's names are given in the very beginning. Then he expresses his gratitude to those whom he owes it. There after a message fitting to the occasion is conveyed. He concludes the letter either with a formal greeting or a prayerful wish. Writing was a different task in those days. Paper was not available and printing press was not invented in those days. Besides he was always traveling from place to place preaching the Gospel incessantly. So he might not have written these letters personally. He must have dictated them and somebody else might have taken them down.

Fourteen letters are attributed to St. Paul. The last letter – letter to the Hebrews – differs from the other letters. As opposed to his usual style, we do not find Paul's name in this letter. Then the style of presentation is also different in this letter. But the letter expresses his own ideas and opinions.

For the purpose of study, these 14 letters can be classified under five heads.

1. Early Letters

The two letters to the Thessalonians belong to this category. He wrote these epistles to the Thessalonian Church which was in its infancy, and wrote them which earlier than those other letter. This is also the first letter in the New Testament.

2. Evangelical (Letters) Epistles

To this second category belong the Epistles to the Roams, Corinthians I and II and the letter to the Galatians. They are also known as the Major Epistles.

3. Letters from the Prison

The letters which he wrote while he was in prison are known as captivity letters or letters

from the prison. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon are being address through these letters.

4. Pastoral Epistles

The two letters Timothy and the one to Titus are considered pastoral Epistles. Through these letters he addresses the heads of those churches which was established by himself.

5. Epistle to the Hebrews

This letter is different from the other letters written by St. Paul. St. Paul's letters assume importance because of their profound theological insight. The chronological order in which they are written is of no importance here.

The Theology of St. Paul

St. Paul's Theology is Christ – centered. It is the passion of Christ, his death and resurrection and not the incarnation of Christ that is stressed by Paul. It is St. Paul who used the 'Gospel' = good news – to the maximum in the N.T. He uses the designation 'Lord' instead of Yahweh whenever he wants to make a reference to Yahweh. He addresses Christ as 'the Lord' and he proves that Jesus is the Son of God. Crucifixion, death and resurrection are given prime importance in the incarnation of Christ. According to St. Paul a person is in Christ when he becomes a partner in the mystery of the incarnation of Christ and that is what is meant by life in Christ. And as children of God, we are entitled to enjoy absolute freedom. The children of God are no longer under bondage to Mosaic Law, sin and death. It is through the Holy Eucharist that a Christian becomes one with Christ. In our physical body we will be able to experience Christ through the Holy Sacrament.

Memories – Acts of the Apostle 20 :32

“And now, brethren I commend you to God and the word of this grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance, among all of them which are sanctified.

Reference

1. How should the Boos in N.T. be classified ?
2. What is the common pattern followed by St. Paul in his Epistles?
3. Write a note on St. Paul's Theology.
4. Describe the different categories to which his epistles fall. Mention the different categories.

Lesson – 8

Early Letters of St. Paul

St. Pauls Letters To The Thessalonians

Thessalonica, now known as Thessalonika, is a beautiful city in Macedonia. One could find many Jewish settlements here. Thessalonica became the capital of the Macedonia province when the Romans annexed it from the Greeks.

During his second missionary journey, St. Paul reached Thessalonica. Many among the Jews and the Greeks fled to the gospel. Many among the Jews and the Greeks fled to Christ. But some of the Jews organized an uprising / rebellion against Paul and his companion. As a result of this problem St. Paul and Timothy left Thessalonica and came to Berea and from there reached Athens. After sending Timothy back to Thessalonica St. Paul came to Thessalonica and spent one and a half years there, preaching the gospel. Timothy, who went back to Thessalonica wrote a detailed report about the Thessalonica church sent to Paul. St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians was written in the light of this report. This was followed by his second epistle. He wrote both these letters in AD 52. In the beginning of the letter we find the names of Silas & Timothy along with the name of St. Paul, the writer of this epistle. Unlike his other letters which give moral lessons based on logical reasoning, this letter contains valuable advice to the church in a very cordial manner.

The First Epistle

At the very outset congratulates the church for its spiritual growth and remembers the hardships which they had suffered for the Christ. In it he also expresses his desire to visit them. In ch. 3. He appreciates the role played by Timothy as the mediator between himself and the church. This is followed by advice (1:1-12). Then he expresses his conviction about the resurrection of the dead (4:13 – 18). He also believed that the second coming of Christ would take place soon. There are hints about the second coming of Christ in this letter, which he thought would happen in their generation itself (4:17). But we do not find such references in his other epistles. But such a belief prevailed in the early Christian church. He exhorts the people to be vigilant and be ready to receive the Lord at his second coming.

He concludes his first letter with a word of advice regarding administration of the church and it is followed by his benediction

Second Letter.

The Second letter immediately followed his first letter. Certain problems arose in the church as a result of misunderstanding caused by Paul's teachings about the Second coming of Christ. Some people indulged in immorality and some others began to circulate fake letters. Under these circumstances Paul was compelled to write his second letter which immediately followed the first one.

After appreciating their unshakable faith, he tries to strengthen them in their belief. He assures them that those who presented them will be duly punished (1:3-12). He wants them to correct their misunderstanding regarding the second coming of Christ (2:1-12). He (asks) them the Thessalonian church to pray for them. His letter concludes with a warning to those who lead a lawless life and blessing / benediction to the faithful.

Key verse to the memories –I Thessalonians 4:14.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Exercise

1. Explain the reason as to why St. Paul and his companions (other) left Thessolonia.
2. Describe the circumstances under which the first epistle to the Thessalonians was written.
3. Why did the second letter immediately follow the first one?
4. What assurance does St. Paul give to the Thessalonians ?.

Lesson 9

Epistles of Gospel Teaching.

(Romans, Corinthians of Galatians)

The trenching of Jens in the gospels are given prime importance in these epistles. He (panel) gives epeeist interpretation of the gospels tenths the people gospel tin this. As his man objective is to envoy the gospel message to the people these letter as called epistles teaching

Letter to the Romans

This letter has reviewed insigne qualities. This is the longest letter written by Stipule. And it is addressed to a church which was neither established by st.paul nor visited by him before he wrote this letter to them. He marks it élans in his letter that has reared in great deal in lent this rhymed he longed to visit this church rinse some time.(1:8-13, 15:22-24).

The church in Rome was not established by St.Paul. These are two possilirties about the establishment of the Rome church Many Jews who lived in Rome when they went to the Jerusalem happened to here the sermon of St.Petu. Those who believed in heist, got Laptriged became members of the church. These early Christians when they returned to Rome might have established the church these. According to the other possibility Christian from churches established by panel (churches in Asia, Macedonia Greece) might have migrated to Rome established church these. The majority of Roman heritress was gentiles. But these was also Jewish- Christians. (Christians convents from fideism).

At the crime of writing this letter the church in Rome was famous through out the world. These was a wait majority of believes there. And Rome was the commercials entrée of the world at that time.

Paul stayed in Corinth for 3 months during the last phase of his third missionary journey. This letter was written during that period. He sent it through the maid Phoebe who was a deaconess of the church of Corinth.

The objective of writing this letter.

St. Paul introduces himself to the church because he had no personal relationship with the Roman church so he introduced himself to the church audiences himself in the presence of the gentiles. He acquaints them with the essence of the gospel which he preaches. It is to seek their cooperation and support for further activities that he has written to them.

The central idea

The cardinal idea put forward by Paul in this epistle is justification by faith. The observance of the Mosaic law does not justify in person. He teaches that justification can be achieved only through Christ. The salvation granted by Christ in faith enables a person to receive justification before the righteous God. The Christ whom Paul had known through his sacrificial death, won salvation for all.

Epistle to the Corinthians

During the N.T. period Corinth was a flourishing commercial trading centre and an important in Greece. It was also a renowned university centre. There was prosperity that at the same time moral degeneration was rampant there. Paul rebuilt the evilly made it his headquarters. Paul, during his second missionary journey came to this prosperous city. He stayed there one and a half year preaching the gospel. During his third missionary journey also he visited Corinth and stayed 3 months there.

The two letters written to the Corinthians are the authoritative texts which the church has received from St. Paul. But from this first letter it is evident that a letter was written to them earlier (1 Cor. 5.9). Unfortunately this letter is lost.

The purpose of the first letter

The Corinthian church established by Paul, grew because very powerful. But Corinth also had many problems because of immorality such as other ignoble thoughts and activities that prevailed there. It caused several serious problems in the lives of Christians. A letter which Paul received from Corinth.

This is the immediate reason for writing this epistle (1 Cor. 7.1). A group of representatives under the leadership of Stephanas and others, Antipater handed over this letter to Paul. The content of the letter was the problems faced by the Corinthian church.

Then again he happened to hear unpalatable news about the church through the people of Achaia. St. Paul was highly distressed by the immoral moral degeneration that prevailed in the church. Bringing law suits before the gentile judges, matters concerning the offerings made to the idols, disorderly conduct during the time of worship these are some of the issues that came to the attention of St. Paul. They had doubts regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage. Through the first letter he clarifies their doubts and answers some of their questions.

Division of the Book

The first letter can be divided into 3 parts.

1. Reply to those clearing the doubts/questions about differences- chapter 1-4
2. Answer to the report about immorality – chapter 5-16
3. Reply to the questions raised in the letter by the Corinthians. Chapter 7-16

Second epistle to the Corinthians

After his first letter to the Corinthians false (pseudo) teachers came these along to instigate the people against Paul. In order to meet this (challenge) situation St. Paul sent signs about the change of heart or repentance of the people delighted Paul very much, he wrote his second epistle to express his gratitude to the majority together with those who did not repent. He sent the letter through Titus. Timothy was also sent to collect alms for the poor. Through this letter he reveals the authority which he has received from Christ.

Division of the Book

1. The explanation by Paul about his service – ‘ diakonia ’
2. Explanation regarding the collection of alms for the poor. Chapter 8-9
3. Confirmation regarding his apostolic authority. Chapter 10-13

The second epistle concludes with a benediction in the name of the triune God. (2 Corin. 13:13)

Letter to the Galatians

This letter is not written to a particular church at a particular town or place. But it is written to church at a particular place. He raises the paradigm churches in 1:2.

In the 3rd B. C. some of the tribes from Gaul migrated to Asia Minor. The place where the descendants of these people got settled down came to be known as Galatia. Later it was attached by Sigrva, Greece, Rome. In 5 C. B.C. Galatia the surrounding place became a province under Rome. Galatians were a mixture of the various inhabitants like Celts, Greeks, Jews, & Romans. During the time Paul wrote this letter the name ‘ Galatia ’ was used to indicate the place where the Galatians lived and it also referred to the Roman province ‘ Galatians ’. The Roman province Galatia included the place where the Galatians lived i.e. Galatia and places like Prisdhya, Listra, Debra, Ikonja, (n. Galatia). St. Paul during his first missionary journey, had established churches in these places. There are differences of opinion among theologians as to which church this letter is addressed to.

The circumstance under which the letter was written

The Jewish Christians among the believers questioned the authority of St. Paul. As St. Paul was not among the 12 disciples or apostles chosen by Christ these Jewish Christians argued that the converts from other faiths also must get circumcised like the Jews follow Jewish customs, converts. It was to counter the ‘ indoctrination ’ process activities of the Jewish Christians caused great confusion among the other Christians who got converted from other faiths St. Paul was trying to remove their doubts confusion, through his letter.

The Main Subject matter

After a brief salutation St. Paul vehemently criticizes false (pseudof) preachers of the gospel (1:8). Then he boldly asserts that his apostleship is from above, i.e. from God, that he has approval of the dissemblers in Jerusalem (1:11, 2:10). The most important ideas found in this letter are salvation through grace and justification by faith. Salvation is not on the laws of Moses but on the basis of the faith. The law condemns people as sinners and they are under its curse. But faith in Christ liberates people from the bondage of sin so that they can enjoy the grace through Christ (3:1, 4:31). This freedom which one enjoys should enable a person to produce the fruits of the spirit (5:1-26). The epistle, written by the hand of Paul, concludes with certain instructions that are useful for daily life.

Verse to memorize

If the first part is holy, the whole mass will be holy; the branches there of will be so.

Exercise -

1. Which letter is the longest among St. Paul's letters?
2. What is the central idea in the epistle to the Romans?
3. What subjects does Paul answer in his first letter to the Corinthians?
4. The second letter to the Corinthians is divided into several parts? Which are they?
5. To whom is the letter to the Galatians written?
6. What is the main idea in the letter to the Galatians?
7. Why do we consider the letters Romans, Corinthians, Galatians 'Epistles of Gospel Teaching'?

Lesson 10

Letters From Prison

The letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians & Philemon are known as prison letters because they were written while he was undergoing imprisonment in Rome. The following references clearly give evidence to the fact they were written while he was in prison (Eph.3:1, 4:1, 6:19, Phil.1:7,13,17, Sol.4:3,10,18, Philemon 1,9,13,23) between AD 51-52.

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesus was an important city in Asia Minor. This city was one of the centers of missionary activity for Paul. He paid several visits to Ephesus and stayed there more than 2 years doing missionary work there. Timothy, an ardent disciple of Paul was the head of the church there. From the prison he sent the letter through Onesiphorus.

It is to strengthen and encourage the Ephesian church that he wrote this epistle. He explains the status of the church in relation to Christ & gives practical suggestions in accordance with their

Christian calling. He confides to them that God has arraigned a special mission to them (chapter 3), Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of His power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints 3: 8,9. He depicts the intimate relationship between Christ and the church using several metaphors. Paul compares the church to a temple where Christ is the cornerstone, again church is the body where Christ is the head & further church is the bride where Christ is the bridegroom.

THE CENTRAL IDEA CONTAINS 4 POINTS

I. The status of a Christian (1-3)

- a. Chosen by God the Father (1:3-6)
- b. Redeemed by Jesus Christ, the son of God (1:7-12)
- c. Sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13-14)
- d. The former state of the Christian (in a vegetative state) (2:1-3)
- e. The present state of the Christian-(having fullness of life) (2:4-22)

II. The life of a Christian (4-6)

- a. Unity in the church (4:1-16)
- b. Sanctity in the life.(4:17,5:21)

III. Duties of a Christian (5:22,6:9)

- a. Wives -5:22-27
- b. Husbands -5:28-32.
- c. Children-6:1-3
- d. Parents -6:4
- e. Servants -6:5-8
- f. Masters -6:9.

IV. Must be firm & be united in the fight against Satan(6:10-20)

Verse to be memorized:-Eph.4:7

“But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippine is one of the important cities in Macedonia. The city was established by Emperor Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. He came here during his second missionary journey. Silas, Timothy & Luke were with him. Paul visited their city during his third missionary journey also. The church there is the first church established by Paul in Europe.

While Paul was in prison in Rome, the Philippians raised a fund to help him & sent it through Epaphroditus to Rome. On two other occasions also they arrested him financially (4:16). In Rome Epaphroditus suffered ill health, but when he regained his health. Paul sent him to Philipp with his letter. He writes to them that his imprisonment has not caused any hindrance to his evangelization further he congratulates them for their courage & expresses his gratitude to them for their finely

& generous financial help. He appreciates their steadfast faith, at the same time reminds them to give up rivalry & competition among them. He wants them to imbibe the spirit of Christ –to go forward.

This is a letter where there is not even a single quotation from the O.T. Word's "joy" & "rejoice" are repeated several times in several most of the chapters in this letter. Allegations are few & words of praises are more in this letter.

PORTRAYAL OF CHRIST IN THIS EPISTLE

Christ, even though, he is equal to god, without regarding his equality with god, Emptied himself & took the likeness of man the image which he draws about Christ in this epistle is very important. He draws a parallel image between his life & that of Christ's in the first chapter. He presents Christ as the model of humility. They should also cultivate the same attitude of humility (2:5). In the third chapter he presents Christ as one who transforms one humble body into the likeness of his glorious body. In the fourth chapter he refers to Christ as the unfailing source of strength who grants victory to us under any circumstance (4:13).

Verse to be memorized:-Philippians-4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice"

LETTERS TO THE COLOSSIANS:-

Colossian was an important city in Asia Minor. This ancient city does not exist now. This has been destroyed instead there is a village called Lones (kenos). St. Paul has not visited this church. It was Epaphras, a disciple of St. Paul, who established the church there.

The Colossian church faced a very serious issue that threatened the very existence of the church there. False teachings began to spread in the church. St. Paul came to know about it from Epaphras. He wrote this letter to refute the false teachings & to strengthen the church in true Christian faith. In those days there were certain philosophical outlooks that were opposed to Christian understanding of god & creation. (They taught that everything was created by angels & heavenly beings & not by god). It is through angels that god created the world & everything in it. Man must subdue flesh (body) through renunciation and they must follow the sites & rituals (traditions) of the few & thereby they must acquire absolute knowledge. According to their way of thinking they must subdue flesh through renunciation of the world... This began the worship of the angels in the Colossian church. It was a mixture of gnosticism & Jewish faith. It is to portray Christ above everything & to emphasize the salvation which he confers as absolute that St. Paul wrote their letter.

In style & subject matter this letter has great similarity with the letter to the Ephesians, the mess topics like universal powers, fullness of creation, church the body of Christ, Messiah, the head of the church can be seen in both Ephesians. Some of the ideas which he mentions in Col –fully developed in Eph. There are certain common themes like elemental spirits of the universe, perfection of creation, church the body of Christ, Christ the head of the church in both the letter. Some of these ideas mentioned in the Colossians are fully developed in Ephesians scholars & theologians

opine that the letter to the Ephesians is braid in Colossian and the ideas there in are further developed in Ephesians. Example: only the practical side of husband-wife relationship is health with in Colossian whereas in Ephesians, when he relates man-woman relationship he Compress it with the relationship between Christ and the church.

HOW IS CHRIST PORTRAYED IN COLO.(1:14-20)2:13-15,3:1)

1. One who confers absolution of sins &salvation to us?
2. Image of god (likeness of god)
3. First born among all creation.
4. Everything has been created by him.
5. The head of all rule &authority.
6. Everything exists became of him.
7. Head &first born among the dead
8. Head of the church which is the body of Christ
9. The whole fullness of deity dwells in him
10. God has reconciled the earthly &the spiritual through xts blood on the Eros

VERSE TO BE MEMORISSED:’-COLO :2:10

“And you have come to fullness of life in him ,who is the head of all site and authority”.

LETTER TO PHILEMON

This is the smallest letter of st.Paul. There are only 25 verses in this letter. Paul does not discuss any serious theological matter in this letter. Philemon, a native of Colossian, became a Christian as a result of Paul’s missionary activities. He was generous in giving alms – enthusiastic in even evangelization. His house was a meeting place for Christians of Colossian. According to tradition he was the bishop of Colossian & finally he won martyrdom

One sinks slave of Philemon, fled from his master, reached Rome & finally came to st. Paul who was undergoing imprisonment. Stayed with Paul serving him & became a convert to Christianity. Philemon & Paul were friends. Paul sent him back to Philemon with this letter along with Thihikos.

St. Paul requisites Philemon to pardon his former slave (Onesimus) & to accept him as Paul’s beloved son. Further, if he has wronged him or owe him something it can be charged in Paul’s account it will be repaid by him.

Through the example of Philemon Paul depicts how Christian believes will receive absolution of sins through Christ. As Paul has interceded to Philemon, Christ intercedes to god on behalf of us. According to Mosave law onesimns deserves punishment but he is redeemed through grace.

EXERSICE

1. What is meant by prison letters? Which are they?
2. Describe st.Paul intention in writing a letter to the Ephesians?

3. Mention the Areas of comparison he makes about the church
4. Explain define the status of a Christian in the light of the letter to the Ephesians.
5. Why did Paul write to the Philippians?
6. Mention the letter without any quotations from the O.T.
7. How does Paul portray christ in his letter to Philippians?
8. What are the false teachings spread among the Colossian church?
9. Compare the Colossian & Ephesians' letter
10. What is the image he conveys about christ in his letter to the Colossians?
11. What lesson does he convey through the letter to the Philemon?

Lesson -11

Pastoral Epistles

The two epistles to Timothy and one to Titus are known as pastoral epistles of St. Paul. The name Pastoral epistles for these three epistles was begun to be used generally from the 18th century onwards. These epistles contained necessary directions and instructions to carry out the duties with regard to good administration of the church and hence they were given their name.

Epistles to Timothy

Timothy was the son of a Greek gentleman and a Jewish woman, lived in Lystra in Asia Minor. They embraced Christianity when St. Paul visited Lystra during his first Missionary Tour. St. Paul bears witness for the of Timothy's mother and grandmother in the true faith (2 Timothy 1:5). St. Paul calls Timothy many ways: My own sower in faith (1 Timothy 1:1) beloved son (2 Timothy 1:2) my beloved son and faithful in the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:17). St. Paul qualifies Timothy in these ways. Timothy and Titus were St. Paul's intimate friends. Timothy served St. Paul in his good times and bad times faithfully. Tradition says that Timothy lived long and ministered as Bishop and finally embraced martyrdom.

Epistles

It is believed that the first epistle was written in AD 50 and the second in AD 66.

First Epistle

In the very beginning of the epistle St. Paul warns the fond preachers for their false teaching in the church. They taught different faith and different observances and gave it more importance than the salvation through Christ. St. Paul accuses (1:3-12). In the first epistle St. Paul accuses them (1:3-12). In the first epistle St. Paul sets forth two different important topics:

1. Accuses false teaching and false teachers.

2. Describes the qualities of the servants of the church and instructions to the administrator of the church.

In the second chapter he described the ways and methods when the church members assemble and about the conduction of public prayers. In the third chapter he gives the description of the

qualities of the ecclesiastical hierarchy should have (3:1-13) In the fourth chapter St. Paul instructs and shows the correct way. In the fifth chapter the directions for the good administration of the church is described. The epistle concludes by the sixth chapter where in he was not against the false teachers and given necessary personal instructions.

Verse to memorise (1 Tim -4:12)

Let no man despise thy youth. But we there have an example of the believing in word in conversation in charity in spirit, in faith and purity.

Second Epistle

The main idea of this epistle due personal instructions to Timothy. He informs Timothy. He informs Timothy to serve sincerely witness in a Jesus in the circumstances of oppositions and tribulations. He was to the person who advises others as well as a preacher of the gospel. He works Timothy to follow his lead and avoid argument.

When he was writing this epistle he was in the know of the approaching death and his brave and hopeful words are specially notable. For I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course I have kept the faith Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

The verse to memorise 2 Timothy 2:15

Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.

Epistle to Titus

Titus was a Greek and he embraced Christianity through the work of St. Paul. After his embrace of Christianity through the work of St. Paul. After his report he followed St. Paul to many places as a co-worker of St. Paul. But in the Acts of the Apostles there is no reference about this Titus is notable. But it is clear that Titus was a very close friend of St. Paul from his different epistles. Gal. 2:13 4 Corin 2:13, 7:6,7, 7:14, 16:19, 12:18) "My books" (2 Cor 2:13) In general faith a true son (Titus 1:4) 25 is in these ways St. Paul has embellished. He was consecrated an Episcopos in Acts by St. Paul.

Epistle

It is believed the epistle to Titus was written before his second epistle to Timothy. He informs Titus to do necessary arrangements in church of and to ordain priests the father informed about the. Such persons who are ordained should have the necessary character the leaders of the church should have the necessity of a loving Christian life without oppositions are the main thought dealt with in the epistle. The epistle conducts reminding the duty of a Christian to be submissive to the powers lawfully binding.

Verse to memorise Titus 2:11.

(For) The peace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men

Exercise

1. What is meant by pastoral Epistolical wisdom they
2. Write short note about Timothy

- 3 what are the topics exposed in the 1st Epistle to Timothy
- 4 what are the qualities that the Ecclesiastical order should have as referred in the epistle to Timothy
5. why did he write his first epistle to Timothy ?
6. What are the hopeful words St. Paul remarks as he understands the approaching death ?
- 7 What are the topics dealt in the epistle to Titus !

Lesson 12

Epistle to the Hebrews

This epistle is written to the Jewish – Christian in Palestine. These Jewish – Christian are converts from Judaism. Because of persecution these Christians wanted to return to their old faith. St. Paul through this letter tries to strengthen the people in their Christian faith. He exhorts the people to remain faithful to their calling and to receive the fullness of knowledge instead of going back. He wants to establish Christ's authority over every thing, especially Judaism.

St. Paul says that Christ is the fulfillment of the prophetic sayings in references that the saying events described in the O.T are a mere shadow of the things that are fulfilled in Christ. Moses, their great leader the law giver is inferior to Christ for Christ is the creator of all. Christ is the mediator of the new covenant as such he is above the Mosaic law. The law which they now suffer is nothing compared to the blessing or grace which they will receive from Christ. He tries to convince them that their present state is a blessed one than what they can expect from Judaism.

This epistle when included among the other letters of St. Paul differs from his other letters in many respects. The usual pattern followed by St. Paul in his other letters is not seen in this epistle. The sender's name, salutation, the receiver's name, personal reference etc. are missing in this letter.

There are differences of opinion among theologians about the authorship of this letter. But our Syrian church believes that it is St. Paul who wrote this epistle. But the Western church has doubts regarding its authorship. But its language, manner of presentation, theological outlook all are typically of St. Paul, there is great similarity between the teachings found in this letter concludes the same way as the other letters conclude.

This epistle originally written in Hebrew language in A.D 67 while he was in Italy. St. Luke translated it into the Greek language

How Christ is portrayed in this epistle

He emphatically asserts that Christ is a high priest belonging to the order of Melchizedek. He portrays Christ as prophet, priest king. He gives equal importance to his divine and human natures. Some of the attributes of Christ in this epistle are: 'the apostle of faith' (1:2) 'the priest' (7:20, 10:21) 'mediator' (8:6, 9:15) 'leader of faith' and 'the one in whom faith is fulfilled' (12:2). Letter to the Hebrews can be divided into 3 parts:-

1.The personality of Christ	-	1 : 1- 4 : 13
Christ is greater than prophets	-	1 : 1 -3
Christ is greater than the angles	-	1 : 4, 2 : 18
Christ is greater than Moses	-	3 : 1 - 4 : 13
2.The mission of Christ	-	4 : 14 – 10 : 18
Priest hood	-	4 : 14 – 7 : 28
Covenant	-	8 : 1 – 13
The holy place the sacrifice	-	9 : 1 – 10 : 18
3. Faith life in Christ	-	10 : 19 – 13 : 25
surety of faith	-	10 : 19 – 11 : 40
stead fastness in belief	-	12 : 1 – 29
extortion to love	-	13 : 1 – 17
conclusion	-	13 : 18 – 25

Verse to be by heart - **Hebrews 13 : 16**

Exercise :-

1. What is the purpose of the letter to the Hebrews ?
2. What is the message conveyed to the Jews in this letter ?
3. How can we say that this epistle is written by St. Paul himself ?
4. How does St. Paul portray Christ in this letter ?
5. How can we divide epistle based on its content ?

Lesson -13

Universal Epistle

Out of the 21 Epistles of the New Testament 14 Epistles written by St. Paul have been studied in the Previous lessons. The remaining 7 Epistles are written by St. James, St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude. None of these epistles is written to a particular place or a particular individual. It is written to the church in general and hence these seven epistles are known as catholic Epistles or Universal epistle. It is called Holy Spirit of the church.

Epistles of the James

The New Testament says about five James

- 1, James father of Joseph the foster father of Jesus of (St. Matthew 1: 15)
- 2 James known as the brother of Jesus (Mark 1:15)
- 3 James The father of epistle Jude (Thaddeus) Luke 6:16
- 4 James Apostle son of Alphaeus (St. Luke 6:16)
- 5 James Apostle (son of Zebedee) (St. Mark 1:19)

The Author of this epistle is James brother St. Jesus .Who is remamberd with fifth Diptych (Thubden). He was the first high prist in Jerusalem, saint,Apostle and martys (you have studied about him in standard VI)

In the first verse it is een that third is written for the 18 clansring seateard in different places But the mattu conveyed shows that it is writtern to christians in general . This is an epistle written giving special stress as practical christian life. The Jewish christian at that time had to face with so many problem related to their former fith.such people who had to meet such difficulties were to the strontherd in the faith and be made cousageous and show he new faith through their practical lifeThis was the main intention in writing their epistle . This contains a lot of pieces of advicend instuction as that of the proverds of Soloman It is called the proverbs of the New Tastament.

Main Thoughts

1 Those poor people in the same faith should be considerd with brotherly affidion (2:1-10)

2 Hear the words and act accordingly (1:19,-27,2:10-26)

3 Bewareof the tongue(1:26,3:2-12)

4 Bc humble (4:1-12)

5 Bc in perpilial pardoning nature (6:7-10)

6 The inbeatable power of prayers (5 : 13-18)

Verse to memorise - james 4:10

" Hinndle yoursless in the sight of the LORD and he shall lift you up "

First Epistle of St. Peters

This epistle is one of the authoritativeli accepted Catholic epistle from the very early time St. Petershas referred about This epistle in his second epistle (2 peter 3:1) This epithle is written to the saints living seatered in different aluun countries like (1: 11,18,2:9-10) 4:3-4 pontes ,Galtia Cappadolia Asia,Bithynia -We can assume that they were jews This epistle was written by syluanos .along with markose as directed by St.Peter (5 . 13,14) This epistle was written to those people who began to back slide feding the persention of Emperior Niss and to make them be live that the ordeals are but temporary and to encourage them to the steadfast in the time faithi . He reminds them of the Hope fulness they god through Christ and proclains is necessary to suttu ordials (1: 3-13) Along with their he gives some six points inevitable to christian living.

1. Bc. ideal to other (2:11,12)

2 Submissive to authorities(2:13,)

3 Have noble husband -wife relation (3:1-7)

4 lead a Holy life bahiving that suffering ordeals in the name of crist in fortified.

5 The duties of priest (5:1-4)

6 The dutees of the youngmen (5:5-8)

The epistle concludes with the assestion that if you stand steadfast in faith ignoring the temperary ordeals you are sure to enter into eternal glory

Verse to mamorise 1 Peter 4:1 -As christ hath suffered for us in the flesh arm yourselves likewise with the same mind

Second Epistle of St. Peter

If the first epistle of St. Peter was to deal with external problems of the church, the second epistle was to face problems internally accrued. St. Peter warns the brethren inside the Church and their false teaching bring spread in the church. Only thing is that there is no mention as to whom it was written.

The epistle was to retaliate and revoke the two kinds of wrong teaching we read epistle itself.

1 One set of people who refused to believe the Jews Christ (2: 1-22)

2 Second group of people who refused the second coming of our Lord (3:1-13)

The apostle asserts that the false teachers will be cursed and whereas those who fear God and live accordingly will be blessed with eternal salvation. The apostle similes the false preachers to the wells having no water and the clouds rocked to and fro by a hurricane.

St. Peter proclaims through the epistle to the vigilance hoping for the new earth and new heavens doing justice soon by the symbols of the Lord's second coming. Moreover, the second coming of Christ is delayed just because of sin.

St. Peter indicates his impending death in this Epistle (1:14,15)

Verse to memorise 2 Peter 1:21

"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"

Exercise

1 What is meant by catholic epistles? Which are they?

2 Who are the five James is referred in New Testament

3 What are the main thoughts mentioned in St. James Epistle? What are they?

4 What was the aim of the first epistle of the Peter?

5 With the help of the book prepare a note on the perfect relationship of the husband and wife according to St. Peter.

6. What is the reason for Christ's delay for the second coming as pointed out by St. Peter?

7 To what all St. Peter similes the false teachers?

Lesson 14

Universal Letters – 2

1. Letters written by St. John

These three letters are written by St. John the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. The first letter is written commonly to the Churches in Asia Minor and the second letter is addressed to a Particular church there and the third letter is written to an particular (specific) individual.

The First Epistle

In very strong language he refutes the heresies that began to crop up in the church about the divinity and humanity of Christ. He condemns those who did not believe Jesus as the Messiah (2:22) those who deny father and the son(2:23) and also who consider the incarnation of Christ as an illusion and not real. Such false teaching were prevent in the church there. He portrays these false teachers as fake Messiahs fake properties etc. in his epistle.

Salutation, conclusion, benediction, personal allusions etc., commonly seen in epistles, are not found in this letter. Repeated use of expressions like ‘Children’ (2:12, 18, 28, 3:7, 18, 4:4, 5:21, ‘beloved’ (2:7, 3:2, 21; 4:1,7,11) etc. show his personal relationships and his spiritual authority over them. St. John, the apostle of love, through out this letter empathically talks about love and its various emotional implications.

Chapter 5 V. 13 indicates the purpose of writing this letter “know that you who believe in the name of the Son of God will have eternal life”. He uses the word ‘know’ several time in this letter. Union with God or harmonious relation with God is the central idea of this letter. By giving emphasis to the main attributes of God he explains how we can attain union with God – 1. God is light, 2. God is love and then God is righteous.

1. **God light.** Therefore those who walk in light are in union with God (1:5 – 2:28)
2. **God is righteous.** Therefore those who practice justice are from God (2:29 – 4:6)
3. God is love. Therefore those who love are born of God (4:7 – 5:12)

The Gospel according to St. John and St. John’s first epistle have several things in common. Similarity of ideas, similarity in language etc. can be seen in both the Gospel and the first epistle. The incarnation of Christ, (John 1:14, 1 John 4:2), the idea to live in union with God (John 15, 1 John 2 : 2-4). The idea to love each other (John 13:34, 1 John 3:23), advice regarding eternal life (John 5:24, 1 John 5:13) etc. are evidences to show the relation between the two books.

Verse to learn by heart :- 1 John 4:9

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world, so that we might live through him”

Second Epistle

To whom is it written :- There are differences of opinion among learned theologians whom the second letter is addressed to. According to some it is written to a noble lady. The hold semitone records that it is written to (the elect lady) Kyria and her children and the English Bibles say it is to the Elect lady and her children. Kyria is the Greek word for Lady. The first impression we gather may be that the letter is written to a noble lady & her children. But a careful reading and analysis of the content will make it clear that the Elect lady is the local church there (4,6,8,10,12 verses). Verse 13 conveys the greetings of the church from where he writes. Here it is written the children of the Elect sister. Such expressions are used because church is considered the bride of Christ.

There is close relation between the second and first epistle in terms of ideas. He exhorts them not only to love but reminds them that love is life (living) in accordance with law / commandments. He wants them to be wary of those who deny the incarnation of Christ. According to him those who do

not confess that Christ has come in the flesh are “deceivers” and ‘anti-christs’. Hospitality should not be accorded to those who come to your houses with false teachings. One should not engage in friendly chat with such people.

Vese to be memorized (2 John V.9)

Any one who goes a head and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the father and the son.

Third Epistle

The third epistle is addressed to a person called Gaos, “Walk in truth” – that is the central idea of the letter. He mentions the names of three people – Gaos, Deeyothrapos and Demetrious – members of the local church which is under his authority.

Gaos used to welcome those who were engaged in evangelization (missionaries and extended hospitality and did all kinds of assistance to people. But Diathropos was an over ambitious person who rejected (denied) the letter of St. John, spread scandals against him, ill-treated the missionaries and excommunicated those who welcomed received the missionaries. Demetrious, was one among those who were expelled from the church. St. John when he came to know about these troubles in the church, appreciates the services of Gaos and exhorts him to continue such services.

Vese to be memorized

3rd John V II beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God, he who does evil has not seen God.

2. The Letter of Jude

The auther of the Epistle- In the Holy Bible we find 5 persons by the name Jude 1 (St. Jude) Judas, the Son of James (Thaddai) (St. Luke 6:16) 2. Judas, the brother of Jesus Christ, (St. Mark 6:3) 3. Judas the Galilean, (Praxis 5:37) 4 Judas of Demasens (Praxis 9:11) 5. Judas Iscanot (St. Luke 6:16).

It is Judas, the brother of the Lord, who has written their epistle. St. Johns, the auther of the epistle, was his brother. It is after the resurrection of Christ that bother Judas and James became bvelivers.

It is not eleas into whom the letter is written to the auther tries to consentise the people against the degeneration fotheir faith and the un dogly life they are leading. St. Paul and other letter writens mostly deal with the dangers of heresines that playgued the churches. But St. Judas not onl;y denounces / condemns the false teachers he also exhorts the Christians to fight against this danger and to remain steadfast in their faith.

The contents of Judas letter remind us of St. Peter’s secnd letter. A close examination of the letters show how deep the relation between the two is. It is different to decide who has intimated the other as there is no common couse for them to imitate. Because of the following reasons we assume that the second letter of St. Peter must have been written earlier

The second letter of St. Peter warns against false teachers who will appear in the future. But Judas in his letter says that they have already come. Quoting 2. Peter 3.3. Judas in VS 17 and 18 states that this has been foretold by the apostles. The Epistle of Judas also contains ideas and quotations from Apocalyptic literature like the Apocalypse of Hanaoch and Assumption of Moses. For Example

V. 9 – from the Ascension of Moses.

Vs. 14-15 – from the apocalypse of Hanaoch.

St. Judas compares false teachers to Cain, Balaam and Korah. He denounces those who indulge in Physical passions and revile the glorious name of the Lord and calls them ‘waterless’, ‘Frontless trees’ and ‘wild waves of the Sea’, The apostle exhorts the believers to lead a pure, godly life and to convince and save some who doubt the true Christian faith and wait for the mercy of the Lord unto eternal life. He concludes the letter glorifying the Lord.

Verse to learn by heart : St. Judas V . 17

“But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Exercise :

1. How does St. John depict the false teachers in his first epistle?
2. What is the purpose of St. John in writing the first epistle?
3. Which letter has the central idea – ‘union with God’
4. Compare the epistle and the Gospel written by St. John
5. The second letter is addressed to whom?
6. What is the relation between the first and second epistles of St. John?

Lesson 15

The Book of Revelation

1. Author of the Book and the Period of Writing

A couple of instances in the Book indicate the name of the author as John, the disciple of Jesus (1:1, 4,9; 22:8). From the book we gather the information that the author calls himself – servant and ‘brother’ and that he was in the island of Patmos. During the reign of Domitian, the Roman emperor (A.D 90-95) St. John was exiled to Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea. Patmos, an island full of volcanic rocks, was a place where criminals and political opponents were exiled. When St. John was here he was shown this revelation by Jesus Christ and he was ordered to write down this vision. John used to write down the visions which were shown to him. He reached Ephesus after his release from there in A.D. 96. He wrote the Book which he was in Ephesus and sent it to seven churches in Asia Minor.

The Name of the Book

'The Apoealypse of St. John' is the title of the Book found in the Holy Bible and in the Greek Bible. Apoealypse a Greek word is used here. Apoealypse means to unveil or to unravel. 1:1 records it as the vision or revelation of Jesus Christ. It can either mean a revelation from Christ or a revelation about Christ.

The Purpose of writing the Book

1. To reveal Christ fully
2. To boost the morals and to fortify the faith of those Christians who have suffered persecution because of their belief in Christ.

Apocalyptic Literature.

God reveals those mysteries to which are known to him only either by Himself or through a messenger to man is called revelation. These are revelations of hidden secrets or mysterious. God reveals them through revelations. Those who receive them record them and inform the others. The language here will be such in symbols. This is known as apocalyptic literature. This branch of literature began to flourish with the end of the prophetic period. The concluding chapters of the prophetic book of Ezekiel and chapters seven to twelve of the prophetic book of Daniel belong to this category. The whole of the book of Revelations is written in this literary style. The visions described here cannot be interpreted literally as the language used here is such in allegory everything described and here persons (individuals), places animals activities, numbers, stars, colours – has allegorical symbolic value or significance. Extreme care must be shown to interpret these passages and to arrive at its message. We must also relate it to the interpretations of similar biblical passages.

Interpretations

For centuries the book of revelation has been interpreted in 4 different ways. Even though each of these different schools, of interpreters has a number of followers none of these is sufficient enough to interpret this book.

1. Preterits (Out look) view point

According to this school of thought all the prophecies in the Book of Revelations are already fulfilled. They believe that St. John wrote this book to instill courage to those who underwent religious persecution in the Roman empire.

2. Futurist view point

The prophecies / visions found in the book are not fulfilled; they are yet to be fulfilled.

3. Historic view point

According to this school the book gives a historic account from the period of St. John (the Baptist) to the advent of Christ and the things that followed that period.

4. Idealist outlook

They hold the view that it has nothing to do with reality. It has neither historical significance nor any fulfillment of history. It is an allegorical representation of the conflict between good and evil.

Reference to Christ in the Book of Revelations :

Though the book says a lot of things about the three persons in the trinity, it is about Christ that the book gives clear witness to Christ is addressed using the following names :

1. Faithful witness, first born among from) the dead, loved of kings.
2. Olaph and that (first and last letter in syriac) alpha and Omega, indicates that he is the first and the last (1:8; 22:13)
3. Son of man (1:13)
4. The first and the last and the living (1:17)
5. Son of God (2:18)
6. The witness, the faithful, the truthful and amen, the head of Gods creation (3:14)
7. The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of Davis (5:5)
8. The lamb that has been slaughtered (5:6)
9. Word of God (19:13)
10. King of Kings, Lord of the Lords (19:16)
11. Shining Morning Star (22:16)

Conclusion

The Book of revelation concludes like a covenant. St. John gives the testimonies of 3 persons to ratify the contents of the book. First is the testimony of the angel who has shown the visions to St. John. It is followed by the testimony of Christ who says it is he, the Alpha and the Omega, who has sent the angel to show these visions to St. John. The third testimony is that of St. John himself. Curse will befall those who make alterations to what is written in this book says St. John.

Verse to lower by heart : Revel 22:12

Exercise :

1. Name the author of the Book of Revelation
2. What is meant by Apocalyptic Literature?
3. Under what circumstance did he write the Book of Revelation and what is its purpose.
4. The different interpretations of the Book of Revelation.
5. How is Christ depicted in the Book of Revelation?

Lesson -16

The Second coming of the LORD

Introduction

The Second coming of Christ is said parousia in quick. This world is used for the majestic official processer the kings and such people. It means presence or arrival. This word is used in the New Testament to describe the second coming of Jesus Christ.

I The proclamations regarding the second coming.

1 comes in the glory of father

For the son of man shall in the glory of his Father and with the angles (st. Mathew 16:27, 25:31, St. Mark 8: 38 St. Luku 9:26)

2 He will come in the clouds

"They shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and glory (St. Math 24:30 26 :64, St. Mark 13 :26 , Luku 21 :27)

3 He will come like a thief

The thief who wants to note comes suddenly without any prior information. Similarly the second coming of Christ will be at a time quite unexpected (1 John 5:2)

4 come along with his Angels (st. Mathew 25:31

The son of man shall come with glory with all his Holy Angels and sit on the throne of his glory

II The Aim of the Coming

1 For the fulfilment of the promise (St. John 14:3)

I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself and where I am there maybe also.

2. To unite the chosen people. St. Mathew 24: 31

He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of the heaven to the others

3 To judge the nations St. Mathew 25: 31-32

When the son of man shall even in his glory and all his angels with him, then shall he sit up on the throne of his glory. And before him be gathered all nations and he shall separate them from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

4 To reward everyone according to his work St. Mathew 16:27 .

5 To rise the dead 1Thes 4:13-17

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with trumpet of God. and the dead in Christ shall rise first then we which are alive and remain

shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

III The time of the Second Coming

The lord has not given the correct time of his second coming but certain indications are given.

1. The Time is unknown

Regarding the day and hour of coming, nobody, even the angels of heaven know except the father alone knows it.

2 In all the world the gospel of the kingdom should be preached St. Math 24:14)

For the witness of all nations in all the world the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached. Then will come the end.

3 After the appearance of Antichrist (2 Thes 2: 3)

justly faith will be abandoned and son of man son of the man of sin will appear,
4 It will happen as that of time of Noah, (St. Mathe 24: 37,47, How was the time of Noah, So will be coming of the son of man.

IV The preparation of the faithful.

Since the second coming of the Lord is so sudden and unexpected and since people have no certainty of the time there are certain things they should observe.

1 wait anxiously (1 cori 1: 7)

So that you come behind in no gift. waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

2 Be prepared (St. Mathew 24:44)

Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh.

3 Be Active (St. Luke 19: 13 -27)

In this part our Lord says a Simihi to his disciples It is related to the second coming of son of man.

A rich man went away to acquire kingship to a foreign country. He entrusted his servants some money and asked them to merchandise with the money he comes. Some obeyed him and dealt properly with the money. Some refused to use the money properly. In an unexpected time, the master came and checked the accounts of everyone. He rewarded each according to their work. Those who were lazy were punished and sent them in to the darkness outside.

Until the second coming of the LORD the faithful are to be diligent throughout this life, is what the sinitic

4 Pray ardently for his coming (Reve 22 :20)

"Surely I come quickly Amen even so comes LORD Jesus

Verse to memorise St. Mathai 25: 13

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the son of man cometh

Excercise

- 1 What are the things said about the second coming of the LORD ?
- 2 What is the aim of the second coming

- 3 When is the second coming of the Lord.
- 4 How are we to be prepaid for the second coming ?

PART 3
True Faith
LESSON 17
TRINITY

Introduction

It is beyond human intellect to know God fully. He could have revealed himself only by what God was kind enough to reveal about himself. The mysterious character of the Three in one is revealed in the Holy Script in different ways at different occasions .

The faith of the church about God

We believe in the one true God the Almighty Father, creator of the heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible

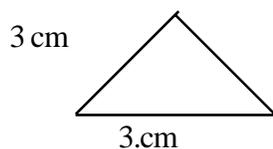
The Holy Trinity

When we think about God we say three Gods in one God, that is three in one and one in three. This being a mysterious union it is beyond the comprehension of human mind. This is not possible to prove by argument or by intellect. Only through faith can we comprehend this mysterious character of God.

In God there are three personalities or otherwise known as "knemos" The Holy Father the "Holy Son" and the Holy Ghost they are equal in every respect, one in neither bigger or shorter, neither powerful more than the other two. In character and in essence, there is no difference and showing no mark of any difference they are mysteriously united and hence we say three in one God or Trinity.

Example

consider an equilateral triangle all three sides are equal.



In this which side is longer and which are is shorter if ask it will be a sheer foolery

similarly in God the persons Father, Son and Holy Ghost are without any difference whatsoever these three persons have the same characters and same substance. Where we say Father, do not misunderstand that there was a time when there was no Son when say Father it is understood the 'Son' the Father and Holy Ghost are included. That is we can not include two persons and single out one among the three. The prayer given below in the early part of the service of Pentecost

O God invisible and incomprehensible, one having no beginning and no end, one who is boundless you are known in essence, and differentiated as three persons. All intellectual beings comprehend you with the three special qualities, The only one God you are known as three Holy knemos with only one with the character having no beginning and no end Father Son and Holy

ghost three persons indied, the true one God,

This prayers of the church elucidates fully the teaching of Trinity in the Holy church. In the Service of pentecost part of the prayer in the introducing 'Preemion' is also given below.

"god is self born. self knowing and self able. He is the creator and the our who books after all things visible He has no beginning and he will be eternal . He is mysteriously self born incomprehensible and having no beginning and no ending . He is the three one god with some and the Holy ghost with one character, one power and one mind.He has no name with out kumo, One Kumo is neither small no older than any other one. Kumos have no difference in size nither big nor small In This eternity the kumos or his name is neither different nor small. when it is said father. it is true that the son and Holy ghost is from him. When it is said Son, It is that the Father and Holy ghost is Known because of him.when it is said Holy ghost it is clear that Father andin him Father is the together but not the begotten The son is by other but not the together . The Holy ghost comes out the Father and taken from the son and is having equal status in character and equal dernity as father, There is no need of further explanation regarding the one god in Trinity.

The word Trinity is not seen in the Holy bible.But there are several occasions which indicates Trinity.some are given below

Genesis 7:26 god said make man in our image after our likeness

St. Mathew 28;19 " go you there fore ,and teach the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy ghost .

St.Mathew 3 : 16-17 And Jesus when he was baptised went up straightway out of the water. and so the heavens were opened went to him. and he saw the Holy spirit of god, descending like a dove,and lighting upon him And to a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son in whom I will pleased.

Exercise

1 What is the faith of the church about god ?

2 Describe the details in the 'Premaon' of the " Pentecoste 'to comprehend the teaching regarding Triminty .

3 The word Triminty is not seen in the Holy Bible .But there are indications in this regard explain them with referene to the occasions in the Holy Bible.

Lesson 18

ONE AND ONLY HOLY GOD

Many people find it difficult to form a clear idea about holiness and saintliness and Holy one and saint. Some people even hold the view that it is improper to consider humans as saints or holy ones because god alone is holy. Some others even think that saintliness is nobler than holiness and saint is more elevated than a Holy man.

Holiness

It is after many centuries that the idea 'holiness' got its present meaning. The idea holiness was prevalent among the Canaanites and the Babylonians even before the formation of Israel as a nation and the worship of the one true God. The gentiles used the term to denote external cleanliness. But it assumed a spiritual meaning with the Israelites.

The semantic people (e.g. Babylonians, Assyrians etc.) when they said God is Holy, it meant that he does not have any human weaknesses and that he does not suffer from illness etc. When this quality is attributed to human beings, animals and places, it means that it is set apart for divine worship. Ethereal values are not associated with this holiness.

The Hebrew concept

The law (Mosaic law) was given the Hebrews when they reached Canaan after their liberation from Egyptian slavery. They got the conviction that the God was Holy and righteous. So their understanding of holiness had ethereal/moral considerations.

The Mosaic Law CLEARLY indicates ethereal purity and moral righteousness. Leviticus chapter 17-26 describe the laws regarding such holiness. When the Hebrew ascribe holiness to people and places it means that such people and places are dedicated to God.

Prophetic holiness:-

During the prophetic period the concept of holiness acquired (special) layers of meaning. The prophets were not at all interested in cult and rituals. For them purity of heart was important. They emphasized purity of heart/ purity of life above everything else. They insisted that man should be as holy as God himself. Just as God is absolutely perfect in attributes, his saints also should be morally perfect. The prophets made it clear that those who commit injustice and violence are ungodly unholy. They taught that God's saints should be morally perfect. Prophet Isaiah said that those with impure lips are not Holy (6.5). From the period of the prophets, holiness means purity of heart. External purity does not make a person a Holy one.

In the New Testament

The holiness of Jesus:- Even before the birth of Christ, the Holy spirit prophesied that he would be Holy (St. Luke 1:35). The unclean spirits recognize his holiness. (St. Mark 1:24) The man with unclean spirits cried out, "what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? I know who you are, the Holy one of God." Several references speak about the holiness of Jesus. The following are some of the passages which reveal the holiness of Jesus: - St. Luke 4:34, Acts 3: 14, 4:27-30, Hebrews 7:26, I John 2:20, Rev. 3:7.

Christians and Holiness

The New Testament strongly teaches that Christians, the followers of Christ, also should be Holy as Jesus Christ is Holy.

1. The holiness of John the Baptist (St. Mark 6:20)

Herod feared John knowing that he was a righteous and holy man.

2. The prophets are considered Holy

The New Testament testifies that the prophets are Holy."..... until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his Holy prophets from the old." (Acts 3:21)

3. The holiness of the Church:-

“Christ gave himself up to her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the novel, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”(Eph 5:26-27)

4. The holiness of the believers:-

The believers are said to be Holy when their thoughts, desires and deeds are in accordance with will of God .The life and of the believers must be appropriate, must be holt like that of saints.

I Peter 1:15-16 – “but as he who is called Holy, be Holy yourself in all your conduct; since it is written. You shall be Holy for I am Holy.” So the scripture says believers should lead a saintly life.

The purpose of divine calling: - The calling of Abraham

It was with a definite purpose that God choose Israel as his own people. God reveled it through his election of Abraham, the tribal leader.

“Now the lord said to Abraham, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show to you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.....shall bless them. (Genesis 12:1-3) God called Abraham to be blessing in him and the cause of blessing to others. The earth that is cursed through the sins of the sons of Adam must be blessed. God had his salvific purpose in his calling of Abraham. He knew how to execute his plan of redemption of mankind.

Try to be partners in His Holiness.

God calls man to be partners in His Holiness. When man was created he was innocent, pure and righteous. Man was in communion with God. A God who is Holy, innocent and righteous cannot create a man who is impure/unholy, full of malice and unjust. Through the instigation of Satan, man got alienated from God; he became subjected to cruse and death. Only when he is freed from cruse, can he become Holy and can approach God who is Holy. God calls man with this and this call extends to all humanity. “As I am Holy, you should also be Holy” (Lev.11:44-45).it is to partake in His Holiness that God calls man. “I am the lord your God. As I am Holy, you should sanctify yourselves and be Holy. Do not defile yourselves. I am the lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt”.

And the lord to Mosses “Say to all the congregation of the people of Israel, you shall be Holy for I the lord your God is Holy” (Lev. 19:2).

“Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be Holy; for I am the lord your God. Keep my statutes and do the; I am the lord who sanctify you” (Lev. 21:7).

The calling includes the following seven points.

1. God is Holy.
2. God is the lords who sanctify you.
3. The people should be Holy.
4. The people should not defile themselves.

5. The people should consecrate themselves.
6. The people should observe all his statutes and ordinances and do them.
7. The people should try themselves to be Holy.

The man who satisfies all these points will become Holy. He will be transformed to the holiness of God and he becomes Holy.

The man who submits himself to divine calling, observing the statutes and ordinances of God, dedicating himself to God through continuous purification process will be sanctified by God and he cannot be called unholy. He has received holiness from God. God executes this purification through Lord Jesus Christ.

This idea is evident in the prayer offered by Jesus in chapter 17 of St. John's Gospel. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one" (St. John 17:11).that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in his, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me that they may become perfectly one... (St. John 17:21- 23).

This prayer of Jesus is a realization of God's calling into holiness. It is through Christ that the curse of the defiled / unholy man is removed and he is led to holiness or perfection. With the sanctification of Jesus this process is completed.

Jesus prays to father in the following manner:-

"Father, sanctify them in the truth; thy word is the truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for this sake I consecrate me, that they also may be consecrated in the truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word" (St. John 17:17- 20).

God's promise to Abraham that all the families of the earth shall be blessed by him and by his son; this is fulfilled through Jesus, the son of Abraham.

The Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world offered his body as a sacrifice in Calvary for the absolution of sins. He did this so that "we share his holiness" (Hebrews 2:10), St. John, the disciple writes, "The blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all the sins" (1 John 1:7).

Thus those who are absolved of all their sins and sanctified are holy.

The One and Only Holy God and Holy men

Except the only true God, no one is holy. The whole mankind has sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But this lost glory is regained through Jesus Christ. When we have become one in Christ, our sins are washed away (cleansed by his blood) and become partners of his holiness, it is God's holiness that we receive. That is, we might receive the holiness of the only Holy one through his grace. Thus we also become holy ones.

"The one and only holy Father"

At the end of the celebration of the holy Eucharist when the holy mysteries are celebrated the priest recites like this -

“These holy mysteries are given to the holy ones “. As reply to this the believers with one accord confess and say that, “Except the one and only holy father and the one and only son and the one and only holy spirit, there is no more who is holy”.

Some may have some doubt when they suddenly hear this declaration of faith. After making the confession- that except God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit, there is none who is holy. Some think that it is wrong to address ‘holy mother of God’, ‘holy bishop’ etc...

Such doubts arise when does carefully listen to the confession of faith in holy Eucharist. One should pay careful attention to the following prayers offered by the priest-

“The one and only holy Father who created this world in His compassion are with us. The living Holy Spirit that brings perfection to what is and what is to be is with us. Let the holy name of the Lord be glorified forever from the very beginning”.

If only we have attained holiness, the Holy Father, the holy son and the Holy Spirit will dwell with us. We are holy ones for the son of God has sanctified us with his blood.

St. Paul writes, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”(2 Cori. 5: 17 - 18)

He who have crucified the old man (Adam) with all his worldly passions and desires, have become shareholders in the holiness of the holiness of Jesus Christ. Those who receive holiness from the one and only Holy one, also become holy ones. When a twig is thrown into blazing fire, likewise, we whose sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus by the grace of God will be transformed and become holy ones. Thus those who receive holiness from the only holy one become holy men.

LESSON 19

ANGELS

Introduction

Angels are heavenly beings They have no worldly ladies or relations. Once created they have no death. They uniform man the will of God and safeguard them who love god according to the orders. they are named Angel, messenger messenger of God, They are named angel ,messenger different name as seen in the Holy Bible.

creation..

Holy Bible says that god has created the angels (Psl 148:2:5) cols 1;16 In hese passages without saying density it is made dear that are also areated by god as other creations

Services of the angels

A Actions to the faithful

In relation to the human beings many things are said about angles in the Holy Bible some are given below.

1. guidance in the right path (Gem 24: 7, 40)

When Abraham wants to ferid out a wife for his son Israc he engageshis servant he says as follows god will sent his angel before you to fried out a wife for my son (Gen 24:7) It is happend and that is recordad in Gen 24: 40

2 Safeguarding (Psal : 34 :7) of the Lord

An army of angels has surrounded his faithful men and his safe guards them.

3 Release (Danial 6:22)

My god sent his angel and closed the mouth of theso that they may not injure me the lions so that they may not injure me

4 Appear (Acts 27: 23,24)

For There stood by me this night the Angel of God saying Fear not paul. then must be brought before Ceasar to god

hath given the all them that said with thee

B Acts towards the unfaithful

1 Rain (Gaints 19:1,13)

The two angels reched sadom at evening time As the sodom has reached the presence of the Lord and this place is going to be destroyed The Lord has sent us to destroy this place.

2 To curse (judges 5:23)

The angel of the Lord orderd to curse the city of of meros and curses severely its inhabitants.

3 Judges sudden death Acts 12 : 23

As he did not glorify god the angel of the Lord punished him forthwith . He died woman eating his body.

4 Follow the enemy and destroy

They (Enemies) will like dust before the wind Angel of the lord will follow them. this way will be darkness and it will make slipping. The Angel of the Lord will make them flu.

C In Relation to the life of Jesus

1 Let known the pleasant News- (The Happy News of Birth)

(St. Math. 1: 20,21) (St.11 :20,21) St.Luke 1:26-38) (St.Luke 2:8-13)

2 serves Jesus (st. Mathew 4:11)

Then satan (Akai Karuse) left him and Angele came near him served him

3 Bear witness to the Resurrection of Jesus

(1 Tanies 3:16 Jesus revealed himself in body gratified in spirit and appeared to the Angels

4 proclaims Resurrection (st.Mathew 28: 6-7)

Angel said to the woman Fear not, I know that you are searching for the crucified Jesus He is not here as had told he has resurrected

The fallen Angels

6th those of St. judes epistle refers to a set of Angels who were ousted from the kingdom of god having struggled against god. Profihet Israil 14:12-25 The prophet Israil refers to an Angele by the predonation of self struggled against god and was ousted But the same in about the king Babil according to chapter 14 fourth Verse. Job 4:16, St. Mathew 25 : 41 Peter 2:4 Reve 12:9 These portion indicate reference to the fallen angels The groups of Angels

Very little references are seen in the Holy Bible about the different groups of the Angels.

gosp5:14 rats for that he said No, I have come now as the Lord of the army of God This indicate there are different groups of Angels 1. Kings 22:19 Zech 2:3,3:1, In there verse also We can see indications of several groups in the angels. Dhani 8:16, 10:13 In these verses we see the names gabrial & Michail In the book of Tobit we can see that Tobit we can see that Tobit and Thobias are herlped by Angel Raphal

Mor Diamesious who wrote the Holy Khurbono in his vision he says vividly about the different groups of Angels According to the tradition of Aionories The Angels are arranged there grades each grade has 3 sub divisions.

grade I

There are three groups in this grade

1 Seraphym (Sropae)

2 Cheruls (Crobae

3 Thronics (Mauthbu)

grade II Three groups

1 lords (Moraosoa

II Strength (Hailavosa

III power (Suthonai

Group III Three groups

1 Rules (Archovosa or Reesanjhvosa

2 arch angel (reesh Angel

3 Messengess (Angels.

thus there are 9 groups in 3 grades

In the Holy Eucharist these names Angels Angels, Archangels ,Sothonu,Rusinvosa , Mauthuba, crotau, sropac etc can be seen in the premcons

The group Sropas are considered to bear fire prophet Israh saw them (6:6) church are Angels glorifying god, and they are also Angels who are watching see Israich 37:16. Hezackid 1310 chapters.Gaimes 3:24

St.Paul also says about the groups of angels Ephes 1:21-22)

Rulers(Archavosac)

Powers (suthonac)

Strenth (Hailea

Lordship (Moravosac)

Mar Ignatious Nooroma said Angels in two groups worshipping god,in his vision.According to the Anthiochain Tradition.....two groups in the worship in lod n this

Exerscise

1 give in one or two sentences the coditions of the Angels ?

2Describe how the action of Angels towards the faithful ?

3 howis the action in case of the unfaithful ?

4 when all did Angels be with jesers in his life

5 Which n the grups of Angels.

7 The hy mus of worship in two groups is on what baries?

Lesson 20

The Holy Church

In church means the congregation of the redeemer faithful with the Lord Jesus Christ as the head church is divided into two the old Testament church and the New Testament church in the shadow where as the New Testament church in the real.

New Testament Church

Jesus Christ son of God incarnated as man and released the humanity from the slavery of Satan. He gave them the Commandments of the New Testament - Love and eternal life by his holy and blood. Moreover the good news of salvation was given by his disciples. Thus Jesus Christ established and the Apostles finished and nurtured the faithful congregation and it is the New Testament church.

The old Testament church

The old Testament church constitute all the faithful people from the time of Adam until Jesus Christ. Even then the beginning of old Testament church considers its clear beginning from the call of Abraham the father of the faithful. God declared by this call that he would make the children of great nation. One old Testament church began to grow through 12 clans through 12 sons of Jacob son of Israel, son of Abraham. So it is issued that the old Testament church is the people of Israel just before Jesus Christ.

The difference between the old new Testament churches

The old old Testament Church and New Testament church have Cardinal differences

1. old Testament church is pertaining to body where as New Testament church is spiritual
2. old Testament church was only to one nation say Israel where as the New Testament church is to whole humanity to all nations of the earth
3. The Old Testament church was under the commandments and the discipline there of The New Testament church is adjoined to Jesus Christ and filled with the grace of Holy Spirit

The similarities of church

Church has many similar in the Holy Bible same are given below

1 The Bride of Christ

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband as in to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph 22:25)

2 Church in the body of Christ.

For we are the members of the body of his flesh and of his bones (5:30) And he is the head of the church (Col 1:18) Now we are the body of Christ and members in particular (1 Cor 12:27)

3 Church in the Temple of God

Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor 3:16)

ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5)

The Existance of the church

The church established by Jesus Christ overcoming all obstructions will exist on earth till the second coming of Jesus Christ and I also say unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (St. Mathew 16: 18) For the word himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thesal- 4:16,17)

The characteristic nature of the church

The characteristic nature of the church is defined in the third part of the Creed we believe in the church which is Catholic, apostolic, only one and holy from these four things are very clear

1 The Church is Catholic

The word Catholic means it is universal

1 The church is Apostolic

Christ has built his church on the rock which is the immutable faith of St. Peter, the head of the Apostles. The Lord planted the Apostles and fathers who succeeded them nurtured their church, the entire commandments of the Lord is not fully recorded in the Gospels. St. John (21:25) The resurrected Lord taught them again many things and should examples (Acts 1:2-3). This also is not recorded in the Bible. This was given to the successors by verbal teaching that is extant in the church even to days. It is this that is called tradition. This church is called Apostolic church because it has an antiquity from the age of the Apostles and it was led and guided by the Apostles till these days

3 Holy Church is Only one

God is only one and Jesus Christ also is only one and the Holy Ghost is also only one. The God which is the union of Father, Son, Holy Spirit is again only one. St. Peter's Confession of the Faith immutable is also for the other disciples as well. Because the question asked was to the entire group of the disciples. It was not directed to St. Peter alone. Christ asked of his disciples when he reached the Lord Kaisaria of Philip what do people say who is the Son of Man? Again he asked what do you say about me? The question was asked in common to all. Simon Peter answered for himself as well as on behalf of others,

"Thou art the Son anointed of the living God" Thedisciples did not object to the answer. Jesus accepted this reply. Then he gave the laws regarding the church (St. Mathew 16:13-20) Thus to any Apostolic church in the world the same Creed is used. Thereaway the difference of local language. Hence there can be changes according to different places and different languages. But the faith in God and the faith in Jesus Christ is not changed, church is the body of Christ and all faithful persons are members of the Church and hence they are all part of the body of Christ. Therefore church is only 'One'

4 The Church is Holy

It is the Lord God who started and established the church. God is holy and the church he established is also holy. Christ the head of the church which is the body of Christ, Christ is holy so his body also should be holy. This is the temple of God and that Holy Spirit abode which you say St. Paul the Apostle again the place where the spirit of God dwells is holy and so the church is also Holy

Duties of the church

Proclamation of the gospel worshipping God spreading of the true faith to the world, celebration of the Holy sacraments which are ways of achieving grace from God, by we alms on help the poor we call these duties Evangelical liturgical Doctrinal and pastoral Exercise

1, What is New Testament church ?

2 what is old testament church?

3 what are the characteristics nature of the church - Explain

4 what are the Duties of the church..

PART IV- HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
LESSON 21
THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Aim: To Learn about the early stages in the development of the Christian church.

The earliest stage in the development of the Church, from 30 A.D. to 70 A.D., can be called the 'apostolic period'. Luke has written about some aspects of the history of the Church during this stage, in the book, 'The Acts of the Apostles'. Initially the Roman Government and the gentiles considered the early Christian Church as a modified form of the Jewish religion. Even after the ascension of Jesus Christ, the apostles and other believers used to go to the temple of Jerusalem for prayers (Acts 3:1). But after Stephen became a martyr, Christians started getting recognized as a separate group. As we know, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the strongest driving force behind Christianity. For the same reason, the Sadducees, who did not believe in resurrection, became enemies of the Christians. During this period the gospel was preached amongst the gentiles too. Saul of Tarsus, who was strongly against the Christians, was converted to Christianity. Later, he came to be known as St. Paul. He did a lot of gospel work among the gentiles. Decisions taken at the Jerusalem council in AD 51 encouraged the gospel work and the growth of the Church.

In AD 70 Romans destroyed the temple of Jerusalem completely. A large number of people were killed. Remaining people fled to distant places to save their lives. The period from AD 70 to AD110 can be called 'the apostolic disciple period'. The followers who learnt directly from the apostles led the church during this time. Most of the books of the New Testament were available during this time. With the downfall of Jerusalem the Jewish Christians were no more important. The largest cities in the world at that time were Rome, Antioch and Alexandria. These three cities became the important centers of the Christian church. These cities were in the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa respectively.

The Romans used to worship idols and also the emperors who ruled the country from time to time. The Christians who refused to do this were branded as atheists. The Christians who were denied the right to worship used to get together in secret places and worship at night. From AD 55, when Emperor Nero was the ruler, till the Edict of Milan issued by Emperor Constantine in AD 313 bringing the persecutions under Diocletian (and later Galerius) to an end, for two and a half centuries the Christian Church was persecuted continuously. The Christians who protested against making the slaves fight animals for the entertainment of the Romans were persecuted. Amongst the gentiles, Christian ladies were treated like slaves. Since the Christian Church was a prohibited establishment, it did not enjoy freedom of expression and worship, which other religions enjoyed. To be a Christian was a crime in itself. The Romans used to hate the Christians. During this period of persecution many Christians were murdered and many others were subjected to various tortures. In spite of all this the Church was growing every day. Since membership in the Church was a disadvantage financially, only the real faithful were members of the Church.

After the death of Emperor Diocletian, the Roman Empire was divided. Constantine, who was the chief of the army, became ruler of one part of the empire. During a war, Constantine saw the sign of the cross in the sky in a vision, while crossing the Milvian Bridge, and heard the voice, "With this you will win". Constantine believed in the vision and got the sign of the cross marked on all weapons and on the flags. He won the war that followed. Later he became the emperor of the whole of Roman Empire. Emperor Constantine removed all the restrictions imposed on Christians by his predecessors and made a proclamation in the town of Milan in Italy. This historically important 'Edict of Milan of AD 313' declared complete religious freedom to all the people in the country. All Sundays were declared public holidays. Following this, Christians started their day worship on Sundays.

Later Emperor Constantine became a Christian and the best thing he did for the growth of the church was to conduct the first ecumenical council in AD 325 in the city of Nicaea in Asia Minor (part of modern Turkey). From different parts of the world 318 bishops attended the various meetings of the council. Mar Osthathivos (Eustathius), Patriarch of Antioch was the president for many of the meetings. The heresy of Arius that denied the divinity of Jesus Christ was declared as accursed at the council of Nicaea. The council established the doctrine that God the father and God the son were of the same essence. It was decided that baptism of the heretics would not be accepted and that Easter would be celebrated only on a Sunday and not based on the date alone.

Under the leadership of Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, a group of people went to Jerusalem and searched for the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified and found it. The Church commemorates this event on September 14th as 'Sleeba Perunnal'.

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

Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople started teaching that though Son of God was of the same essence as God the Father, the Holy Spirit was not equal to the Father and the Son. The aim of the 2nd council at Constantinople in AD 381 was to officially rebuke this heresy of Macedonius. The convener of this council was Emperor Theodosius, who was the ruler that time and the president was the Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Milithios (Meletius). Since a regional council was going on at Rome at the same time, the Bishops from that region did not attend the Constantinople council. But the Pope in Rome later accepted the decisions taken at the council. While the council was in progress, Mar Milithios who was the president passed away and the rest of the meetings were conducted with St. Nectarius as the president. The wrong teachings of Macedonius were rejected as heresy and the true faith about the Holy Spirit was added on to the Nicene Creed. The Cappadocian Fathers have written in detail about the true faith.

Another heresy came up in the church a few years later. The Patriarch of Constantinople Nestorius, who had rejected the heresy of Arius and Macedonius, started the trouble this time. He taught that Jesus had two natures, one human and one divine, and that there were two persons in Jesus, one man and the other God. He further taught that the sufferings on the cross were undertaken by the man Jesus. He also said that it was wrong to call St. Mary, who was the mother of Jesus in his nature and person as a man only, as the mother of God (Theotokos). The most important person to oppose this heresy was St. Koorilose (Cyril), the Patriarch of Alexandria. It was to discuss this heresy that the ecumenical council was held at Ephesus in AD 431. Mar Koorilose was the president of the council. It was declared at this council that Jesus Christ, the Son of God was a single person with a single nature that was fully human and at the same time fully divine. It was also declared that it was right to refer to Virgin Mary as the mother of God.

Apart from these ecumenical councils, regional synods were held to solve problems that arose locally. When the dyophysite (double nature) argument that was declared as heresy at the council of Ephesus in 431 raised its ugly head again, the emperor convened another council in Ephesus to counter it. Mar Dioscorus of Alexandria presided over the council. In this council that was attended by most of the Church leaders, representatives from Rome also took part. Pope Leo of Rome sent a letter known in history as the 'Tome of Leo' to be read in the council. Since the contents of the letter were contradictory to the convictions of the previous councils, the president did not allow the letter to be read in the council. Therefore the Pope was angry with Mar Dioscorus.

Following this, as demanded by Pope Leo, Roman Emperor Marcian convened a council at Chalcedon in Asia Minor, in the year 451 A.D. Here Mar Dioscorus who was the president of the second council at Ephesus was rebuked in public and was declared guilty. The people under the administration of

the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria did not accept the decisions of the council of Chalcedon, since these decisions were seen as reintroducing, in a modified form, the dyophysite concepts which had already been rejected as accursed at the council of Ephesus. But the Patriarch of Constantinople remained as an ally of Rome.

Questions

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

LESSON 22 THE DIVIDED CHURCH

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

When the cities of Rome and Constantinople were important as centers of power and administration, Antioch and Alexandria became famous as centers of learning and knowledge. The learned theologians of Antioch and Alexandria took up the responsibility of establishing and explaining the faith and doctrines at the three ecumenical councils. Mar Athanasius and Mar Koorilose are to be considered the foremost among these theologians.

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

When Constantine became the Emperor, the period of persecution for the Christians came to an end and the golden period started. Along with this, greed for power and rivalry among churches also grew. The church in Rome, which claimed more importance, tried in various ways to establish its supremacy over the other churches. They thought that this would give them an opportunity to grow equal to the churches of Antioch and Alexandria in the field of theology. Leo, the Episcopa of Rome was waiting for such an opportunity when it was decided to hold the second council at Ephesus in 449 A.D. to discuss about the heresy of Evuthikose (Eutyches). Leo saw it as an opportunity to establish a dominant position for Rome in the field of theology. Therefore though he did not attend, Leo sent an essay (Tome) through his representatives, to be read at the council. Mar Diascorus, the president of the council did not allow the 'tome' to be read at the council as many of the ideas in it were similar to those of Nestorius, which had already been declared as accursed at the council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

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

Emperor Theodosius died soon after and Emperor Marcian who became the next ruler agreed to Leo and convened another council. This council started in 451 A.D. at Chalcedon. (Instead of AD and BC present day authors prefer to use the terms CE (Christian Era) and BCE (Before Christian Era)). Aims of this council were:

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

The council publicly condemned Mor Dioscorus and declared him guilty. Leon's tome was accepted. So the Nestorian argument of Jesus having two persons in one body, which the council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. had rejected, was accepted with some alterations.

Nestorius had argued that Jesus Christ had two persons and two natures. The decision at the council of Ephesus in AD 431 was that Jesus Christ could not be considered as consisting of two persons, one man and the other God, and that he did not have two separate natures, one human and one divine. Mar Koorilose explains it as 'one nature of the incarnate word'.

Eutyches taught that human nature merges into the divine nature to become one nature. Our Church has not accepted this. Human nature does not become divine nature and divine nature does not become human. The human and divine natures neither become a mixture nor merge and become one. One nature does not destroy the other. Instead divine nature in completeness and human nature in completeness except for sin are inseparable in one essence. This is the teaching of our church.

Therefore after incarnation also Jesus Christ was complete man and complete God. After this inseparable union, actions and nature of Christ cannot be separated as some human and some divine. It is against the faith to teach that divine nature of Jesus raised Lazarus from death and that it was his human nature that lamented on the cross. In Jesus Christ there is inseparable union of divine and human natures in their completeness.

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

Regarding Christology, the four oriental churches including the Syrian Orthodox Church follow the faith declared at the Ephesus council of 431 A.D. After the Chalcedon council in 451 AD, which the Oriental Orthodox Churches never accepted, the Roman church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches which came under the Patriarch of Constantinople developed a misconception about the position of the Oriental Churches. They considered the Oriental Churches to be 'monophysites' and thus departing from the true faith. Recently the discussions which took place between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have cleared the misunderstanding. In 1982, a common proclamation on Christology was made by the Pope, Supreme head of the Catholic Church and the Patriarch of Antioch, Supreme Head of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

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

There are about fifteen Churches that are classified as Eastern Orthodox Churches. These include four smaller Churches in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem that accept the dyophysite

(double nature) faith and eleven autocephalous Churches in Russia, Cyprus, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, Georgia, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Poland and Sinai.

The Churches that did not accept the dyophysite theory are known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches today. Syrian orthodox, Coptic orthodox, Armenian orthodox and Abyssinian orthodox (Ethiopian) churches belong to this group. All these churches have the same faith and liturgy.

Questions

1. What are the teachings of Nestorius and Eutyches about the nature of Jesus?
2. In the Tome of Leo what is different from the decisions at the A.D. 431 Ephesus Council?
3. What is our faith about the nature of Jesus Christ?
4. Which are the orthodox churches not accepting the dyophysite faith?

LESSON 23

THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

Syrian Orthodox Church is under the Holy Throne of Antioch. Of all the Patriarchal Sees organized at the Council of Nicaea (Antioch, Alexandria and Rome) the See of Antioch is the most ancient. It is important to note that the followers of Jesus Christ were called Christians for the first time in Antioch. Also it was at Antioch that St. Peter established his Apostolic See.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, Antioch was a very important place. Antioch was the third biggest town of the Roman Empire. E. S. Burchiar, in his book about the history of Antioch, mentions that in the 4th century, Antioch had 5,00,000 people living in 1,00,000 houses within a radius of 15 miles. Antioch in the 4th century was much bigger than many of the modern Indian cities.

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

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

In the 5th century, the prominence of Antioch and its Christian Church began to decline. There were four reasons for the decline:-

1. Persecution from the double nature (dyophysite) group after the Chalcedon council.
2. The earthquake of the first half of the 6th century.
3. The Persian attack in AD 538. The city was nearly completely destroyed in this attack.
4. In AD 638 when Arabs invaded and conquered Antioch, it became isolated from the Christian world.

It was in AD 538, the same year of the demise of Mar Severius (also spelt Severus) that Antioch was destroyed completely. After Mar Severius, the headquarters of the Apostolic See was shifted from Antioch.

Dayara Movement

In the earlier classes, we learned about many Church Fathers, who lived before the time of Yacoub Burdana (Jacob Baradaeus) and suffered much in their endeavor to keep the faith pure. Most of these Fathers belonged to the Dayara (monastery) movement. At least from the 3rd century, Dayara movement was existent in the Syrian Orthodox church. Though, due to unfavorable circumstances the inmates in these Dayaras are small in number these days, for centuries the dayaras have been centers of spirituality, knowledge and service.

Dayara of Mor Mathai

The Dayara of Mor Mathai, situated near Mosul in Iraq, was founded in the 4th century and is an important one. Apart from Mar Mathai who established it, Abraham, Zaki and Daniel were the other prominent members of the Dayara in the beginning. One Arabic historian of the 13th century has recorded that about one thousand people lived there at that time.

In the middle ages, this Dayara was well known as a centre of learning. One of the most scholarly among the famous ascetics of the Syrian church, Maphriyano Bar Hebraya (Bar Hebraeus) lived here for a long time and wrote many books. Since the 10th century, for a long time it was the headquarters of the Maphriyanos. We have lost almost all the invaluable books of the famous library of this Dayara. They are now kept in places like the British Library, Vatican library and different institutions in Europe where ancient manuscripts are kept. Only a few original handwritten books of not much importance are available in the library now. Thousands visit the place as tourists and pilgrims.

Dayara of Mar Barsouma

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

Since the 8th century (some historians say 9th century) till 1293 our Patriarchs lived in this Dayara. Michael the Syrian who wrote our church history lived in this Dayara (1166-99). Before becoming Maphriyano, Bar Hebraya also lived in this Dayara. In the middle of the 14th century the Kurd tribal people destroyed the Dayara. It has not been renovated.

Dayara of Mar Hananiya

Another important Dayara called 'Dayara of Hananiya' was established by Mar Hananiya, the Metropolitan of Mardin in AD 800. From the beginning itself, there were about 80 inmates there. The dayara is globally famous because of its library. From 1293 onwards the Patriarchs used to live here. From among the inmates of this Dayara, there have been 21 Patriarchs, 9 Maphriyanos and not less than 110 bishops.

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

Apart from the people who lived together in Dayaras, there were ascetics who lived in caves. There were others who lived an ascetic life on high pillars. Such people were called Destuno (stylites). Mar.Semavoon Destuno (Simeon the Stylite), whose name is mentioned in the 5th diptych, was the first among them (389-459). Since he had special gifts and powers, people followed him everywhere. It was to avoid being disturbed by people while he was meditating, that he decided to meditate from the top of a pillar which was 60 feet tall. But soon the place was filled with people.

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

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

Following his footpath many used to meditate standing on top of pillars. The practice was prevalent in African and European churches also. Mar Michael used to meditate from a pillar till his death

at the age of 105. In 19th century also there were ascetics who followed this practice. Syria and neighboring regions where people of a single faith lived came under the rule of the Arabs in the 7th century. With this the persecution from the Chalcedonians (the dyophysites) ended and there was peace in the church. The only condition of the Arab rulers was that the Christians should not work against Islam religion and its rulers. All non Muslims had to pay a tax also. This could not be considered a burden. Military service was compulsory for the Muslims. Because the Christians were exempted from this, they had to pay a tax instead. Priests and ascetics were exempted from this tax.

The Muslim rule before the Crusades helped the Christians in many ways. The Muslim rulers were keen to make use of the knowledge of the Christians. That was good for the Christians. Secondly since Syria, Persia and Mesopotamia got united politically, the gospel spread to many places where it had not reached till then.

Since the dyophysites (believers in double nature) lost their strength with the lack of royal support, the Church did not have to face their hostility any further. The peaceful atmosphere allowed the Syrian Christians to continue their pursuits in other fields. In fields like science, medicine, astronomy, history and theology, Syrian Christians made significant contributions.

The first Maphriyano Mar Marutha, Muse bar Keepa and Mar Yacoob of Edessa lived during this time.

Since Christians were more educated than the Arabs, they held important positions under the Caliphs. Their growth in the field of trade helped them financially also. In general till the Crusades, the period of Muslim domination was a time of peace and progress for the Christians, though a few rulers were against the Christians.

Questions

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

LESSON 24 THE COPTIC CHURCH

The Patriarchal See of Alexandria was one among the three organized at the Council of Nicaea. Today, the Church which comes under this See is known as the Coptic Church. Most of the members of this Church are Egyptians. It is called the Coptic Church because the Coptic language is used for the liturgy. Till the 13th century this was also the spoken language. In 705 A.D., Caliph Abdul Malik banned the Coptic language and made learning of Arabic compulsory. Thus, by the 13th century, the Coptic language ceased to exist as a spoken language.

The land called Mizraim in Bible is the Egypt of today. This land has many connections with the Bible and the history of Israel. In the Bible there is a reference to Abraham going to Egypt and living there for a while. Israeli people grew in number while in Egypt. Further, following the instruction of the angel, Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus to Egypt. So this land had the fortune to be a refuge for the Lord Savior of the world. The traditional belief is that Mark the Evangelist established the Church in Egypt as instructed by Apostle Peter.

The achievements of the Coptic Church in theology and faith in the early centuries can be attributed to the school of theology in Alexandria. For centuries it remained as the theological capital of the world. This school gave birth to many eminent leaders.

Later, due to the persecution by the Arabs, this school became weak. A school similar to the School of Alexandria and learned people equal in status to the scholars of this school cannot again be found in the history of the Church. Regarding steadfastness in faith and in the Dayara movement this Church was always in the forefront. Kings who were idol worshippers, westerners with the double nature (dyophysites)

theory and later Muslim rulers tortured this Church enormously. With the famous Edict of Milan by Emperor Constantine, persecution from the Gentile kings came to an end. But the Coptic Church continued to be oppressed under the Arab rule. We have already seen about how the Coptic language ceased to exist as a spoken language.

Starting from the 13th century, there have been many attempts to bring the Coptic Church under the Roman Catholic Church. But a majority of the people resisted these attempts. In 1899, Pope Leon XIII of Rome ordained a Patriarch for the Coptic Church members. There are only very few members under this Patriarch.

The headquarters of the Church today is Cairo in Egypt. Though in the early days the Patriarchs used to live in Alexandria, for various reasons they shifted to the Dayara of Macarius in Nitria in the 6th century and later in the 11th century to Cairo. About a million people belonging to Egypt, Sudan, other African countries and neighboring Middle Eastern countries belong to this Church.

Unlike our Church, the Coptic Church celebrates Christmas on January 7th. Easter is celebrated on the Sunday following the Passover of the Jews.

Questions

1. How is Egypt (Mizraim) important in the Bible?
2. What is the importance of the theological school at Alexandria?
3. What did the Coptic Church mainly lose due to the Arab rule?
4. What are the differences in worship between the Coptic Church and our Church?

LESSON 25

THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Armenia was the first country to accept Christianity as the official religion. In A.D 313, emperor Constantine of Rome became a Christian. Much before that, in 301 A.D., the king, the officials and the people of Armenia accepted Christianity as their religion. The people of this country, the first ones to accept Christianity as the official religion, were also the first ones to suffer persecution. Even in the 20th century they were cruelly persecuted. During the First World War about one-third of the Armenian population was massacred. There cannot be such a large number of martyrs in any other Church. According to the traditional belief of the Armenian Church, apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew were the apostles who spread the Gospel in Armenia.

Until the 4th century, the Armenian language had no script. Further, the conversational language was different in different places. Therefore the Church did not have its own liturgy in the local language. Greek and Syriac Bibles were normally used during this period. Due to the efforts of St. Isaac (St. Sahak / St. Sahag), when he reigned as the Catholicos, a script was made for the Armenian language and the Bible and other books of worship were translated into the Armenian language.

It was in the provinces of the Roman Empire that most of the early century Christians lived. Arguments and discussions regarding faith took place between people or Churches within the Roman Empire. Armenia which was not a Roman province was not much affected by these arguments. Though the council at Nicaea was the only one they attended, they consider the decisions of the councils at Constantinople and Ephesus as binding on them also. They do not accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A.D.

Later during the 13th century when the Armenian Church established relationship with the Catholic Church it did not change the faith. It was the enmity towards the Arabs and the distrust in the Greeks that prompted the Armenians to have contact with the Roman Catholics. Even under this situation, the Armenian Church did not accept the dual nature (dyophysite) theory of the Roman Catholics.

In the 18th century with the help of the French, the Catholic Church again tried to bring the Armenian Church under the control of Rome. They kept trying to bring the Armenians under their control,

initially through peaceful means and when that failed using force. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV ordained a Catholic Patriarch for the Armenian Church. But very few people accepted this Patriarch, who was a representative of the Roman Catholic Church. Even today, there is a small community under this Patriarch.

The Armenian Church suffered much due to the changes of regimes. During World War I, the Armenians were the victims of a genocide unprecedented in history. From a total Armenian population of 35,00,000 before the war, about 12,00,000 Armenians were massacred during the war.

The Armenian Church developed its liturgy based on the liturgies of St. Basil the Great and Mar Ivanios (St. John Chrysostom) with the golden tongue, and that of the Syrian Church. While all the other Oriental Orthodox Churches use leavened bread for Qurbana, the Armenian Church uses unleavened bread. They do not have the tradition of mixing water in wine. Priests wear black robes and caps. Dayara priests wear a head dress also.

In one year 157 days are for fasting. Christmas is celebrated on January 6th. Like in our Church, there is Qurbana on Sundays and on all maranaya feast days. In larger parishes there is Qurbana on Saturdays also.

Questions

1. Which was the first country to accept Christianity as its official religion?
2. What were the achievements of the Armenian Church during the rule of St. Isaac (St. Sahak)?
3. Write a brief note on the faith and traditions of the Armenian Church.

LESSON 26 ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Ethiopian Church is one of the oldest in the world. It is the largest of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. It is believed that long before they became Christians, even during the time of King Solomon, the Ethiopians were monotheists (believing in and worshipping only one God). Through Queen Sheba who married King Solomon, monotheism is believed to have reached that country.

The incident of Philip and the Eunuch points to the fact that the Gospel reached Ethiopia in the 1st century itself (Acts 8:26-40).

The missionaries Frumentius and Edesius laid the foundation of the Ethiopian Church. After initial missionary work in Ethiopia, Frumentius went back to his native city of Alexandria, met the Coptic Patriarch Athanasius and requested him to ordain a Metropolitan for Ethiopia. Athanasius anointed Frumentius as the first Metropolitan of Ethiopia. Frumentius was a member of the Alexandrian Coptic Church. So Ethiopian Church initially existed as a diocese of the Coptic Church. The Metropolitan known as 'Aboona' and ordained by the Coptic Patriarch used to rule the Ethiopian Church.

Though Ethiopia was geographically separate, faith, liturgy and administrative practices were the same as that of the Coptic Church. The Ethiopian Church had connections with the Syrian Orthodox Church also.

For centuries, Ethiopia was ruled by a Christian dynasty which traced its ancestry to King Solomon. The whole of Ethiopia was under this king. But the situation changed with the arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century. When their power increased the Christians migrated to the mountains and the Muslims occupied the plains. However, the Church did not have to face much persecution.

From the 13th century onwards there were attempts to bring the Ethiopian Church under the Roman Catholic Church. Many missionaries were sent to Ethiopia from Rome with this objective. These attempts saw the use of threats and violence over many centuries. Consequently, there is a small group under Rome in Ethiopia today.

In 1948, an Ethiopian was ordained as Aboona for the first time. Subsequently, in 1959, Baselius became the first Patriarch of Ethiopia. Today the Ethiopian Church is independent.

Faith and Practices

Since it was established by the Coptic missionaries and nurtured under their care, in faith and liturgy their tradition is followed. They accept only the three Ecumenical councils that are recognized by the other three Oriental Churches. There is unity with the Syrian, Armenian and Coptic Churches regarding the faith related to the Trinity and the nature of Jesus Christ.

But in rituals, the Ethiopian Church has its own special features. It is believed that when Menelik I came to Ethiopia, some Jews also went along with him. Probably due to this connection with Solomon there are many Jewish rituals in the Ethiopian Church. Like the Jews, Saturday is the Sabbath day for the Ethiopians also. Circumcision, purification, avoidance of forbidden food etc are practiced according to the Jewish Laws. Like the Levi people who danced in front of the Ark of the Covenant, a group of people called Debteras dance during processions. They dance holding a T shaped stick in one hand and a musical instrument in the other.

Members of the Church are very punctual about sacraments and fasting. About 250 days in one year are fasting days for the Church. Only vegetarian food is consumed during the fasting days. On a day of fasting, no food is eaten till 3 PM, except when it is a Saturday or a Sunday.

Primary education is related to the Church and the liturgy. Along with the most important subject mathematics, psalms, songs of praise to Jesus and St. Mary, and prayers in Geez language are taught. Geez is an ancient language of Ethiopia. It is important only as the language of the liturgy. The spoken language today is Amharic. About thirty million people are members of this Church. Addis Ababa is the headquarters of the Church. There are 53 ascetic groups in the Church. Christmas is celebrated on 7th January.

Questions

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

LESSON 27

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

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

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

This verse touched the hearts of many faithful, and as a result the ecumenical movement started. The English word ‘ecumenical’ originated from the Greek word ‘oikoumenikos’. It means, ‘the whole inhabited world’. The root word is ‘oikos’ which means house, spiritual house, temple etc. Thus, by the middle of the 19th century, the word ecumenism attained a wider meaning: “Christian fellowship worldwide”. In the modern world, the ecumenical movement reflects the endeavor of the Christian Churches for a universal Christian unity and their desire to be witnesses of Jesus to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Over the centuries, Churches in different geographical regions accepted different rituals and ways of administration. Then each church focused more on the differences between themselves and the other churches. But the belief and hope that while individual differences in faith and liturgy and rituals are respected, different churches can work together in other aspects, led to the emergence of the ecumenical movement.

Translation of the bible into various languages helped this movement. When the British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1804, the ecumenical movement got a lot of encouragement. Though the Bible society was started by the Anglican Church, from the beginning they allowed half of the

members of the director board to be from other churches. In 1816 when the American Bible society was started, members from different churches forgot individual differences and co-operated.

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

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

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

By the middle of the 19th century, the word ecumenism acquired the wider meaning, "Christian fellowship worldwide". This word signifies the wish for unity among the divided Christians.

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word ecumenism?
2. Which is the biblical verse that gave encouragement for the ecumenical movement?
3. What are the biggest achievements of the ecumenical movement so far?