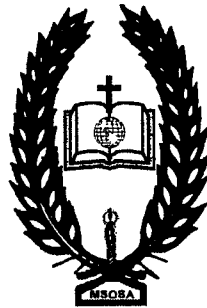


**MALANKARA SYRIAN  
ORTHODOX SUNDAY SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NORTH AMERICA**



**TEXT BOOK CLASS – V**

**2003**

## **PREFACE**

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

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

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

Carteret, NJ  
07-11-2003

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

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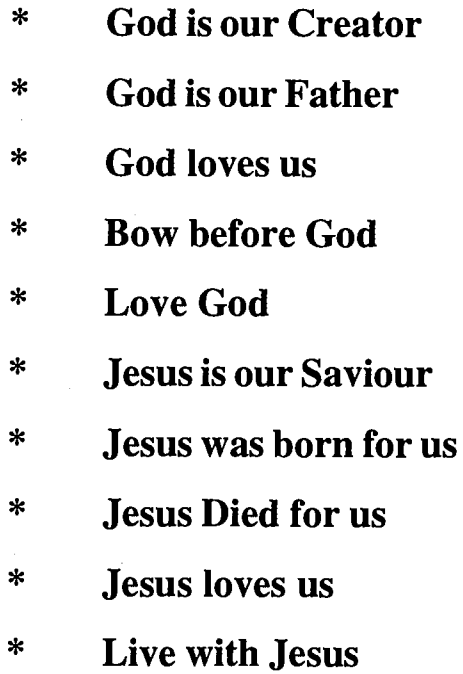


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(English)

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- 
- \* **God is our Creator**
  - \* **God is our Father**
  - \* **God loves us**
  - \* **Bow before God**
  - \* **Love God**
  - \* **Jesus is our Saviour**
  - \* **Jesus was born for us**
  - \* **Jesus Died for us**
  - \* **Jesus loves us**
  - \* **Live with Jesus**

## LESSON 1

### PRAYER

#### Prayer of Repentance

O Lord! teach us all Your commandments. By Your grace help us to live according to them. O God set guards to the open doors of our senses that the treasury of Your grace may not be detained from us. Barekmore.

KARTHAVE ! NINTE SARVA KALPANAKULEDEYUM VAZHI NJANGALE PADIPPIKKENAME. NJANGAL AVAYE AACHARICHU NINTE KRIPAYAAL JEEVIKKU MARAKANAME. NINTE NALVARATHINTE BHANDARAM KAVARCHA CHEYYA PPEDATHIRIPPANAYITTU NJANGALUDE THURAKKAPPETTA VAATHILUKALKKKU NEE KAAVALKKARE NIYAMIKKENAME. BAREKMORE.

O holy God, Your Holiness is adored by all saints. O Lord, cleanse our thoughts and make us worthy to glorify Your name like the seraphim who proclaim and glorify Your holiness. Moriyorahae melain nooadarain.

VISHUDHANMARAL THANTE VISHUDHATHA KONDADAPPEDUNNA PARISHUDHANAYA DAIVAME! KARTHAVU PARISHUDHANENNUM, THANTE NAAMAM VAAZHTHAPPETTATHENNUM SROPPENMAR STHUTHIKKUNNATHUPOLE NJANGAL NINNE STHUTHIPPANAYITTU NJANGALELLAVARUDEYUM VICHARANGALE NEE SHUDHEEKARICHU VEDIPPAKKENAME. MORIYORAHAE MELAIN NOOADARAIN.

#### Opening Prayer

O Lord, who is wakeful and do not sleep, awaken us from our sleep in the sloth of sin that we may praise Your wakefulness. O Living and eternal One who do not die, wake us up from the sleep in death and destruction that we may worship Your compassion. Father, Son and holy Spirit, who are being praised and adored on earth and in heaven, make us worthy to praise You and adore You in holiness, along with the glorious company of heavenly angels now and always and for ever. Amen.

URAKKAMILLATHA UNARVULLAVANAYA KARTHAVE! NINTE UNARVINE  
STHUTHIPPANAYITTU PAAPAMUZHUKALIL NINNU NJANGALUDE URAKKATHE NEE  
UNARTHENAME. URAKKAMILLATHA JEEVANULLAVANE ! NINTE KARUNAYE  
VANNIPPAAYITTU MARANAVUM KSHAYAVUM AAKUNNA NIDRAYIL NINNU  
NJANGALUDE MARANATHE NEE JEEVIPPIKKANAME. PITHAVUM, PUTHRANUM,  
VISHUDHA ROOHA YUMAYULLOVE ! SWARGATHILUM BHOOMIYILUM NEE STHUTHIKKA  
PETTAVANUM VAAZHTHAPPETTAVUM AAKAKONDU NINNE STHUTHIKKUNNAVARAYA  
SWARGEeya MALAKAMARUDE MAHATHWAMULLA VRINDHANGALODONNICHU  
VISHUDHEEYODU KOODIIPPOZHUM EKKALATHUM ENNANNEKKUM NINNE STHUTHICHU  
PUKAZHTHUVAAN NJANGALE YOGYARAKKENAME. AMEN

### **Bovooso**

O Lord, by the prayers of those who pleased you, have mercy on us.

The prophets who spoke by the Holy Spirit, the disciples who witnessed you and the martyrs who embraced death in Your love will pray for us. Have mercy on us.

Saints', pray with us to the Lord whom you have pleased by your deeds that He may remove from us punishments and the rods of wrath.

Lord, by the prayers of those who pleased you, have mercy on us. By their prayers and supplications have mercy on our souls.

O Lord, who is merciful to sinners, have mercy on us on the day of your judgement.

O merciful one, the afflicted are knocking at Your door. By Your grace answer their supplications.

Our heavenly Father, we pray that You accepts our offerings and have mercy on us.

Lord of those above and the refuge of those on earth, accept our offerings and have mercy on us.

Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Glory be to you O, God. Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Glory be to you O, God. Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Glory be to you O, God.

O! merciful God, be compassionate towards us in your mercy.

In our sacrifices and in our prayers we commemorate our fathers who while alive taught us to be children of God.

Son of God grant them rest in the eternal heavenly kingdom with the just and the righteous. Amen

KARTHAVE! NINNE ISHTAPPEDUTHUNNAVARUDE PRARTHANAKALAAL NJANGALODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME.

ROOHAYAAL NINNEKKURICHU SAMARICHA DEERKKADARSHIMAARUM NINTE PRATHYAKSHATHAYE ARIYICHA SLEEHANMARUM NINNEYULLA SNEHAM NIMITHAM MARANATHE SWEEKARICHA SAHADENMARUM NJANGALKKUVENDI NINNODAPEKSHIKKUNNU. NJANGALODU KARUNACHEYYANAME.

PARISHUDHANMARE! SHIKSHAKALEYUM KRODHATHINTE VADIKALEYUM NJANGALIL NINNU OZHICHU NEEKKIKALAVANAYITTU NINGAL NINGALUDE PRAVARTHAKALAAL PRASADIPPICHTTULLA KARTHAVINODU NJANGALODU KOODE APEKSHIKKANAME. KARTHAAVE! NINNE ISHTAPPEDUTHUNNAVARUDE PRARTHANAKALAAL PRASADIPPICHTTULLA KARTHAVINODU NJANGALODU KARUNA CHEYYANAME. AVARUDE PRARTHANAKALUM APEKSHAKALALUM NJANGALUDE AATHMAKKALODU KRIPA CHEYYANAME. AMEN

# **OLD TESTAMENT**

## **LESSON 2**

### **THE FALL OF ISRAEL**

1 Kings 11 to 2 Kings 17

Objective: God will forsake those who forsake him.

After the death of the great King David, his son Solomon ruled the country for forty years. He was bestowed with the fullness of knowledge and also wealth. He was also fortunate to build the great temple at Jerusalem. However, during the last twenty years of his reign, he had to accommodate his heathen wives by building places of worship for their gods. He sometimes joined them in their worship, thus disobeying the commandment of his God. This caused God to become angry. As a result Solomon made many enemies. God told through Ahijah the prophet that Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officials would rule 10 tribes of Israel.

After the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam became the king. But except for Judah and Benjamin, the other ten tribes accepted Jeroboam as their leader. He became king and reigned from Shechem.

Jeroboam feared that if his people went to Jerusalem to worship, they may ultimately forget their differences and join hands with the other two tribes. So he made two calves of gold and set one in Bethel and the other in Dan, and told the people that it was their god. This caused the wrath of God.

A man of God came from Judah to dissuade Jeroboam from offering sacrifices to the calves. Jeroboam did not listen to him, but offered his sacrifices to the idols. On that day itself, his son became sick. The prophet of God, Ahijah warned Jeroboam's wife that terrible harm would befall their family and that they would be completely destroyed for the great sin Jeroboam brought to Israel. Soon after this Jeroboam's son died.

After the death of Jeroboam, Baasha, Nadab, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab - were the kings who reigned in Israel. Idol worship reached its pinnacle in Israel. In addition to worshipping Baal, they also built many temples and set idols of Ashtaroth, a goddess.



During these days, many prophets reminded the people of God's wrath if they forsaked Him, and the many miseries that would befall them. Many repented and turned to the Lord God. Jezebel, the queen of Ahab was instrumental in the death of many prophets. Obadiah, an official of Ahab and a devout believer in God saved many prophets by hiding them in a cave and feeding them with bread and water. During this time Prophet Elijah warned of a severe famine. Elijah went and dwelt by the brook at Kerith. He was fed by the ravens by God's will and drank off the brook. But the brook dried up. He went to Zarephath, and a widow and her son received him. He stayed with them. Until the famine ended, the flour in her jar and oil in her jug never ran out. By Elijah's prayer, the life that departed from the body of the son of the widow returned to him and he lived.

Then Elijah visited Ahab the king, and proved to him on Mount Carmel who is the true God. When Elijah prayed, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. The crowd killed the prophets of Baal. Afterwards, there came a torrential rain.

Greedy Ahab took possession of the vineyard of Naboth, as persuaded by Jezebel, his wife. She connived him to kill Naboth. As prophesied by Elijah, Ahab was killed in a battle and dogs sucked his blood. In a battle that Jehu led, Jezebel was pushed down from a window and dogs ate her flesh.

Ahaziah, son of Ahab, was also an idol worshipper. He fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber and was bed-ridden. He sent down messengers to inquire from Baalzebub the God of Ekron, if he would recover from his disease. The Lord God was angry with this and Elijah was sent to foretell the king that he would not come out of the bed, but would surely die. The king was angry and sent a captain with 50 of his soldiers to kill Elijah. Fire from heaven came down and consumed them. This happened twice. As told by Elijah, Ahaziah died on his sick bed.

Elijah with his disciple Elisha went to the other side of Jordan. When Elijah struck the waters with his cloak, the water separated and the two walked on dry ground. There, Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha returned with the cloak that fell down from Elijah, and showered many blessings on the people.

Joram, Ahab's son was living against the commandments of God. God's anger rose against him. In the war against the Syrians, he was wounded. He went back to Jezerel for treatment. In the vineyard of Naboth, he was killed. Jehu, who was anointed by Elisha, became king and reigned over Israel for 28 years. He broke down several places of idol-worship and killed many of the priests of Baal. After Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea- they all reigned in Israel and continued to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Elisha, the great prophet, died during the reign of Joash. Later, when some people were burying a man, he was put in Elisha's tomb. When his body touched Elisha's bones, the dead man came back to life and stood on his feet. (2 Kings 13:21)

During the reign of Hoshea, the king of Assyria besieged Samaria for three years. He subdued Israel and carried them away to his country as slaves. The children of Israel had sinned against the Lord God, walked in the ways of the heathen and had built high places in all their cities and set up images and worshipped idols. They had forsaken the Lord God. The history of Samaria points out that the anger of the Lord causes increasing havoc.

### **Questions:**

1. Why did God tell through the prophet Ahijah that the family of Jeroboam would be completely removed from the earth?
2. God destroyed Ahab and Jezebel. Why?
3. The widow of Zarephath and her son gladly received Elijah and he stayed with them. What was the blessing they received during the famine?
4. A prophet was taken to heaven along with his body. Who was it? What is the name of his disciple?

### **Work for the Class:**

1. Write in serial order the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.
2. Write the names of the 12 apostles of our Lord.

## LESSON 3

### CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON

2 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 25

Objective: Only serve the Lord who said, “Thou shall have no other gods than me.”

The children of Israel were known as the people of God. There were no other people on the face of this earth who were so blessed by the grace of God. However, they made idols of Baal and Ashtaroth and worshipped them. This caused God’s wrath to rise and punish them. As the Israelites forsook the Lord God, in the 9th year of Hoshea’s reign, the king of Assyria conquered them and took them as slaves to his country.

Also, the kings of Judah worshipped other gods and the Lord God left them to be subdued by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at the time of Jehoiakim, the king of Jerusalem. His son Jehoiachin was worse than his father. When he had ruled for only three months, Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city and besieged it. The king of Babylon took the king of Judah, his servants, his princes and his officers to Babylon. He also carried away all the treasures of the house of the Lord and treasures of the king’s Palace. He cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon the king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord.

Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah the king of Judah. Zedekiah did not listen to the advice of prophet Jeremiah. He became stone hearted and did evil before the Lord. He laughed at the messenger of God and persecuted His prophets and polluted the hallowed house of the Lord. Moreover, all the chief priests and the people transgressed under the influence of the heathens, and polluted the house of the Lord that He had built in Jerusalem. God’s wrath rose against His people until there was no alternative.

Zedekiah ruled under Nebuchadnezzar for eleven years and then he rebelled against him. The king of Babylon came with all his soldiers against Jerusalem. They built forts around it. Famine was very severe in the city. Zedekiah and his army fled the city during the night. The soldiers of Babylon caught them. They killed Zedekiah’s children before him. They made him blind and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon.

The Babylonian army set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem and broke down the walls around Jerusalem. They broke down all the pillars and vessels made of brass and took them away. They carried away everything that had any value along with the remaining people left there. The people of Judah remained slaves to Nebuchadnezzar and his sons until the king of Persia became powerful. After 134 years of the fall of Samaria, Judah too was completely destroyed. The destruction of Judah fulfilled the Lord's decree to Solomon that if the Israelites do not observe the commands and embraced other Gods, Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.

### **Questions:**

1. How did the Israelites become slaves of the king of Assyria?
2. What were the damages done by the soldiers of Babylon to the temple of Jerusalem?
3. "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." (Chronicles 36:16). Which prophet was laughed at as stated in the above verse?

### **Work for the Class:**

Write the 10 Commandments.

## LESSON 4

### DANIEL AND HIS THREE COMPANIONS

**Objective:** If we surrender ourselves to the will of God, He will fulfill greater things through us.

In the year 606 B.C., the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar subdued Jerusalem. He carried away all the princes, all the mighty men of valor, and all the craftsmen and smiths as his slaves. The wise king dealt kindly with the slaves. The craftsmen and smiths were put to hard work. There were children of the nobles who were without any blemish. The king beloved forever on those who were skillful and astute in knowledge and science. They were taught the language of the Chaldeans so that they might help him in the governance of the large kingdom.

Some of the noble children who were handsome, intelligent and smart were given quarters in the palace itself under the king's chief official. The chief official was well pleased with four such children. He called them Chaldean names. For Daniel, he called Belrteshzzar, Hananiah Shadrach, Mishael Meshach and Azariah Abendego.

The four youngsters strictly followed the commandments of the Lord. They refused to eat the food of the Chaldeans, most of which was the meat of pigs. For a trial period of ten days, the chief official allowed them to eat only cereals and water. After ten days, they were found to be in excellent health and so they were allowed to take whatever food they wanted.

After a training of three years, they stood before the king and he found them to be extraordinary in all manner of knowledge, and they were placed in high offices of the king. Daniel was blessed with the ability of interpreting dreams and had visions of the things that were to come.

One night, King Nebuchadnezzar saw a dream. When he woke up, he forgot the dream. He knew only that the dream was an unusual one. He called in all magicians, astrologers, scholars of the Chaldeans, and requested them to tell him the dream and its interpretation. They all failed miserably and the king ordered them to be executed. Daniel, being a scholar, was sure that he would be the next one to be called by the king to tell his dream. So Daniel prayed to God with his friends to reveal the dream and its interpretation. God listened to their prayer and revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Daniel stood before the king and told him that there was a God in heaven who revealed secrets that no man could know. He said that the Lord God would reveal it to him. Daniel told the king his dream and also its interpretation.

The dream was this: The king was looking upon a great statue whose head was of fine gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While the king was watching a rock was cut out but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. The iron, clay, brass, silver and gold were all broken to pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away. No place was found for them and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The king said the dream was the same. Then Daniel interpreted the dream.

The large statue depicts the kingdom of Babylon. The head of the image made of fine gold denotes king Nebuchadnezzar himself. The chest and arms of silver is likened to an inferior kingdom that would rise after Nebuchadnezzar and then a third kingdom, one of bronze which would rule over all the earth. The fourth kingdom would be strong as iron and would shatter all previous kingdoms. The mixed feet of iron and clay showed that the kingdom would be divided, and that one part would be strong, and the other weak. The stone cut out without hands denotes the everlasting kingdom that would be established by God. The kingdom of God would remove all other kingdoms established by men, and would remain forever as the greatest kingdom.

King Nebuchadnezzar was convinced of the correctness of the dream and its interpretation. He gave many valuable gifts to Daniel and honored him by making him governor of the whole province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

In B.C. 587, king Nebuchadnezzar made a very huge image of gold and proclaimed that all people should fall down before it and worship it when they hear the sound of horn, flute, harp, lyre, pipes, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music. He also announced that, those who do not kneel down before this image will be thrown into a blazing furnace. Daniel was not there at that time.

The image was dedicated most pompously. At the sound of all kinds of music, thousands of people fell down and worshipped the golden image. Three people, Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego, did not kneel before the image. They were questioned. They said that the God they serve is the Almighty God and that they would kneel before Him only. They boldly said they would not kneel before the image the king made.

On hearing this, the king was furious and commanded the soldiers to heat up the furnace seven times more than usual, and to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the burning furnace. When they were thrown into the furnace, the king saw they were walking in the furnace. There was a fourth person along with them whose face was filled with heavenly beauty. The angel of the Lord saved them in that furnace. The astonished king called them out. Not even a single hair on their head was burnt. It was then that The king

realized the power of the true God. He decreed that anybody who speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would be severely punished. The king honored them by giving them higher positions in the province of Babylon.

**Questions:**

1. Who are the youngsters who found grace with the king Nebuchadnezzar? Mention Chaldean names.
2. What was king Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
3. What was the meaning of the dream?
4. The king was convinced that there is an Almighty true God. Which event proved it to the king?

**Work for the Class:** Discuss an event that truly happened to show that our God saves us from any danger.

**Moral:** The Omniscient God knows our wants and helps us to get them.

**Memory Verse:** As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. (Psalms 103:13)

**LESSON 5**

**DANIEL, THE GOVERNOR**

**Objective:** God saves those who are dear to Him from all evils, and gives them higher positions and protects them.

There is a saying, "Pride goes before a fall". This happened in the life of king Nebuchadnezzar also. Once he saw a dream. He saw a huge tree in the midst of the earth full of leaves and fruits. It had fruits for all. It sheltered all living creatures under it. Then an angel called out like this, "Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of its roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass. Let the dew wet it, let it be like a beast and eat grass for seven years. The Most High gives the kingdom to whomsoever He will, and set up over it the basest of men."

The king asked Daniel the meaning of this dream. Daniel was astonished and his thoughts troubled him when he heard the dream. However, he told the king its meaning. The tree was the king himself. As its leaves, fruits and branches were cut down and removed, the king would be removed from the throne and he would live like a beast suffering from the rain and dew and eating grass for seven years. By seven years, he would know that the power to rule can only be given by God. Then he would get back his kingdom.

Soon, the proud king endured hardships as was foretold by the dream. After a year he became mad and went to live with the beasts. He suffered from the rain and dew, and ate grass as oxen for seven years. Then he got back his understanding. He lifted his eyes to heaven and praised the God. He got back his reasoning power. He returned to his throne. He ruled for some more years and he praised, extolled and honored the King of heaven for the rest of his days.

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, his son Belshazzar became king. In BC 583, the king held a grand feast for his lords. The king, his princes, his wives and his concubines drank wine in the golden vessels brought from the temple at Jerusalem. They made merry and praised the gods made of gold, silver and other metals, wood and stone. At that time, the king saw the hand of a man writing on the wall. The king was terribly afraid and called in his magicians and astrologers to read the writing. None of them could read it nor interpret it. As the queen advised, the king sent for Daniel. Daniel read it as, "Mene, Mene, Tekkel, and Upharsin." Its meaning was, "'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. You were weighed in the balance and was found wanting. The kingdom will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.'" In that night itself, the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon and killed the king.

Darius the Median took the kingdom. He appointed Daniel as one of the three administrators in the country and he was the chief of them. Daniel was a man without any blemish and the Spirit of God was in him. So the king wanted to make Daniel the chief over the whole realm. Knowing this, the princes and other high-ranking officers were jealous of Daniel, and wanted to destroy him somehow. They knew that they could not find anything wrong with him except in the matter of the law of his God. So they plotted and made the king sign a royal statute and to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save the king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.



Daniel knew that such a decree had been made. He went into his house, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem. He knelt on the floor three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did before. His enemies informed the king what Daniel was doing. The king wanted to save Daniel but There was no way. So with great sorrow, he ordered Daniel to be cast into the den of lions. A big stone was placed at the opening of the pit of lions and it was sealed. His enemies rejoiced at the fall of Daniel.

King Darius could not sleep that night. He fasted and very early in the morning, he came to the den. He cried with a lamenting voice and called Daniel, "O, Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel replied, "O, king! Live for ever! My God has sent his angel and has shut the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me. I was found innocent before my God. O king, I have not done anything wrong to you." The king was exceedingly glad for him and commanded that they should take Daniel out of the den. The king ordered to put all those who accused Daniel into the den with their families. The lions ripped them apart. The king also decreed to all people, nations and languages that dwelled on the earth that all of them should tremble and fear the God of Daniel.

After the reign of the Medes, Daniel continued to hold high positions during the rule of Cyrus, king of Persia. Daniel was a member of the royal family. He was a prophet and a chief ruler in Babylon. He lived according to the law of the Lord. Daniel was a man of courage, self-control, humility, discipline and, above all man, of prayer. Daniel is a great prophet and a model for all in high positions. The name Daniel means "God is my Judge."

### **Questions:**

1. The life of Nebuchadnazzar teaches us that pride is dangerous. How?
2. God found Belzhezzar wanting. What was the thing he did wrong?
3. What was the writing on the wall that was a judgment against king Belzhezzar?

**Work for the Class:** "God will save us from all perils." Discuss this saying, narrating an event from the life of Daniel.

**Memory Verse:** "For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." (Psalms 48:14)

## KING CYRUS AND DELIVERANCE OF THE JEWS

Objective: God protects His people from all perils and gives them a peaceful life.

We have seen that Jews, the chosen people of God, lived a sinful life in their prosperity and abundance, and became prey to the wrath of God. Their slavery in Babylon lasted for 70 years. Due to the influence of Daniel, the chief governor of Babylon, who was a great administrator and well liked by the king Cyrus, and knowing that the God of Daniel was Almighty; he felt compassion for the people of Judah.

Once Cyrus had a vision that the Lord God who gave him all the kingdoms of the earth wanted him to build a house for the Lord at Jerusalem. The king proclaimed that all the people of Judah who were in Babylon should return to Jerusalem to build a house for the Lord God of Israel and that those who did not want to return should give gold, silver and other items to help build the temple.

Accordingly, in BC 534, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin along with the priests and Levites, numbering 42,360 people returned to Jerusalem. 7337 servants and 200 singers were also with them. Those who did not return gave gold, silver and other items. The king Cyrus gave back all the vessels of gold and silver that were taken by king Nebuchadnezzar when he destroyed Jerusalem. The leader of the people who returned to Jerusalem was Zerubbabel, in Chaldean tongue 'Sheshbazzar'

### Questions:

1. What was God's commandment to King Cyrus?
2. What was the proclamation of King Cyrus?
3. Who was the leader of the people who went back to Jerusalem? How many returned?
4. What were the things they carried back to Jerusalem in addition to those things returned to the temple?

Memory Verse: *He who endures to the end shall be saved. (Mathew 24:13)*

**THE RETURN OF ISRAELITES**

*Objective:* God is our shepherd and He makes us lie down in green pastures; and leads us beside the still waters.

By the grace of the God, the people of Israel could return to their own land. They returned with many servants and their maids, singing men and women, horses, mules, camels and asses under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and stayed in their cities. As written in the Law of Moses, they built an altar of the God of Israel and offered burnt offerings upon them. They also kept the feast of the tabernacles and started the work of building the temple of the Lord. They laid its foundation at the same place where the temple built by Solomon had stood.

When they laid the foundation for the temple of the Lord, the priests in their apparel blew the trumpets and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) played the cymbals to praise the Lord. All the people gave a great shout to express their joy. Many elders, on seeing the state of the new temple and the glory of the previous one, wept loudly. As the work was progressing speedily, the adversaries made problems to hinder the work. The prophets Haggai and Zachariah gave courage to the people. During the reign of Darius, who ruled after King Cyrus in BC 511, the construction work of the temple was completed. The children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the children of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. They offered sin offering for all Israel. They observed the Passover and the feast of the unleavened bread with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful. They turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

**Questions:**

1. Who built the first temple at Jerusalem?
2. When they started work of the new temple, who cried loudly? And Why?
3. When the Jews returned from captivity, how did they express their gratitude to God?
4. Who are the prophets who encouraged the people in building the temple?

**Work for the Class:** Discuss the event that allowed the Israelites to observe the Passover.

**Memory Verse:** *Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:22)*

## LESSON 8

### CLEANSING OF HEARTS AND SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT

(Read Ezra and Nehemiah)

**Objective:** For God to live in us, we need purity of heart. We should build our church as best as we can.

In biblical history, the events achieved by Ezra and Nehemiah are worth remembering. Ezra's role was to lead the people of Judah who returned from captivity into righteousness. Nehemiah's role was to build the walls around Jerusalem and make their lives secure.

Ezra was a scribe. He was well liked by king Artaxerxes who became ruler after king Darius. He authorized Ezra to oversee the activities in Jerusalem and all Judah. As requested by Ezra, the king gave him enough money to look after the needs of the temple. He brought the leftover vessels and other implements of the temple that Zerubbabel could not bring. The king also gave orders to the treasurers to give Ezra necessary wheat, wine, oil, salt, gold, silver, etc., free of charge. Ezra exempted the priests and other helpers in the temple from taxation. Ezra with some Jews started for Jerusalem. At the river of Ahava, they set camp and stayed for three days fasting and praying to the Lord. In BC 457, they reached Jerusalem. Ezra made the people confess their transgressions and made them swear to keep the statutes and laws of the Lord God. He was in charge of Jerusalem for 13 years.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer (Personal attendant) of king Artaxerxes, and a leader of the Jews. Even though the Jews who had returned from captivity had rebuilt the temple of the Lord, they lived in great affliction and reproach. The walls of Jerusalem remained broken down and the gates were burned by fire. When Nehemiah heard these things, he was very sad. When the king enquired why he was sad, he requested the king to send him to Jerusalem to build the city again. The king granted his request and sent him to Jerusalem with all the help required.

In BC 445, Nehemiah reached Jerusalem and he looked for the places where repair is required. He called for all the elders of the people and told them that they had the permission and help of the king to build the walls of Jerusalem. The people diligently took up the work and finished it part by part, each part by each group.

The walls took shape very fast. On seeing this, the heathen leaders and the army chiefs of Samaria grew jealous and tried to stop the work. Sanballat their leader wanted to kill Nehemiah. Nehemiah did not fall into their trap. The Jews continued to repair the walls. In one hand the people held a weapon and with the other hand they worked. In 52 days, they completed the work on the wall. The heathen leaders sent a complaint to king Artaxerxes against Nehemiah. When the king came to know that king Cyrus had given Jerusalem back to the Jews to build the temple at Jerusalem, king Artaxerxes sent an order in favor of Nehemiah. The enemies of the Jews were put to shame.

All the Jews celebrated. In a great procession, the people reached the temple. Then Ezra stood at the pulpit and read the laws of the Lord to them. They swore that they would live according to the law of the Lord. Ezra reminded them of the many perils they had because they transgressed against the God; and reminded them that by His grace they were freed and returned to their own land.

### **Questions:**

1. Who was Ezra? What role did he play?
2. Why was Nehemiah sad?
3. What did Nehemiah do to build the walls of Jerusalem?
4. Who were the Persian kings who were inspired by God to send declaration in of the Jews?

**Work for the Class:** The Lord God was always willing to protect His people.

Discuss two incidents when the Lord protected His people.

**Memory Verse:** *Come, and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. (Nehemiah 2:17)*

## LESSON 9

### ESTHER

(Love of Esther for her own people)

*Objective:* God will destroy those who try to harm His chosen people. Esther was prepared to give her own life for her people.

During the reign of King Cyrus, the Jews got their freedom. Most of them returned to Judah. A few of them still remained in Babylon. Esther was a daughter of one such Jew. Since her parents died when she was a child, she was brought up by Mordecai, her father's brother. Mordecai was living in the city of Shusan, which was the capital city of the Persian kings.

Ahasuerus, the Persian king, ruled the very large Persian kingdom from BC 484 to 465. This vast empire extended up to India in the east and Ethiopia in the west, and consisted of 127 states. King Ahasuerus held a grand banquet, and while he was high in spirits from wine, he commanded his chamberlains to bring Vashti the queen before him wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the nobles. The queen refused to come and was angry with the king's chamberlains. The king's anger knew no bounds, and as advised by his nobles, he removed the queen from her position and decided to choose a virgin who was beautiful and obedient as his queen.

The most beautiful virgins were invited into the king's palace. The king found Esther the most suitable person to be his queen. She earned the affection and goodwill of all by her pleasing conduct. As advised by Mordecai, she did not reveal who her people or her kindred were. Mordecai, developed his acquaintance with the officers of the palace without revealing his relationship with the queen.

Mordecai came to know that two chamberlains of the king plotted to kill the king. Mordecai informed the king through Esther about this plot. The king conducted an enquiry and found out the two chamberlains. He ordered the two to be hanged and the chronicler to write in his chronicles about Mordecai and the information he gave which saved him.

Haman was the chief of the nobles of the king. All the servants of the king, who were at the gate of the place, bowed and gave reverence to Haman, because the king had commanded so. Mordecai alone did not bow down before

Haman nor gave reverence to him. He bowed down before his God only. Haman was looking for an opportunity to destroy Mordecai who did not bow down before him. He consulted his astrologers and found out that the 13th day of the month of Adar (March) was the suitable date to destroy them. Haman persuaded the king and obtained a decree for all the states in their languages in the Persian kingdom that all the Jews in all the places could be plundered and executed on that day.

When the Jews came to know about this, there was great mourning among them, and fasting and weeping and wailing; and many lay in sack clothes and ashes. Mordecai wanted Esther to go before the king and make him revoke his decree to save her people. She informed Mordecai that if any one goes before the king without being invited, he would be executed. Mordecai sent her word, "Think not with yourself that you shall escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, there shall be deliverance from other quarters and you and your father's house shall be destroyed, and who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

Esther was thoughtful and sad. She sent word to Mordecai that all the Jews in the city of Shusan should fast and pray for three days for her. She and her maids would also do likewise. And afterwards she would go to the king's presence for good or bad. All the Jews accordingly fasted and prayed three days for Esther. On the third day, Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house. When the king saw Esther, the queen standing in the court, he held out to her the golden scepter that was in his hand. She drew near and touched the top of the scepter. The king asked her what she wanted. He said whatever she asked, even half of the kingdom, would be given to her. She said that the king and Haman should come for the banquet she had prepared for the king. At the banquet, the king told her again that he would grant her anything she wanted. She only said that the king and Haman should come for the banquet for the next day also.

Haman went home happily. At the gate he saw Mordecai who did not bow down before him. Haman wanted to hang Mordecai. So he built a gallows 50 cubits high. The next morning, he went to the palace to speak to the king about Mordecai.

In the morning, while the king was thinking that he had not done anything for Mordecai, Haman came in. The king asked him what the king should do to a person whom he delights to honor. Haman thought the king would be intending to honor him. So he said that the person whom the king delights to honor should be arrayed in royal apparel, and the royal crown should be placed on his head. He should then be led through the streets of the city on king's horse and the chief prince should proclaim before him that it was the way the king honored a person whom he favored. Then the king said to Haman to do everything he said for Mordecai. Haman was shocked as if struck by a thunderbolt. What could he do! He had to do as commanded by the king.

Later in the evening, the second banquet was held. The king asked her again what she wanted. The king promised her even half of his kingdom. She requested the king to save her and her people from the adversary who tried to destroy her and her people. The king asked her who that evil enemy was. She pointed her finger to Haman and said he was that man.

In his wrath the king stood up and went into the garden. When he returned, he saw Haman fallen upon the bed where Esther was. Then said the king, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house." As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. On the same gallows that Haman prepared for Mordecai, Haman was hanged. Haman's house was given to Esther. Mordecai went out in the presence of the king in royal apparel and with a crown of gold. Mordecai was appointed as chief official of the king. The king sent another order in favor of the Jews. On the same day, March 13th, the ten sons of Haman and many other enemies of Jews were executed.

### **Questions:**

1. How did the queen Vashti lose her position?
2. What was the event that was written in the chronicles of the king, praising Mordecai?
3. Who was Haman? Why did he make the gallows?
4. To save themselves from the imminent great danger, what did the Jews do as requested by Esther?
5. On commandment from the king, in what ways did Haman have to honor Mordecai?



**Discuss in the class:** "In the pit he has prepared for others, he himself will fall." How did it happen in the case of Haman?

*Memory Verse: They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. (Psalms 34:5)*

## LESSON 10

### RUTH

(A model of true affection)

Objective: Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long.

Let us learn the story of a woman whose name finds an honorable place in the Bible. She was from the tribe of Moab, considered to be a heathen. Her name is Ruth. She was fortunate to be the grandmother (Mother of Obed who is the father of Jesse, father of King David) of the mighty king David.

Ruth lived in BC 1300 or so. Around this time there was a severe famine in Israel. Judges were the rulers in those days. Due to the famine, a certain man of Bethlehem, Elimelech with his wife Naomi and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion went to Moab and stayed there. Moabites are the descendants of Moab, the son of Lot. Elimelech died at Moab. Mahlon married Ruth and Chilion Orpah, both Moabites. After a few years, both Mahlon and Chilion died. Naomi told both her daughter-in-laws to return to their home, marry again and settle down. Accordingly, Orpah left. But Ruth said to Naomi, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Wherever you go, I will follow you; wherever you stay, I will stay with you, your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die, I want to die and be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part you and me."

Naomi and Ruth returned to Judea and reached Bethlehem. It was the beginning of the harvest season of Barley. Ruth wanted to find food for her mother-in-law and so she wanted to go to the field to glean. With Naomi's consent, Ruth went to a field and gleaned after the reapers. The field belonged to Boaz, a noble man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech. Boaz had heard the sad story that had befallen the family of Elimelech and that to help Naomi her daughter-in-law had come with her. He knew they were in Bethlehem. He had not seen her before. When Boaz saw a strange woman gleaning in his field, he enquired who she was. When he knew that she was the daughter-in-law of Naomi,

he dealt with her kindly and allowed her to continue to glean in his fields. He also told his workers to leave deliberately handfuls of corn for her to glean. He arranged food for her with his reapers. On that day, she gleaned about 10 kg of barley. Naomi asked her and knew that she gleaned in the field of a close kinsman of her family. She advised Ruth to approach Boaz humbly and to request him to redeem her. Boaz told Ruth that there was another kinsman closer to her family. After consulting him, he would do what he could.

Boaz called in that kinsman and ten elders of the people and requested him to buy the properties of Elimelech and also to marry his daughter-in-law Ruth and thus redeem that family. He did not agree to this and gave all his rights to Boaz. As was the custom, he plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz in confirmation of giving all his rights in the matter. Boaz accepted Ruth as his wife and redeemed the house of Elimelech.

Her fear of the Lord, her humility and her love for her mother-in-law gave her the great fortune to be a person in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

**Questions:**

1. Who are the Moabites?
2. When Naomi told Ruth to return to her own house, what did Ruth reply?
3. In what way did Boaz help Ruth in the field?
4. What are the characteristics that helped Ruth enter the genealogy of Jesus Christ?

**Work for the Class:** Organize a group discussion on how we can help our parents.

**Memory Verse:** *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)*

## LESSON 11

### JOB

Objective: The Lord God will protect us from all our afflictions.

Job was a man, blameless and upright, one who feared God, and shunned evil. He was from the land of Uz, which is in the south of Palestine.

Satan was envious at the blameless life of Job. On the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan too went among them. He said to God that Job feared God because God had given him plenty of luxuries. God did not agree. With the consent of God, Satan began to test Job. One by one, Job had great losses. All his cattle were stolen. Wicked men killed his servants. There was a great wind which caused the building in which his sons and daughters were having a party, to fall upon them and kill all of them. When Job heard all these, he rose up, tore his mantle, shaved his head and fell upon the ground and worshipped God. He said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed is the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21). In all these Job did not sin, nor charged God foolishly.

Then Satan again tested Job and afflicted him with sore boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself, and he sat down among the ashes. His wife asked him why he was still holding on to his integrity. She told him to curse God and die. He answered her that she was speaking as a foolish woman. He said that as we received good from God, we should receive the bad too. (Job 2:9, 10) In all these, Job did not sin with his lips.

On hearing the evils that had fallen upon Job, three of his friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite came to sympathise with him and to comfort him. They could recognize Job only when they came very close to him. Because Job's suffering was very great, his friends began to weep aloud. They tore their robes and sprinkled dust upon their heads (Job 2:12). Job cursed the day he was born, but never blamed the Lord. His friends could only think that those evils fell upon him because of the sins of Job. So they told him to repent to receive blessings. Another friend of Job, Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite said that the self-righteousness of Job itself was a great

sin. At this time, the Lord God appeared in a whirlwind and spoke. It now became clear to Job that he was ignorant, imperfect and feeble. He became aware that his self-righteousness was also a sin.

The Lord was angry with the friends of Job. Job prayed for them, and the Lord accepted it. The Lord reversed his condition and blessed him. God gave him twice what had been taken from him. He had seven sons and three daughters. There was nobody else in the land as beautiful as the real friend who delivered him from all his difficulties. The story of Job tells us that when we have trials and tribulations in life, we have to be closer to God, as Job did in his life.

### **Questions:**

1. What kind of a man was Job?
2. What were the trials and tribulations of Job?
3. What did Job's wife tell him to do? What was his reply?
4. What was the sin hidden in Job's life?
5. What does the story of Job teach us?

**Discuss in the Class:** In what way you will help a lone/old man, waiting for his death, who stays in a hut into which rain water leaks.

**Memory Verse:** *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19)*

## LESSON 12

### THE PRIESTS OF ISRAEL

The word priest is first said in the Holy Bible about Melchizedek. He was known as the priest of the most high God. (Genesis 14:18-20). He offered sacrifices unto God with bread and wine. As God's intermediary, he blessed Abram and as Abram's intermediary he praised the Lord of the most high, possessor of heaven and earth.

The priests of Israel were set apart to serve the Lord and act as intermediary. They offered sacrifices unto the Lord on behalf of the people and as God's representative of the worshipper and blessed the worshipper for God.

The tribe of Levy was set apart for the services of the Lord. All the people of the tribe are not priests. God gave priesthood to Aaron and his house only. The other people were engaged in the services of the temple. The priests were chosen and anointed. There were three groups in them - a) Chief Priests, b) Priests, and c) Levites.

There was one chief priest at a time. Aaron was the chief priest (Exodus 28:1, 7 & Leviticus 1:8). His main duty was to offer sin offering and burnt offering. For sin offering, a bullock and for burnt offering a ram were sacrificed. Once a year, this sacrifice was offered for the redemption of the sins of all the people. Nobody else was authorized to make this sacrifice. After Aaron, Moses anointed Aaron's son Eleazar as chief priest.

Priests conducted sacrifices for a person or persons (Leviticus 1:7). They were set apart for such services. For a sinner, there was sin offering and for others, burnt offering. They had no right to enter the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat. They did the sacrifices only at the altar.

The third group was the Levites. They had no right to conduct any sacrifice. They helped the priests. They were the keepers of the accessories in the Tent of Meeting. They lived around it, and acted as servants of the Chief Priest and Priests and they were also musicians.

Abraham gave one tenth of his wealth to Melchizedek and received blessings from him. Priesthood is greater than kingship. King Uzziah went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense and he became a leper (2 Chronicles 26: 19-21). Kingship has power only in this world. Priesthood has power both in heaven and earth.

Jesus is the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek and He is considered a pointer to Jesus Christ (Psalms 110:4 Hebrew 5:10).

### **Questions:**

1. Who are priests?
2. How did king Uzziah become a leper?
3. Why is priesthood greater than kingship?
4. Who is the Priest of the most high God?

**Memory Verse:** *No man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. (Hebrews 5:47)*

## **NEW TESTAMENT**

### **LESSON 13**

## **THE FALL OF JUDAS**

Matthew 26: 45-56, 27: 1-8

Objective: To understand the circumstances of the betrayal of our Lord.

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples of our Lord. He betrayed his Master to His enemies and later hanged himself.

Immediately after the supper with Jesus, Judas went to the elders of the Jews. They were all waiting for him, having done all the preparations. Judas told them the sign he would use to identify Jesus. The person whom he kisses would be Jesus.

After His prayer at Gethsemane, Jesus told His disciples, "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand." (Mathew 26:46) Then they could hear the multitude coming from Jerusalem. Judas, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came with the chief priests and elders of the people.

When Judas entered the garden, Jesus was talking to His disciples. The guards of the temple were just behind Judas. He came to Jesus and told Him, "Greetings, Rabbi," and kissed Him.

Jesus looked at the face of Judas and asked, "Friend, why have you come?" The soldiers might have been startled when Jesus called him friend. They also might have felt that Judas committed a grave betrayal.

Jesus asked him again, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Judas did not reply.

When the signal to identify Jesus was seen, the guards came forward. Jesus left His disciples and moved towards the guards and asked them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." When they heard the reply, they looked at His radiant face and fell to the ground. After a while, they got up.

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He." Pointing towards His disciples, He said, "If you seek Me, let these go their way." Even at this time, He was more concerned about the safety of the disciples. They bound Jesus.

On seeing this, the disciples resisted. Peter drew his sword and struck Malchus, a servant of the high priests, and cut off his right ear. Jesus told Peter to put his sword in the sheath and touched Malchus' ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the priests, leaders of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." They did not pay any attention to Him.

They bound Jesus and brought Him before the chief priest and later before Pontius Pilate, the governor. Pilate questioned Jesus but could not find any fault with Him. He wanted to free Jesus. The pressure from the people was so high that he consented to crucify Jesus.

Judas Iscariot felt extremely guilty and shameful. He knew that he had betrayed innocent blood. He brought back the money to the chief priests and elders. They did not accept it. He threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and went and hanged himself.

The chief priests decided not to put those 30 pieces of silver into the treasury, because it was the price of blood. With that money, they bought the potter's field to bury strangers. Therefore, the field has been called the Field of Blood or "Akel Dama."

Judas is known in the history of the world as the betrayer of his master.

**Questions:**

1. How did Judas betray Jesus?
2. With what preparations did the Jews come to arrest Jesus?
3. When Jesus was arrested, Jesus was more concerned about the safety of His disciples than His own. How can you prove it?
4. What is "Akel Dama?" What is the meaning of this?

**Discuss in Class:** With participation of all, enact the scene of those coming to arrest Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** *For God will reward every person according to what he has done (Romans 2:6).*

## THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Objective: To learn that Jesus was questioned on behalf of us

Jesus was bound and was led to the mansions of Annas and Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the high priest of the current year and Annas was his father in law. The questioning was done in two parts. Two kinds of charges were brought against Him. The high priest and the council questioned Him about religious matters. They could sentence Him to death but they had no power to execute it. That required the consent of the Roman governor. They submitted political matters before him.

Before meeting the council, Annas questioned Jesus. His intention was to prove that Jesus plotted against Caesar. Jesus told him that He had spoken publicly only and he could verify it with those who heard Him. A soldier was angry at His reply and hit Him on His cheek. Jesus asked him to prove if His reply was wrong, and if it were not so, why he had hit Him. The soldier had no reply. On seeing the unusual calmness and kindness on His face, Annas stopped his questioning and sent Him to Caiaphas.

In the meanwhile, as foretold by Jesus, Peter denied Jesus thrice. When Jesus was arrested and taken, Peter and John followed Jesus. As John was known there, he could easily enter into the mansion of the high priest. At John's recommendation, Peter could also enter there. Peter sat outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." He denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." When Peter had gone out to the gate, another girl said to those who were there that he was with Jesus of Nazareth. Again, he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man." A little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know that Man." Instantly, a rooster crowed. Peter remembered the words of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

The next was the questioning by Caiaphas who was the president of the council. They brought in false witnesses. Their submissions were contradictory.



So Caiaphas directly questioned Him. Jesus kept silent. Caiaphas asked Him, "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand side of the Almighty and coming on the clouds of heaven!" Immediately, Caiaphas and all the council members condemned Him to death. Then some began to spit on Him and to blindfold Him and beat Him. The guards struck Him.

Early in the morning all the chief priests and the elders made their plans against Jesus to put him to death. For a crime deserving death, the rule was that the questioning should be done on one day and judgment should be pronounced on the next day. They had plotted beforehand to put Jesus to death and took Him to Pilate.

**Questions:**

1. What was the motive of Annas in questioning Jesus?
2. Who was the high priest at that the time?
3. When Caiaphas asked Jesus if He was the Christ, Son of God, what reply did Jesus give?
4. Why did the council meet early in the morning?
5. It so happened in the case of Peter as Jesus had foretold. What did Jesus tell him? How did it happen?

**Work for the Class:** Discuss. Both Peter and Judas did wrong. What did they do? How did Peter find out the way of salvation and Judas the way of damnation?

**Memory Verse:** *And I tell you that if you do not turn from your sins, you will all die as they did. (Luke 13:3)*

**JESUS BEFORE PILATE**

**Objective:** To learn that Jesus suffered all afflictions on our behalf.

The council of the chief priests and Jewish elders condemned Jesus to death. They took Jesus to the mansion of Pilate so that their judgment might be executed. And then Pilate examined Jesus. During the Passover festival, if the Jews visited any house of heathens, it was believed that the Jews became unclean. The uncleanness would be over after seven days. So they did not enter into his mansion.

Pilate asked them what their accusation was. They replied that if he were not an evildoer, He would not have been brought before him. Pilate did not like this answer. So he told them to take Him and judge Him according to their law. They told him that they had no power to put a man to death. Their accusations were that He cheated people, He told them not to pay taxes to Caesar, and He committed other offences against the empire of Caesar. Then Pilate asked Him if he were a king. Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world. You say rightly that I am a king. I was born to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate told the Jews that he found no fault in Him at all (John 18: 33-39).

By this time, the chief priests and others also reached there. They accused Jesus of many things. Jesus kept silent all through. This made Pilate wonder and he felt compassion for Jesus. He could not do anything due to the outcry of the Jews. When he knew that Jesus is from Galilee, which was under the jurisdiction of Herod, Pilate sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad as he hoped to see some miracles done by Him. Herod asked Him many things, but Jesus kept silent because He knew there would not be any good coming from a man of immoral character. Herod did not judge Jesus. He treated Him with contempt and mocked Him. He arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:7-12).

A second examination of the case was done before Pilate, even though he did not like to take up the case again. He tried to explain to the chief priests

and elders of the people that he could not find any fault in Jesus. He told them that Herod too did not find any fault with Him. So he said he would reprimand and punish Him and release Him.

In the Passover festival season, the governor used to set free a prisoner whom the people wanted. Pilate thought he could set Jesus free in this way. There was a notorious criminal, Barabbas who was imprisoned for rebellion in the city and murder. Pilate asked the people whom they wanted - either Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ. While Pilate was sitting at the judgment seat, his wife Claudia Procula sent message to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." Pilate was in a dilemma. The chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude to ask for Barabbas and crucify Jesus. The multitude vehemently told Pilate they wanted Barabbas. Pilate asked them what was to be done to Jesus who is called Christ. They said, "Let Him be crucified." Pilate said in vain that Jesus did not do anything wrong (Mathew 27:15-23).

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, and the people were rising in revolt, he took water and washed his hands before them, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You see to it." All the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate released Barabbas to them, and sentenced Jesus to be whipped and crucified.

The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium. They smote Him with a whip that split His back until His blood flowed out. They twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They put a stick in His right hand and they bowed before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of Jews." Then they spat on His face, and took the stick and struck Him on the head. Then they stripped Him and put on a scarlet robe on Him (Mathew 27: 27-30).

They brought Jesus out with the scarlet robe and the crown of thorns. Blood was flowing from the wounds caused by the whipping and the crown of thorns. Pilate said, "Behold that Man, I do not find any fault in Him." The elders of the people cried loudly to crucify Him. They argued that as He made Himself the Son of God, He deserved to be killed.

When Pilate heard that He was the Son of God, he became more afraid. He noticed how calmly Jesus suffered the cruel beating of the whip, the assault and mockery. Pilate examined Jesus again. Jesus kept silent. Jesus knew that

Pilate was a coward who could not act according to his conscience. When Pilate talked about his power, Jesus replied, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above." This worried him more. He wanted to free Jesus. The multitude intimidated him. They cried out, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

Pilate did not want to earn the displeasure of both the Jews and Caesar. He put away all other considerations and brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called 'The Payment', in Hebrew, 'Gabbatha.' He said to the Jews, "Behold your King." They cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." He delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away (John 19: 1-16).

### **Questions:**

1. Why did the Jewish elders bring Jesus before Pilate?
2. What were their accusations?
3. Who was Herod? What did he expect from Jesus?
4. Who was Claudia Procula? What was the message she sent to Pilate?
5. Pilate knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong. What were his statements and deeds to prove so?

**Discuss in Class:** Read Isaiah 53 and discuss how this prophecy was fulfilled.

**Memory Verse:** *He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*

## THE CRUCIFIXION

Objective: The whole world was saved by the death of Jesus through crucifixion.

After the judgment of Pilate, Jesus was handed over to a centurion for crucifixion. The chief priests, the elders and a large gathering of people were there. The soldiers put a large and heavy wooden cross on His shoulders because it was customary for the condemned to carry it to the place of crucifixion. It was very difficult for Jesus to climb up the hill since he had been beaten and assaulted by the soldiers the previous day. The soldiers were impatient and they beat Him, kicked Him and rebuked Him. At last the soldiers laid hold on one, Simon of Cyrene, and they compelled him to bear His cross.

On seeing the pitiable condition of Jesus, the women who followed wept bitterly and lamented about Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children." Jesus was warning them about the havoc that was to fall on Jerusalem. Jesus asked, "For if they do these things to the green tree, what will be done to the dry?" (Luke 23:2-31) Dead tired and exhausted, Jesus reached a place called Golgotha, that is, Place of the Skull. The soldiers gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. This was obviously to reduce the death pangs at the cross. But when He tasted it, He would not drink it (Mathew 27:33-34).

The soldiers made all arrangements for the crucifixion. They stretched His hands on the cross and nailed them. They put together His legs and hammered a long nail to hold them. Then they raised the cross and put it in its pit. They also crucified two thieves, one on His right side and the other on the left. Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: "**Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.**" It was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The chief priests said to Pilate, Do not write so but say "he said he is king of the Jews". He answered, "What I have written, I have written." The soldiers took His garments and made four parts and for His tunic that was woven from the top in one piece, they cast lots for it (John 19: 18-24).

On the cross while He was suffering the terrible pain, He prayed for those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34). His enemies sneered at Him in many ways. They said, "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ, the chosen one of God." The soldiers also mocked Him offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save Yourself" (Luke 23:35-37, Mathew 27:39-43).

One of the criminals who was hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us." The other criminal rebuked him and said, "Do you not even fear God? We indeed justly receive the due rewards of our deeds, but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His disciple John. He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to John, "Behold your mother." Later, John took her to his own home (John 19: 25-27).

From the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mathew 27:46, Psalms 27:1) Some of those who stood there, when they heard His cry said, "This Man is calling for Elijah." Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst" (John 19:28). Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a stick, and offered it to Him to drink. Some of them said to wait and see if Elijah would come to save Him. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit" (Luke 23:46). Having said this, Jesus gave up the Ghost. Then, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks split. Graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" (Mathew 27:45-54). Seeing what had been done, the whole crowd beat their breasts and returned.

It was the Preparation Day. The bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. Therefore the soldiers came and broke the legs of both the criminals. When they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. The commandment of God, "Neither shall you break a bone thereof" was fulfilled. (Ps 34:20) To ensure that He was dead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. Another passage says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." (John 19:37).

### **Questions:**

1. Who was the person lucky enough to go with Jesus carrying His cross?
2. What did Jesus say to the Hebrew women who were weeping?
3. What was the title Pilate wrote and put on the cross?
4. What was the first prayer Jesus said on the cross? For whom was it?
5. Explain the meaning of "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani".
6. When Jesus gave up His Spirit, what happened?
7. Who said this: "Truly He was the Son of God!"

**Discuss in Class:** The seven sayings Jesus said on the cross. Point them out in the Bible.

**Memory Verse:** *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptances, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)*

## **LESSON 17**

### **THE ENTOMBMENT**

**Objective:** He who is life was buried as dead.

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, also a member of the council of Jews, took the initiative for the funeral of Jesus. He too was a disciple of Jesus, but kept it secret for fear of the Jews. Another rich person Nicodemus, who for fear of the council of Jews had kept his acquaintance with Jesus secret, also helped Joseph.

Joseph asked Pilate for permission to take away the body of Jesus. Pilate was astonished to know that Jesus was dead so soon. He called for the centurion and ascertained from him what had happened. Immediately, he gave consent to the request of Joseph. Nicodemus had brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 100 pounds. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as was the custom of the Jews for burial. They laid Jesus in a new tomb that was hewn out of the rock where no one had been laid before. A large stone was rolled against the door of the tomb. The pious women who followed Jesus observed where He was laid (Mark 15:42-47).

On the Sabbath Day, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together before Pilate and told him that Jesus had told earlier that He would rise on the third day. It might be possible that His disciples would steal Him at night and spread the news that He had risen. So they wanted Pilate to arrange guards for the tomb. He told them to take some guards and make the tomb secure. They went and made the tomb secure. (Mathew 27:62-66).

The disciples of Jesus stayed in Jerusalem most sorrowful and anxious about what would happen next.

### **Questions:**

1. Why did Joseph of Arimathea keep his closeness to Jesus a secret?
2. Who was Nicodemus?
3. Describe the funeral of Jesus.
4. What did the chief priests and Pharisees want Pilate to do? What were the precautions they took?

**Discuss in Class:** Versus - Mathew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

**Memory Verse:** *The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7)*

## **LESSON 18**

### **THE RESURRECTION**

**Objective:** Jesus Christ conquered death in this world.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, and Salome bought spices and went to the tomb. They talked to each other as to who would roll away the stone for them. Other women also followed them. When they reached there, they saw an empty tomb. Jesus had been resurrected before they had reached the tomb!. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and there was a big earthquake. His countenance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook in fear of him and became like dead men. They ran to the city (Mathew 28:1-4).



With much hesitancy, the women approached the tomb. They saw the stone rolled away. Mary Magdalene anxiously ran to Peter and John. She suspected that the Jews had encroached upon the tomb and taken away the body of Jesus. She told them so. Soon Peter and John ran to the tomb.

After Mary Magdalene left, Mary mother of James and Salome went into the tomb. They saw an angel clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side. They were alarmed. The angel told them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you to Galilee; then you will see Him, as He said to you." They went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed (Mark 16:1-8)

Peter and John reached there. Peter went into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded together and kept there. John also went in and looked around. They remembered that He had told them that He would resurrect. They returned quickly (John 20:3-10)

It was quite clear without any doubt to Peter and John that Jesus had risen from the dead.

### **Questions:**

1. Who went early to the tomb of Jesus with spices?
2. What did Mary Magdalene tell Peter and John?
3. What did the angel tell the women?
4. How was Peter and John convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead?

**Discuss in the Class:** Seeing the empty tomb of Jesus, who all believed that Jesus had risen? What were the circumstances that led them to go there?

**Memory Verse:** *There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:5)*

**THE TRUTH THAT DRIVES AWAY FEAR**

Objective: Christ is the Truth that drives away our fear.

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb again. By that time, both Peter and John had gone. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting there. They asked her why she was weeping. She said they had taken away her Lord and she did not know where they had laid Him. Then she turned around and saw Jesus there, and did not know that it was Jesus (John 20:14). Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking"? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." (John 20:15) Jesus said to her "Mary!" All at once she understood that it was Jesus. She said, "Rabboni!!" and knelt down and worshipped Him.

Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she saw Jesus and spoke to Him. They were worried at the delay for Peter and John to return. They did not believe her (Mark 16:11). Other women also went to the tomb and saw the empty tomb and the angels. The angels asked them why they were looking for the living among the dead (Luke 24:5).

The guards ran to the chief priests and told them of the dreadful events such as the earthquake, appearance of angels, etc. The chief priests gave them a large sum of money and wanted them to keep these a secret and instructed them to publicize that while they were asleep, His disciples came and stole His body away (Mathew 28:11-15).

On the same day, two disciples were going to a village called Emmaus from Jerusalem. They were talking about all things that had happened. Jesus drew near and went with them. They did not recognize Him. They told Him about Jesus of Nazareth, His crucifixion and His resurrection on the third day. They also said that a few disciples and some women saw Jesus. Jesus expounded to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. When they reached the village, Jesus pretended to go forward. But they invited Him to stay with them. When they sat at the table, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him but He vanished from their sight. They rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.

When they reached Jerusalem, the other disciples told them that Jesus had certainly risen. They explained their experience to them. While they were talking, Jesus appeared before them. Apostle Thomas was not among them. He showed them His hands and feet and told them to touch them (Luke 24:39). In their presence He ate a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb.

The risen Jesus appeared to them as many as ten times and blessed them.

### **Questions:**

1. Who was the lucky person to see the risen Jesus first?
2. How many times did Jesus appear before His disciples?
3. What was the experience of the disciples who went to Emmaus?
4. How did Jesus convince His disciples that the risen Jesus is living?

**Discuss in the Class:** Read the chapters - Mathew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20 and find out who all had seen the risen Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** *I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (John 8:12)*

## LESSON 20

### **THE SCATTERED ARE GATHERED TOGETHER**

**Objective:** We are bound to the vine that is Jesus.

The disciples who went to Emmaus returned to Jerusalem on the very same hour when they had seen Jesus. The other disciples also reached Jerusalem. They had seen for themselves the risen Jesus. At different places, Jesus appeared and affirmed them in faith. He appeared to many women and showed them His pierced Hands and Feet with nails and His side that was pierced by a spear. He ate before them and they became convinced that Jesus lived with them.

Jesus who appeared in the midst of the disciples told them that He would send them just as the Father had sent Him. He breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. He said, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:19-23). This power is the apostolic succession we have in our church.

Apostle Thomas was not with them. When others told him that Jesus had risen, he did not believe it. Jesus appeared another time when Thomas was there. Jesus told him, "Reach your finger here, and touch My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but be believing." The apostle answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" It was his complete surrender and declaration of his faith (John 20:26-29).

Again, at the shore of the Tiberius Sea, Jesus appeared to His disciples. They had gone there to fish. The whole night they toiled and they did not get anything. While they were returning to the shore, they saw someone standing there. They did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. They did so and they were not able to draw in the net because of the multitude of fish.

John told Peter that it was Jesus. Immediately, Peter removed his outer garment, plunged into the sea and swam to Jesus. The Others drew the net and came too. They saw a fire of coals there. Jesus told them to bring some fish that they caught, then Jesus told them to eat breakfast and He gave them bread and fish.

Jesus made Peter, who had denied Him thrice, to affirm his love to Jesus thrice, and established his supremacy in the group of apostles. Jesus told him thrice, "Feed my lambs," "Tend My sheep," "Feed My Sheep," and entrusted them to him (John 21:15-17). Jesus gave him strength and established him to follow His footsteps and to be the leader of the apostles.

When Jesus appeared again to them, He delegated to them the task of continuing His work of salvation. They received the calling, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He affirmed His everlasting presence with them (Mathew 28:18-20) "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." After His resurrection, within forty days, the disciples knew for certain that Jesus lives. They were convinced in their hearts that the presence of Jesus was there always in this world.

### **Questions:**

1. How did the disciples know that Jesus lives with them?
2. How did Jesus give the Holy Spirit to His disciples?

3. How was the complete surrender of Apostle Thomas?
4. How did Jesus confer the leadership of the apostles to Peter?
5. What was the message Jesus gave to His disciples?

**Discuss in the Class:** The scene of Jesus entrusting Peter the right to look after the disciples.

**Memory Verse:** *You are my hope, O, Lord God: You are my trust from my youth. (Psalm 71:5)*

## LESSON 21

### THE ASCENSION

**Objective:** The living presence of Jesus is with us always.

After His resurrection, for forty days Jesus appeared to His disciples and others, and assured them of His presence. The disciples were certain that no power, not even death, shall deter them from this love of Jesus. They wholeheartedly believed that Jesus is with them always and it strengthened them.

Jesus opened their understanding so that they could comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). He gave them wisdom to know that all the things written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Jesus must be fulfilled. He was to suffer the afflictions and was to rise from the dead on the third day. Jesus reminded them that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. He told them that they were witness of what had happened. He commanded them to 'stay in the city of Jerusalem until they were strengthened with Power from above' (Luke 24:44-49).

Jesus led them to Bethany. They asked Him, "Lord, will You, at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Jesus answered, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive Power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8).

Later, they reached the top of Mount Olive. Jesus stood there. He raised His hands and blessed them. As he was blessing them, the Son of God ascended. A cloud concealed His human form from their sight. They faithfully looked toward heaven.

As the disciples were still looking toward heaven, two angels of God stood by them in white apparel, who said to them, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11). With great joy and amazement, they returned to Jerusalem and went up into the upper room and continued in prayer and supplication.

### **Questions:**

1. After His resurrection, when did Jesus ascend into heaven?
2. From where did Jesus ascend into heaven?
3. How did His ascension into heaven take place?
4. What did the angels tell the disciples?

**Discuss in the Class:** When Jesus was arrested, His disciples were scattered. But later they gathered together in the upper room and prayed in one accord. Discuss the conspicuous difference in their attitude.

**Memory Verse:** *Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)*

## LESSON 22

### THE PENTECOST

**Objective:** We should pray to be engulfed by the Holy Spirit.

After the ascension of Lord Jesus Christ, as He had commanded them, the disciples waited for the Holy Spirit. They had gathered at the upper room of Mark, which is also known as the Mansion of Zion. On the tenth day that was a Sunday, they were all in prayer. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, and a rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Two tongues of fire appeared in front of them, and touched each of them. The fire filled the apostles with the Holy Spirit and suddenly they were able to speak in different languages.

With this event, the apostles were filled with knowledge, power and love. This occurred in the city of Jerusalem. On hearing the mighty sound like thunder, many devout men who were from different countries gathered there. They were amazed and marveled as the disciples were speaking in their tongues.

The chief of apostles, St. Peter, preached to those who were assembled there. He quoted from the prophesy of Joel (Joel 2:28-29) to point out the importance of that day. "It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh: your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young man shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy." (Acts 2:17-18) Peter reminded them of the prophesy of David (Psalms 16:8-11) foretelling the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:25-28). He said, "God has raised Jesus, of which we are all witnesses. Being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured this out which you now see and hear." (Acts 2:32-33). He added, "Therefore, let all the houses of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36).

When they heard this, they were cut to the heart and they asked Peter what they shall do. Peter told them to repent and for the remission of their sins, they should take baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. They would then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who accepted his word were baptized. On that day, about three thousand people were baptised. Those who were baptized continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The Lord added to the church everyday those who were saved. We should also pray to receive the Holy Spirit.

**Questions:**

1. After the resurrection of Christ, where did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit?
2. How did the Holy Spirit come upon the disciples?
3. Why were the people who gathered there amazed and marveled?
4. "Let all the houses of Israel know assuredly." What was to be known?

**Discuss in the Class:** In one God, there are three Persons -1. Father, 2. Son, 3. The Holy Spirit. What does our Church teach us about the three Personalities of God?

**Memory Verse:** *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:31)*

## LESSON 23

### INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The Heresy of Dual Natures of Jesus Christ was groomed in the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This not only paved the way for an everlasting schism in the Holy Church, but also subjected the churches of Antioch and Alexandria to the severest form of persecution.

#### **Heresy of Nestorians**

Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was the main preacher of the doctrine of the Dual natures of the incarnated Jesus. The content of his preaching was that the Virgin Mary could not be called Mother of God (Theotokos) since she is merely a woman and hence could not give birth to God. Also God does not require a Mother. He argues that Mary gave birth to the man Jesus. Godhood (Divinity) descended on him. Nestorius maintained two persons and two natures for Christ. One of them the Son of God and the other the son of Man. It was the Man who was persecuted and had undergone death since God cannot die.

The heresy of Nestorius was based on the evil sense of 'impossible' and shows the limitation of human sense. Whereas the True Faith based on the dedicative sense of "With God all things are possible" (St. Luke 1:27, St. Mathew 19:26)

We learn more about Nestorius and the first and second Councils of Ephesus in the Church History.

In AD 431, the Holy Fathers of the first council of Ephesus studied the heresy of Nestorius thoroughly and ruled that it was wrong and against the truth.

The Council decreed without any doubt that "Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Logos), is perfect God and perfect Man with a rational single soul



(kyono) and single body (knuma). Since Virgin Mary conceived this perfect God and perfect Man, she is the Mother of God (Theotokos = God Bearer)".

### **Heresy of Eutyches**

Eutyches was a very devoted ascetic who opposed the heresy of Nestorius vehemently. After much preaching and clarifications about the unique nature of Christ, against Nestorian heresy, he himself formulated another heresy called 'Eutychism'. He taught that "In Christ the two Natures dissolved together and formed one nature like mixing of wine and water where 'Godhead (divinity) and Manhood mingled and formed a single nature called Messiah'. 'One nature dissolved in another and formed single' is not the True Faith. The true faith states that two natures dissolved each other and do not form any of them which could not be defined by any natural means or by any interpretations.

The second Council of Ephesus in AD 449 condemned this teaching and affirmed that there was two perfect Natures in the one Person of Christ unified 'unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably'. But a new problem arose in that Council as laid out by Pope Leone of Rome and his supporters. He insisted that there were 'two natures after union'. But the holy Fathers of the Antiochene and Alexandrian Churches resisted this and pleaded that the nature of Christ should not be termed as two natures after the union.

As per St. Paul's conversation to St. Thimotheos, "Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is perfect God and perfect Man" and is the "Unique Mediator". The teaching of 'Two Natures' is contradicting the principle of this 'Uniqueness'. St. Dioscorus of Alexandria proclaimed that this 'Union' is beyond the control of the nature and is amazing; as perfect God and perfect Man are inseparably united it could be termed as Single united Nature only and it is wrong and against the doctrine to say or believe there exist two Natures for Jesus after union.

The second Council of Ephesus accepted the declaration of St. Dioscorus. The decisions made by the Holy Fathers on the 'True Faith' about the Nature of Jesus Christ are as follows. (Content of the doctrine)

- 1) Lord Jesus Christ who was incarnated in the womb of St. Mary is perfect God and perfect Man.
- 2) Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is unified to the God himself.

- 3) In the incarnated Son of God, the Nature of God (Godhead) and the Nature of Man (Manhood) is conjoined.
- 4) The Nature of God after the amelioration neither becomes Nature of Man nor does one mix with the other.
- 5) Nor one mixes with the other and forms any one of it or after the union one of it gets destructed.
- 6) The Nature of God and the Nature of Man unified inseparably between Godhood and the perfect Manhood Monophysitism of our Church is not that of Eutyches.

The basic Tenet of our faith is : “What appears imposible to man is possible with God”.

#### LESSON 24

### HOLY QURBANA (HOLY EUCHARIST)

#### **Substance Transformation**

In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the Roman Church adopted the Doctrine of Faith: ‘Substance Transformation’. In their opinion the blessed Bread and Wine after blessing transforms to the Body and Blood of Jesus.

#### **The Faith of our Holy Church is like this**

Wheat Bread itself was in the hands of the Lord. He ordered “it is My Body”. There was no change to the Bread in taste or appearance for the Apostles. While it was Bread itself it transformed in to the Body of Jesus through His words. Likewise the Wine itself without changing its taste or other characters got transformed to His Blood by His Words. It happened as without change in the Human Nature (Manhood), the Nature of God (Godhead) existed in Jesus Christ that without change in substance of Bread and Wine got transformed to His Body and Blood. The ordinary substances of Bread and Wine after consecration transform to Blood and Body of Jesus Christ.

It is not true that this transformation in to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is only applicable to the believers. Whether one believes or not, these are Body and Blood of Jesus. “There for, whoever eats the bread or drinks the

cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the Body and the Blood of the Lord. *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"* (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Faith and recognition are required to avoid the judgement and not for the completion of the consecration.

Holy Qurbana is the sacrament which was conducted by Jesus himself and handed over to the Apostles. It was on Passover Thursday that our Lord introduced this mystery. (It is also known as Rose meaning Secrets). The Passover represents the lamb of safety. 'For Christ is our Passover Lamb' (1 Corinth 5:7). In the Palace of Sehiyon sitting with the disciples, Jesus completed the Old Testament Passover. After that Jesus Christ founded the Holy Qurbana and handed over to Apostles (St. Mathew 26:26-29, St. Mark 14:22-25, St. Luke 22:19-20). 'Attained from Jesus and entrusted to you' says St. Paul (1 Corinth 10:23).

The authority to minister the Holy Qurbana lies with the Priest and the High Priest (Episcopa). Jesus Christ handed over this responsibility to the Apostles only. He never handed over this responsibility to His numerous disciples but only to those who were selected by Him. During the time of the Apostles, Holy Qurbana was being ministered by the Apostles themselves or by those selected by them. To wait on the Table seven were chosen. Apostles gave blessings to them and gave responsibility (Acts\_of Apostles 6:1-6) Episcopas are convey this authority to Kassisos (priests).

## THE PRIESTHOOD

We learned that Priests are those who are selected and given responsibility.

### The selection of Apostles

Jesus prayed the whole night. Jesus spent the night praying to God. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God "(St. Luke 6:12)

Jesus called to him those he wanted. "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter; (St. Mark 3:13 -16)

He designated them as Apostles. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; "(St. Luke 6:13)

### The purpose behind this selection

They might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. (St. Mark 3:14)

The responsibilities and authorities given to the Apostles.

1. Gave Power and Authority to them.
2. Gave responsibility to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (St. Luke 9:1-2)
3. Gave Authority to forgive sins (St. Mathew 16:19, 18:18, St. John 20:23). "Who soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoso ever sins ye retain, they are retained" St. John 20:23.
4. became the servants of the Church (1Corinthians 4: 9-10)
5. Breathed on them and gave the Holy Spirit (St. John 20:22)

We have a tradition of breathing over the head of those who accept priesthood by the Head priest (Bishop). Jesus had breathed over the Apostles

and gave His Godly breath to them. This Godly breath, which Apostles obtained from Jesus Christ, was passed over to those who were consecrated by them. Those who accepted the positions did likewise for others who accepted priesthood from them.

### **ECCLESIASTIC ORDINATION (Laying of Hands = Kaiveppu)**

The information about the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests during the days of Old Testament are described in Chapters 28 and 29 of Exodus. Especially in chapter 29 it is laid out step by step as revealed by God. In the book of Numbers 20: 22-28 the incident about the appointment of Eleazar, the Son of Aaron as the priest is written. In both the instances God appoints Moses as the Minister.

One can see how our Lord Jesus Christ gave the priesthood to His Apostles of the New Testament Church in St. John 20:22-23. The Acts of Apostles and the epistles clearly show that the 'ordination and laying of hands' (priesthood) existed during the days of Apostles itself.

- 1) To wait on tables, seven were chosen. They presented them to the Apostles. They prayed and laid hands on them (Acts of Apostles 6:1-6)
- 2) Barnabas and Saul were set apart for God's work. Priest fasted, prayed and placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts of Apostles 13:1-3)
- 3) St. Paul instructs Timothy about laying of hands (1Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6, 2:2)

### **Three Stages of priesthood**

**Bishop** (Episcopa), **Priest** (Kassiso), **Deacon** (Smamsono)

St. Paul describes about the different positions of priesthood in the holy Church. (1 Corinthians 12:28, 29; Ephesians 4:11.) St. Paul reiterates that for each position separate ecclesiastic blessings and responsibilities were given. (1 Corinthians 12:29-30) Distribution of positions and responsibilities were clearly implemented even during the years of Apostles. Since then the Names of positions have changed and the Responsibilities are slightly varied. All these minor changes were only due to the expansion of the Church and for the requirement of administrative arrangements.

St. Paul orders what would be the responsibilities of Titus and Timothy in Titus 1:5 and 2 Timothy 2:2 respectively. Their responsibility included the one to choose those who have purity in life and disciplined character to be appointed as the Priests. But they shall not be equal to Titus or Timothy. They were the Heads of the Congregation (parish) of each town. They should be reliable, believers of Gospel and be very efficient to preach. (2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:9). It is evident that they are equivalent to Kassissos (Kassisso= Chieftain). Similarly St. Paul orders about the Sextons (Kapiar) 1 Timothy 3:12.

### The special responsibilities entrusted to St. Peter:

The special powers and responsibilities of St. Peter were given by Jesus Christ himself and it was not undertaken by St. Peter by himself.

Jesus ordered “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.” (St. John 1:42, Mathew 16:17)

He offered the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven “And I say also 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. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (St. Mathew 16: 18-19).

After returning from the temporary deviation of Faith, St. Peter was entrusted with the responsibility of strengthening his brothers in Faith. ”And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (St. Luke 22:32)

He entrusted St. Peter to look after His lambs (other Apostles) after asking the question”, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me **more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my **lambs.**” For the second time He asks “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my **sheep**” For the third time He asks “.Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my **sheep**”. He gave the duties of a good shepherd to St. Peter by commanding him to “Feed my Sheep”.

See how St. Peter fulfils the duties entrusted on him.

He led the election for the replacement of Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle. (Acts of Apostles 1:15)

He preaches the Gospel first and conducts Baptism. (Acts of Apostles 2:14)

He conducts the first recorded healing ministry (of Apostles') (Acts of Apostles 3:1-7) and the first Baptism of Gentiles (Cornelius) (Acts of Apostles 10:48)

Makes sensible opinion in the Council of Apostles (Jerusalem Council) (Acts of Apostles 15:7-11)

St. Peter stayed in Antioch and controlled the activities of the Holy Church. He established the Holy Apostolic Throne of Antioch in the year AD 37. We study in Church history that in AD 60, St. Peter went to Rome after consecrating his successor St. Evodius and St. Ignatius Noorono to succeed him. The Supreme Head of our Church, the Patriarchs of Antioch and all the East, H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas is the true and legitimate successor of St. Peter, the chief of Apostles.

## LESSON 26

### HOLY BAPTISM

Adam was created in a divine situation. But he became guilty of sin due to his disobedience to God. Those who originate from the circumstance of Sin will have Sin upon them. The Sin, which is transferred from generation to generation, is called Birth Sin.

Sin through one man and death through Sin.....(Romans 5:12)

We were by nature the children of wrath.....(Ephesus 2:3)

Who can bring what is pure from the impure. No one! ..... Job 14:4

Conceived in sin ..... (Psalms 51:5)

Baptism is the atonement for the original sin. Straying away from God had resulted in sin engulfing all creation. The saving grace brought to creation

by the birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is conferred on the individual through the ritual of Holy Baptism.

Holy Baptism is the Holy sacrament established by Jesus Himself. Jesus asked and authorised the Apostles to conduct baptism.. St. John 4:1-2. Jesus makes the Apostles to carry out Baptism.

St. Mathew 28:19. The Apostles were authorised to Baptise 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

Holy Apostles conducted Baptism on the day of Pentecost.

### **The things achieved through Holy Baptism**

The entry to the Holy Church. The entry to the Holy Church is possible only when one 'Baptises in the name of Jesus Christ'. Acts of Apostles 10:47; 19:5; Romans 6:3

Rebirth to New life St. John 3:5; Romans 6:4, Titus 3:6; Colossians 2:12

Holy Cleansing, Ephesians 5:26

Forgiveness of Sins. Acts 2:38; 22:16

United with Jesus, becomes sons of God. Galatians 3:26-29

### **One Baptism**

Baptism is only one and once only. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", Ephesians 4:5

The bodily birth of man is only once and likewise the divine rebirth is also only once

The tub of Holy Baptism is the representation of the Tomb of Jesus Christ. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" Romans 6: 4, Colossians 2:12. Since Holy Baptism is considered as the rebirth to the Holy Church, the tub of Baptism is termed the Womb of the Holy Church.

Water shows the cleansing and purification actions. Israel passed across the middle of water of Red Sea and was saved from the Pharaohs. Noah was saved over water in the Ark. Both these anecdotes depicted the saving act of the Holy Baptism.



Hot water points out the liveliness of Holy Spirit. The water for Baptism is prepared by mixing Hot water and Cold water.

Holy Oil illustrates the weapon to fight against Satan (Devil). This is the oil of Olive (Saith). Hence denotes the passage 'If some of the branches have been broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them'. (Romans 11:17)

Holy Oil (Mooron) demonstrates the pleasant smell of Jesus Christ, the symbol and seal of the True Faith and the completion of the spiritual blessings.

Holy Fathers like St. Dionysius Fagos, St. Tertulian and St. Theophilus testify that the practice of using the Holy oil in Baptism was in effect as early as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

### **Adoptive Parent (God Fathers)**

For a boy a male and for girl a woman touches the head (adopts) during the Baptism. They act as the mediators in front of God for these Children.

They affirm the Faith on behalf of these Children. They are responsible for these children with regard to teaching of True Faith while they grow up. They have the responsibility to train the children in the right way of life.

Those who 'touche the head' (adopt) the children should be firm believers of True Faith and should lead right practises in their life.

### **The Baptism, which is given in the River or in Pond**

It was not likely that the Holy Baptism was given only either in a river or a pond during the days of Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, there was no facility available in Jerusalem to have an immersion either in a River or a Pond for 3000 people. The River of Jordan is very far from Jerusalem. Cornelius and his household were baptised in his house. The Apostles and those who took responsibility from them have baptised thousands of people worldwide. Hence, we have to assume that a suitable method came into existence for Baptism in those days itself. Holy Syrian Church has adapted that method for Baptism.

## **Child Baptism**

It can be wisely assumed that the Baptism for Children was existent during the days of Apostles.

### **Evidence:**

Cornelius and his household were baptised (Acts of Apostles 10:48)

Lydia and household got baptised. (Acts of Apostles 16:15)

The keeper of the Prison at Philippia and his household were baptised  
Acts 16:33

Crispus the Synagogue ruler and his entire household believed in the Lord and got baptised (Acts of Apostles 18:8)

The household of Stephanose also were baptised. (1 Corinth 1:16)

In these families there would have been children. The Apostles and St. Ireneos talks about child baptism. Hence it is to be understood that the baptism of children were existent in the early Church and this tradition was inherited from the Apostles.

## **LESSON 27**

### **ST. MARY – THE VIRGIN**

The Holy Church from the very early days itself believes that St. Mary is a Virgin and she had no children other than Jesus Christ. She was only engaged to St. Joseph, and never got married.

Holy Apostles were very close to St. Mary. Jesus Christ gave the responsibility to look after St. Mary to St. John. Their Faith and Teachings would not be wrong. The new teachings after 2000 years will be wrong. Because, these new preachers never travelled with Jesus Christ physically or they never saw St. Mary in person and body.

St. Ignatius Noorono says that ‘the Virginity of St. Mary and her conception of Jesus Christ and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ are the three inimitable mysteries’.

*“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” St Luke 1:26-27*

*“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14*

Without affecting any thing to the virginity of St. Mary ‘by Holy Spirit’ St. Luke 1:35, St. Mathew 1:20. The prophecy of Isaiah is thus fulfilled. St. Mathew 1:12-23

It is unnatural for a virgin to become pregnant. Those who doubt about it, the answer is ‘every thing is possible with God’. In addition to that the Holy church points out three other unnatural examples from the Holy Bible.

The tree, which generated the ram. Genesis 22:12

The rock that generated water. Exodus 17: 6

The fish that gave coin (Esthira). St. Mathew 17:27

Serious doubts about the Virginity of St. Mary were expressed since 4<sup>th</sup> Century. The purified and blessed womb, carried the Son of God who could not be confined even in Heaven, It is evil (satanic) doubt that brought forward the theory that St. Mary conceived again and gave birth to other children. The punishment, which Jehovah has given to King Belshazzar for utilizing the sacred Gold and Silver Goblets, which were used for the Holy Sacraments in God’s Temple for his personal use while he was in a state of hysteria was of sudden and severe nature. (Daniel 5: 2-5). Jehovah, who has much zeal even about the gold utensils of His Sanctuary, would be much sharper about the womb where He stepped down and lived!

His Mother and the beloved disciple of Jesus were standing nearby to His Cross. If St. Mary (Mariam) had other children, St. John would have mentioned about them also while he spoke about other Mariam’s during this time. Even during this time of great pain Jesus was thinking about His Mother and gives the responsibility to care for her to St. John. This would not have happened or been necessary if Jesus had. brothers whom his mother gave birth to.

Holy Fathers praise St. Mary as the closed Gate of the Sanctuary as told by Ezekiel 44: 1-2. "Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.", is the prophecy.

The brothers who were termed as the 'brothers of Jesus' in the Gospels were the children of Merriam of Cleopa, sister of St. Mary, says St. Jerome and it was the children of the first wife of St. Joseph as per St. Epiphanius.

## LESSON 28

### SAINTS – THEIR POSITION

"I am the God of your Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," tells God to Moses. Exodus 3:6

Our Lord declares that 'for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him' (St. Luke 20: 38.) 'Those who have lived by expecting the fulfilment of the promise and they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance'. 'Hence the God is not ashamed to be called their God' says the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 11:16)

"Your Father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day and he saw it and was glad" (St. John 8:56.)

During the time of----- transfiguration of Jesus, St. Peter saw Moses and Elijah talking with him.

We understand from all these the following

1. Death is only for the body. After death saints (we also) live without body. "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him' Saints keep contact with God after their death. They can see, talk and enjoy.
2. After death also saints are dear to God.

St. Paul also testifies "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far". (Philip 1:23)

## **Holy remains of Saints**

The bones, their tombs, the things which they used, were respected in the New Testament Church as well as in the Old Testament Church. The bones of Joseph were taken respectfully by Moses from Misraem (Egypt). Even though Israel wandered several years in the desert, they kept these bones with reverence. These were interred in the Promised Land. (Exodus 13:19, Joshua 24:32, Hebrews 11:22)

In 2 Kings 13:20-21 we read 'Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders, so they threw the man's body in to Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet'

Even the inert things, which were used by Saints, were also respected by God. Examples were the Staff of Moses and the Cloak of Elijah (2 Kings 2:14), the shadow of St. Peter (Acts of Apostles 5:15), the Hand Kerchiefs and the Aprons of St. Paul (Acts of Apostles 19:11).

The Bone of Elisha had the power to give life to a dead. The ability to perform lots of miracles with the Staff of Moses, the strength of Elijah's cloak to divide the river Jordan, and the powers of the shadow of St. Peter and the handkerchiefs and the Aprons of St. Paul to cure the Sick were given by the God Himself. God loves and respects His saints. 'As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight' Psalms 16:3

The Holy remains of saints are the sources of blessings. The God Who loves them does miracles through their Holy remains.

### **LESSON 29**

## **VOWS (OFFERINGS)**

To make offers and fulfil them are absolutely as per the Holy book. Holy Bible testifies that Holy Fathers and Saints were administering Offers.

Holy Father Jacob's vow while in Bethel (Genesis 28:22).

Judge Jephthah (Judges 11) Hannah (1 Samuel 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter) also vows.

David talks about Vows in several occasions in the book of Psalms. He attributes 'Vows' as the means to reveal his prayer of gratitude and respect to God in front of every people. (Psalms 22: 25, 50:14; 56:12; 66:14; 96:8).

The 'Vows' of St. Paul were seen in Acts 18:19

'Vows' should not be termed as bribes to God and it is known to everybody that it is not possible to bribe the Almighty to please him. Those who undertake vows and fulfil them do the following;

- 1) Shows the willingness and humbleness to dedicate to God.
- 2) Shows the sincerity of his prayers.
- 3) Since he received from God everything, it shows his obligation, gratitude and obedience to God.
- 4) Praising the God

Those who worship God undertake vows and the Vows alone will not constitute worship.

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

### **LESSON 30**

## **THE UNIVERSAL SYNOD OF CONSTANTINOPLE A.D. 381**

Objective: The Holy Spirit is God. He has unique and identical personality with the Holy Father and the Holy Son.

ARIYUS taught that the Son is not equal to the Holy Father. The Universal Synod at Nicea denounced and cursed the argument of Arius. The Church began to prosper in peace. But the peace did not last long. Makkadoniyus, the bishop of Constantinople began to attack the Church with his heresy. He argued that though the Son is equal to the Father in all respects, the Holy Spirit is equal neither to the Father nor to the Son in any respect. In order to explain and reveal the true faith of the Church, the Holy Synod of Constantinople was held.

Emperor Constantine renovated the old city of Byzantium. The renovated city began to be called as Constantinople after the name of Emperor Constantine. Emperor Theodosius, the successor to Constantine convened the Synod at Constantinople. 150 bishops from different parts of the Church attended. Since the Patriarch of Rome was busy with a local synod neither he nor his representatives could attend the Synod at Constantinople. Though the

delegates from Rome did not attend the Synod held at Constantinople, all churches under the Universal Christian Church have accepted the Synod as a Universal Synod.

The Synod began under the president ship of Mor Milithius, the Patriarch of Antioch. Within a short while after the commencement of the Synod, Mor Milithius was taken into eternity. The Synod elected Mor Gregorious Thevalogous of Nance who was the Chief bishop and head of the Church in Constantinople as the president of the remaining session of the Synod. But the bishops from Alexandria did not like to accept the decision. So Mor Gregorious withdrew from the scene. Mor Naxtarious was elected as the president. Mor Themotheus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Mor Kurilose, of Jerusalem and Mor Gregorious of Naisa were among the prominent participants in the Synod.

The Synod discussed the heresy of Makkadonios in detail. The Synod unanimously decided that the teaching of Makkadonius was heresy. So they denounced the teaching. The Synod explicitly stated that the Holy Spirit is God and He has equality with the Holy Father and the Holy Son in His Personality and Entity. The Synod added that portion which says about the Holy Spirit in 'The Creed'. It affirmed the decisions of the Synod at Nicea.

The Synod took many important decisions with regard to the administrative aspects of the Church. The second decision of the Synod ascertaining the powers of the Patriarchate at Antioch over the Church in the east is very important for the Church in Malankara. The second decision clearly states that the Patriarch of Antioch shall have supreme power over the Church in Malankara and all over the East and the Church there shall always be subject to the Patriarch of Antioch. According to the third decision, the Church head quarter at Constantinople was upgraded into a Patriarchate.

This Synod reveals the fact that the decisions taken in the absence of the Patriarch of Rome were to be accepted by him and the Church under him and the absence from the Synod does not give him any chance to violate the decisions of the Synod.

After the Synod, Makkadonius was excommunicated. Those churches which were in the hands of heretics were given back to the true believers. Peace was established again in the Church. The Church began to prosper.

## ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What was the heresy of Makkadonious?
2. What was the first decision of the Synod at Constantinople?
3. What was the second decision of the Synod? How is it important to the Church in Malankara?
4. What shows the fact that the Pope at Rome had no special Privileges?

**Memory Verse: GOD IS SPIRIT. HE WHO WORSHIPS HIM SHOULD WORSHIP HIM IN TRUTH AND SPIRIT**

### **LESSON 31**

## **THE UNIVERSAL SYNOD**

**AT EPHESUS A.D. 431**

Objective: To teach the fact that the Holy Son is truly perfect man and perfect God.

After the Synods at Nicca and Constantinople the Church registered greater rate of growth. She enjoyed greater peace and prosperity. The true faith began to spread. This peaceful atmosphere lasted till 428 when Nestore began to attack the Church with his heresy. He was the Patriarch of Constantinople. He was really a serious and disciplined monk. It was Anasthanious, the chief advisor of Nestore who preached the heresy publicly.

The heresy of Nestore was related to the Personality and Character of Jesus Christ. He vehemently argued that there were two natures viz the Godly nature and human nature and two distinct personalities, i.e., the personalities of God and man in Jesus Christ. He opined the Virgin Mary gave birth to an ordinary child and the godliness came upon Him afterwards. He dared to argue that God can neither become man nor can bear sufferings. He also argued that since Godly nature could not bear sufferings, only His human nature had suffered at the Cross. He also argued that only His human nature met with death at the Cross. He vehemently argued that since a worldly woman could not deliver God, Virgin Mary gave birth to an ordinary child by the name Jesus and hence she could not be called the Mother of God.



Nastore tried his level best to ascertain his arguments. He removed all prayers addressed to the Mother of God from the prayer book. He also removed the portion "Who was crucified for us" from the daily prayers. (Kouma). He preached that "I am not willing to consider a child who is only three months of age". People rose up with great rage. He convened the meeting of his supporters. The meeting was called to ascertain the support of people in favor of his heresy. He excommunicated those who opposed him. Mor Kurilose, the Patriarch of Alexandria voluntarily came forward to fight against this heresy. He wrote a series of Episcopal Letters against the heresy by quoting evidences from the writings of ancient holy fathers. Nastore gave replies to the Letters through his followers. Mor Kurilose wrote directly to Nastore. But he did not send a reply. Supporters of both began to fight each other. The spirit of war rattled the Church. In order to find a solution to this grave situation, Emperor Theodosius the Great convened a Universal Synod at Ephesus.

The synod made detailed and elaborate discussions about the matters of conflict. It unanimously decided and declared that there is only one Personality (Knuma) in Jesus Christ and that He has the perfectly blended single Character (Knumo) of Perfect God and Perfect man. It also ascertained the traditional belief that Virgin Mary should be considered and called as the Mother of God. It declared that since Virgin Mary gave birth to a Son who is really perfect God and perfect man, she has every right and privilege to be called as the Mother of God. It also decided to remove and excommunicate those bishops who did not accept and respect this belief. According to this decision, the synod excommunicated Nastore and his followers from the Church. Nastore was excommunicated from the country. The Synod ordained Mor Maximinos as the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Mor Koorilose, the Patriarch of Alexandria, was the President of the Synod 200 holy fathers from different parts of the Church attended in the Synod.

#### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Who was Nastore? What was his heresy?
2. What steps did Mor Koorilose take to protect the true faith?
3. What was the true faith accepted by the Synod?

**Memory Verse:** "He has been there before everything. He is respected and revered - by everything".

**THE SECOND UNIVERSAL SYNOD**

AT EPHESUS A.D. 449

*Objective:* To teach the fact that the divine and human characters are perfectly, inseparably and invariably blended in Jesus Christ.

After the Synod at Ephesus, peace was restored in the Church. Though the Nestorians tried to create some problems, they could not succeed. The peaceful atmosphere was unsettled by the heresy of Evuthicose who was the head of a monastery in Constantinople; He was an eminent scholar who vehemently opposed the heresy. He tried to interpret the Single Unified character of Christ and taught that “one character was merged into another character to become single unified character.

Flavian was a supporter of Nastore. With the help of the supporting bishops, Flavian of Constantinople succeeded in giving punishment to Evuthicose. Evuthicose did not accept their argument that there were two characters in Christ. He complained against his opponents to the Emperor and the heads of the churches. Emperor Theodosius convened the second universal synod at Ephesus. All the Patriarchs and the bishops from Jerusalem, Ephesus and Syria attended the Synod. 130 bishops from different parts of the Church assembled at Ephesus. Mor Deeyascorose of Alexandria presided over the Synod. Evuthicose was tried. He denounced his misleading and wrong teaching and belief. He accepted the true faith. But later he began to teach his heresy again, and he was excommunicated. The Synod reaffirmed the decisions of the first synod.

The true faith of the Church is as follows. “Neither the divine nature was changed into human nature nor the human nature was changed into divine nature nor one nature was blended up with another to make a new nature nor the one nature was destroyed by the other nature, but the two characters of Godliness and humanness were inseparably and invariably united and perfect Godliness was joined with perfect humaneness in all respects except the quality of sin in man. This is the true belief which the Second Universal Synod at Ephesus underlined and stressed. This is the belief which was declared by the Synod without any tint of doubt. According to the belief declared by the Synod, both Nastore and Evuthicose are considered as heretics.

Pope Leon of Rome had sent a long write up (Thumsa) supporting the dual characters in Christ. Since it was against the decisions of the first Synod at Ephesus, the Thumsa was not read in the Second Synod. This made Pope Leon burn with anger. He decided to take vengeance on Mor Deeyascorous the president of the Second Synod. The result was the synod at Chalcedon.

### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Who was Evuthicose? What was his heresy?
2. Who was Mor Deeyascorous? What was his role in the Second Synod at Ephesus?
3. What was the true belief which was declared by the Synod?
4. What were the steps taken by Emperor Theodosius to convene the Synod?

**Memory Verse:** "Jesus Christ has ever been unique and unparallel" Hebrews 13:8

### LESSON 33

## THE CHALCEDON A.D. 451

**Objective:** To teach the lesson that one should stick o his true faith and belief though he may have to face serious and hard sufferings.

The humiliation that Pope Leon got in the Second Synod at Ephesus led to the synod at Chalcedon. The Tome of Pope Leon was not read in the Synod. This was the only reason for the enmity between the Pope and Mor Deyascorous who presided over the Synod. The Pope instantly decided to fight against the holy father and defeat him. He began to act accordingly. Since the Synod was held in such a way that it was led by the Divine will and in perfect discipline, Emperor Theodosius was not willing to convene another synod. In accordance with the instructions of the Pope, his successor Markidon convened a synod at Chalcedon. The synod was convened by a ruler who was a supporter of Nastore. It was convened against the wishes of the holy fathers who wished to lead the Church in the traditional faith.

The Synod tried to insult Mor Deeyaskorous. It was the first item in the program of the Synod. Keeping the holy father in the position of a defendant, the synod accepted the Tome of Pope Leon unanimously. The synod at

Chalcedon ascertained the heresy of Nestore that there are two natures in Jesus. But it hesitated to accept the argument of Nestore that there were two personalities in Christ. This is the only difference between the Chalcedons and the Nestorians. The Synod at Chalcedon crushed the traditional belief which had been fostered by the holy fathers like Mor Athanesius, Mor Milithose, Mor Koorilose and Mor Deeyaskorose and the holy Synods at Nicca, Constantinople and Ephesus.

The heresy of dual character in Christ began to grow at greater pace. The Churches at Antioch and Alexandria did not accept the synod at Chalcedon. The Churches there upheld the traditional belief of unique and unified character in Christ as was taught by Mor Athanesius and Mor Koorilose. The Church in Constantinople (The Greek Orthodox Church) accepted the decisions of the synod. So the warm relation with the Roman Church and Constantinople Church was disrupted. The long bond of love between the churches came to a sad end with this synod. This was the first separation that took place in the Christian Church.

All decisions of the other three synods except that about the character of Christ was accepted by the Chalcedon Synod.

Fortesque, the famous historian and scholar in Rome says that no other synods were conducted as the Chalcedon which helped the Pope of Rome to get all his wishes and desires established. As the third decision of the synod at Constantinople questioned the supremacy of the Pope of Rome, the twenty eighth decision of this synod questions the supremacy of the Pope. Though the Pope accepted all other decisions of the synod, he was not willing to accept the 28th decision for a long time. It is clear and evident that the old holy fathers were not willing to accept the supremacy of the Pope. The only importance they gave to Rome was that it was the headquarters of an empire. It had no importance as the successor of St. Peter.

#### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What was the averment against Mor Deeyascorous?
2. Who demanded the calling of the Chalcedon Synod? Who convened the Synod?
3. Thus the first split occurred in the church. How?

**Memory Verse:** Thou art Peter. On this rock I shall build My Church. The forces of evil could not win her (St. Mathew 16:18)

## **THE CHURCH IN MALANKARA: THE BEGINNING OF 16TH CENTURY**

Objective: To prove that God shall protect His Church from all adverse situations

The history of the Church in Malankara up to the 15th century is really vague and uncertain. But there is clear evidence for the uninterrupted relation of the Church in Malankara with the Throne of Antioch. It is certain that there was only the Jacobite faith in Malankara. Rev. Fr. Ghee Varghese who later became the Archbishop Evanious has written that there was neither the Nestorian nor the Roman belief in Malankara before the advent of the 16th century.

The term Jacobite Faith refers to the faith declared by the holy Synods at Nicca, Constantinople and Ephesus and that has been transferred from the holy fathers of ancient times.

### **THE NESTORIAN AGE (A.D. 1490 TO AD 1597)**

The period from A.D. 1490 to 1597 can be called as the Nestorian Age. It was during this period the Nestorian Catholicose of Babylonia who called himself patriarch sent bishops under him to the Church in Malankara continually and claimed priestly supremacy over the Church.

The Nestorian bishops might have come to Malankara before. But they did not try to question the belief of the Syrian Christians. Moreover there had been a warm and cordial relation between the Shrine at Antioch and the Church in Malankara. Macency states that a Keralite named Joseph who visited Portugal with the Portuguese man named Kabral in 1501 had declared that the Christians in Kerala was under the holy see of the Patriarch of Antioch.

In 1490, a delegation from the Syrian Christians at Quilon was sent to Antioch with the request that they wished to get a bishop ordained from there. It was a time when the Shrine at Antioch was tired after the cruel persecution of the heartless Muslims and the invasion of the Roman Church after the Crusades. It was God who sustained the Shrine and protected it from those invaders. Under these circumstances the Throne was not able to send a bishop

ordained from there. At this juncture, the Nestorians came to Malankara to establish their power and influence over the Church.

### **THE ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE**

It was during the Nestorian Age that the Portuguese came to Kerala. They had not only the objective of trade with the East but also that of putting the Syrians under the Pope in Rome. These two periods are inseparably mixed up.

The first batch of bishops who came to Kerala during the Nestorian Age was Marthoma, Mar Yohannan, Yabaloho and Yaccobdenho.

The Portuguese captain Vascoda Gama landed at Calicut on May 21, 1498. Soon the Zamorin of Calicut and the King of Cochin and other rulers in Kerala accepted the protection of the Portuguese. It can rightly be said that the rulers of the states in Kerala handed the Syrian Christians into the hands of the Portuguese.

The first step that the Portuguese took to bring the Syrians under the Roman Church was encouraging the activities of the Nestorian bishops. The Portuguese succeeded in their attempt. The Nestorians were able to establish their influence easily. Since the Nestorian bishops did not try to deviate the Church from her traditional belief, they were acceptable to the Syrian Christians. The Nestorians had only a few pockets under their influence. The entire Church in Malankara was not under the Nestorian influence. The subjugation of the bishops to the Portuguese irritated the Syrian Christians. Since they could not succeed in their attempts, the bishops were hated by the Portuguese. So the Nestorians had a miserable end.

During the reign of Mor Yaccob, the Portuguese established a seminary at Kodungallore in 1541. Mor Yaccob passed away in 1550. In 1551 Mor Joseph came to Malankara. He felt greatly distressed in between the Portuguese who had the power and influence and the Syrian Christians who were strongly upholding their traditional belief. He swayed from side to side and he passed away while at Rome. After his demise came the Nestorian bishop Mor Abraham. He passed away in Malankara in 1597. The Portuguese tortured him very much. Since he upheld the Roman belief and the Nestorian belief alternatively, both the Portuguese and the Syrian Christians hated him. Mor Abraham passed away at Angamali. He was buried there. But the Portuguese did not spare even his tomb. They demolished it. The Nestorian era ended with it.

## ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. How can we understand that there was only the Jacobite belief in the Church in Malankara up to the 15th Century?
2. What is the Jacobite belief?
3. What circumstances led to the arrival of the Nestorian bishops to Malankara?
4. The Nestorians had a sad end. How and why?

**Memory Verse:** “My mind is looking at the Jehovah and is silent. My redemption comes from Him”. (Psalms 62:1)

### LESSON 35

## **THE SECOND HALF OF THE PORTUGUESE ERA**

***Objective:*** God shall protect and maintain His true Church.

The Nestorian Era and the Portuguese Era were the most turbulent period in the history of the Church in Malankara. Instead of the weak and incapable leadership in the Nestorian era, God sent a strong and powerful, capable and valorous leader to His true Church. The leader was Ghee Varghese Archdeacon of Pakalomattom family who was appointed as the administrative head of the Church by Mor Abraham before his death. The position Archdeacon is really a Nestorian designation. It is not equal to the position of bishop hood. But the Syrian Christians in Malankara found their leader in him. God choose the archdeacons from the Pakalomattom family to keep His Church in the traditional belief i.e., the belief declared by the holy Synods at Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus. He asked the archdeacons to keep His Church in tact with the holy shrine at Antioch. He chose the archdeacons to lead His Church in true faith.

Mor Abdul Jaleel Gregorious entombed at North Parur, ordained Thoma archdeacon as bishop in the name Mor Thoma the first in 1565.

### **ARCHBISHOP ALEXIS DOM MENESIS**

Dom Menesis was appointed as the archbishop of Goa in 1595. He had already decided to bring the Syrian Christians in Malankara under the domain of the Pope of Rome at any cost. He had the support of the kings of the princely

states. He also had the support of armed forces, wealth and immense help from all sources.

Angamali was the headquarters of the Church in Malankara. Firstly Menesis decided to appoint Francisco Ross of Vypin Fort as the bishop of the Syrian Christians. He wished to post him at Angamali. But the believers did not accept the proposal. They stood strongly at the back of Archdeacon Ghee Varghese. So he agreed to appoint him as the bishop of Angamali. He asked the archdeacon to accept the Roman faith. But he objected. The Syrian Christians strongly decided that they would accept only those bishops who were rightly ordained by the Patriarch of Antioch.

Menesis was angered at this. He burned with rage. With increased temper and rage, he came to Cochin on 26th January 1599. He threatened the archdeacon at the Vypin Fort. He compelled the latter to sign the pledge of faith. To protect himself from the administrative powers, he put his signature in the pledge of faith. He was threatened so forcefully that he had to sign the document. In order to legalize his cruel action which had been condemned by all historians, Menesis compelled the archdeacon to call a local synod at Udayamperur.

Immediately after his arrival at Angamali, the archdeacon wrote to all churches under him asking them not to allow Menesis to enter into the churches. Though Menesis was able to enter into many churches with the help of the armed forces, he was not able to enter into the churches at Mulamthuruthy and Nadamel (Tripunithura)

#### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term archdeacon? Who was the first archdeacon?
2. What was the aim of Dom Menesis the archbishop of Goa?
3. What was the decision of the meeting of the Syrian Christians held at Angamali?
4. Why did Menesis decide to call a synod?

**Memory Verse:** "Oh! my mind praises the Lord. Let none of His advices be forgotten". (PSALMS 103:2)



**THE ROMAN DOMAIN:  
THE UDAYAMPERUR SYNOD 1599**

*Objective:* One may have to suffer a great deal. But he should always uphold his true faith.

The synod at Udayamperur was held from 20th to 26th June 1599. 153 priests and 600 civilians attended the synod. The monetary and military influence of the Portuguese was so great that the king of Cochin and the rulers of the princely states in and around the region were forced the churches by saying that if the churches did not act accordingly, their entire property shall be confiscated.

In mere 9 meetings, bishop Menesis and his partisans managed to get 267 predetermined decisions passed easily and of course without much discussion. The decisions of the synod aimed at subjugating the traditional Syrian Christian Church under the Pope of Rome, ousting the Nestorian belief completely and accepting the Roman belief and introducing the Latin rites in the prayers and rites. The Archdeacon and his followers were compelled to accept the supremacy of the Pope and had to make a vow accordingly. The most condemnable and inhumane activity of the synod was that it destroyed the age old records and most valuable books of the Syrian Christians. Bishop Menesis took every possible action to destroy all books written in Syriac. He visited the churches and burned all such books available. Fr. Francis Ross a multilingual scholar who later became bishop helped him in all his attempts in this line.

After making all possible successes, Menesis returned to Goa in November 1599. The year 1599 was a dark year as far as the Syrian Church is concerned.

**THE ROMAN DOMAIN**

The Church was under the Roman yoke for 50 years since 1599. The Church had been fully under their control. It is really a miracle that the Church could throw away the Roman yoke. It was God who did this miracle. During this period, the Roman bishops Francis Ross, Stephan, De Britto, and Francis Gratio ruled the Church.

Though the Archdeacon Ghee Varghese subjugated his powers to the Pope, he was not willing to accept fully the powers of the Jesuit bishops. Bishop Ross excommunicated the archdeacon twice. But when he found the popularity and influence of the Archdeacon, he was compelled to accept him again at each time. The Roman bishops did not have the courage to destroy the archdeacon.

When bishop Ross died in 1624, Britto became the bishop. The clash with the archdeacon continued. Bishop Britto tried to destroy the papers regarding the right, powers and privileges of the archdeacon. Archdeacon gave him the duplicate copy of the papers and retained the original.

In 1637 Archdeacon Ghee Varghese died, The course of his life had been eventful and turbulent. He was not able to withstand the challenges of the Portuguese. But God deployed him to protect the true faith and the Syrian Orthodox Church herself and to keep the relation with the Throne of Antioch. Though he was feeble and could not withstand the challenges of his opponents, God helped him to make his attempts successful. After his death, Thoma of the same family was elected the Archdeacon. He was intolerant to the domain of the Romans. Bishop Gracio tried to exert more powers and tried to remove the Syrian rite and tried to introduce the Latin rite. The Syrians protested. By 1650, the Syrian Christians under the leadership of Archdeacon Thoma began to request the Thrones at Antioch and Alexandria to get bishops ordained for them.

In response to the requests and pleas, Mor Athulla of Antioch set out for the Church in Malankara.

#### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Why was the Synod at Udayamperur held?
2. What were the aims behind the decisions of the synod?
3. What was the most condemnable act performed by the synod?
4. Who was the heir of (descendent of) Archdeacon Ghee Varghese?

**Memory Verse:** "Though I am treading along paths of extreme darkness, I need not fear. You are with me. Your stick and pole consoles me." (PSALMS 23:4).

## THE DENUNCIATION OF THE ROMAN YOKE

*Objective:* Depend more on God to survive the temptations and challenges.

### MOR AHATHULLA

The western historians say that Mor Ahathulla was a bishop sent from the holy shrine at Antioch. The Malankara Church believes that he was the then Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch.

Mor Ahathulla reached Suret in 1652. From there he moved to Mylapore where he was imprisoned by the Jesuit priests. Two deacons from Malankara visited him at Mylapore. They were Rev. Dn. Itty from Chengannore and Rev. Dn. Kurian Kizhakkedth. Mor Ahathulla handed over to them a Kalpana (order). He said, "I am imprisoned by the persecutors. In order to persecute me more, they will take me to Goa. Try to save me". In the Kalpana it was said that Thoma Archdeacon was appointed as the head of the Church in Malankara and he would perform all administrative aspects except that of Chief Bishop.

On their way to Goa, the ship carrying Mor Ahathulla reached Cochin.

### THE OATH OF LEANING CROSS 16 January 1653.

The news of the arrival of the ship carrying Mor Ahathulla reached Thoma Archdeacon. Along with priests and a train of about 25000 people, Thoma Archdeacon marched towards Mattancherry. They demanded the release of the Holy Father. But the Portuguese stole him away to some unknown place at night.

The Church in Malankara believes that the Portuguese threw Mor Ahathulla into the Arabian Sea after tying a stone on his neck. Some historians argue that the persecutors took him to Goa overnight and assassinated him there.

When the news of the taking away of Mor Ahathulla spread, the rage of the Syrian Christians in Malankara rose to its peak. They tied a very strong rope on either side of a rock cross at Mattancherry. All the believers assembled there held the rope firmly and took the famous oath which came to be known as the oath of the Leaning Cross. This took place on 17th January 1653 (Makarom 3). They proclaimed that neither their children nor they themselves would obey

the orders of the Roman Church or accept their powers. They also declared that until bishops were sent from Antioch, they would not yield to the bishops from Rome. Thus the regime of the Roman Church came to an end.

The oath of at the Leaning Cross is a milestone in the history of the Church. It announces the stability of faith and the determination of the Church towards the true traditional faith. Next week those who took the oath assembled in the Church at Alangattu. They ordained Thoma Archdeacon as bishop by the name Mor Thoma I excluding the privileges of a bishop. They did so in accordance with the order of Mor Ahathulla. It is worth mentioning the name of Rev. Fr. Itty Thomman Anjilimoottil the Vicar of Kallissery church, who took the lead on all these activities.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Who was Mor Ahathulla according to our belief?
2. Who visited him at Mylapore?
3. What was the order of Mor Ahathulla?
4. How can you say that the oath of the Leaning Cross was a milestone in the history of the Church?
5. What is the oath of the Leaning Cross?
6. Who became Mor Thoma I ?

### **LESSON 38**

## **HOLY QURBONO SONGS**

### **1**

Mary's memory - Blessing for us be,  
May her pray'rs for us - Be a fortress thus-Barekmor  
Fragrance sweet of smell-Through the air doth swell-  
For virgin Mary, God's Mother holy'. Moriyo Rahem...

MARIYAMINN SMARANAM - VARA DAYAKAM AAKA

THAL PRARTHANA NJANGAL - KALMAVINU KOTTA BAREKMOR

DHEIVA PRASAVITHRI - KANYAKA MARIYAMI-

NUYARUNNOYAARIL - SUKAH PARIMALA DOOPAM. MORIYORAHEM...

Chosen Virgin best - O Thou, God's Mother blest.  
 Who didst root out all - Earth's great curse-the fall;  
 Pray thy Son right well - That peace and calm may dwell  
 In the Church of God - And throughout earth's sod. Barekmor

Highest praise to Him - Who left the cherubim  
 And the serph's bloom - For the Virgin's womb,  
 Taking flesh from her - The judgement to deter-  
 Saving all with breath - From Satanic death. Moriyo Rahem...

SWEEKARANAM NEDI - DAIVATHIN MATHAVA -

YIKSHITHI SHAAPATHE - NEEKIYA KANYAKAYE!

SHANTHI KSHEMANGAL SABHAYILUM ENGUM VAANEE -

DAN EKATHMAJANO - DABHYARTHI KKENAME. BAREKMOR

KROBE SRAAPIKAL THAN - SAVIDHAM VITT AVATHARANAM

CHEYTHA KANYAKA THA - NUDARE VAANONE!

AADAMYARE SAATHAN - MRUTHIYIVA THAN ADIMAYIL NI -

NETTIDUVAN MEYE - NTHIYA VEERA STHOTHRAM. MORIYORAHM...

Cease ye not O, mother of God  
 Intercession for us all  
 Let His kindness fall on us  
 By thy loving entreaties.

NIRTHEEDARUTHE PARISHUDHE!

NJANGALKAYIULL ARTHANAYE

NJANGALIL ARDRATHA THONEEDA -

NEKALMAJANOD ARTHIKYA.

Bliss to the prophets,  
 And the apostles  
 And to the martyrs  
 At resurrection. Barekmor

Those martyrs who longed  
For seeing the Christ,  
By their death took wings.  
And fluted to heights. Moriyo Rahem...

BHAGYAM NIBIYARKUM  
BHAGYAM SLEEHARKUM  
BHAGYAM SAHADENMARKUM  
PUNAR UTHANATHINE. BAREKMOR

MASHIHAAYE KANMAN  
KAAMKSHICHORU SAHADER  
VAALAL CHIRAKUKAL POO  
ND UNNATHA PADAMERI. MORIYO RAHEM...

5

O ye Virtuous Prophets! Apostles son of the state  
Pray ye for the welfare of the world  
Let combat disappear-battle be quieted  
May the church-and-offsprings sing of his praises. Barekmor

Holy prophets Apostles, and martyrs  
Your crown in heaven-faithful ones on earth  
In the Church of Christ-you who helped the powerful growth  
Honored is your memory by who is noble. Moriyo Rahem...

PAVANA NIBIMARE! RAAJASUTHA SLEEHANMARE!  
ABHYARTHIPIN - BHOOVANA KSHEMAARTHAM.  
SAMARAM MAYATTE - KALAHAM SHAMAM AARNEEDATTE.  
SABHAYUM SUTHARUM - STHUTHI PAADEEDATTE. BAREKMOR

NIRMALA NIBISLEEHA SAHADENMARE! NINGALUDE  
MAKUDAM VAANIL - BHAKTHAJANAM BHOOVIL:  
MASHIHA THAN SABHAYIL - SHAKTHI VALARTHIYA NINGALUDE  
SMRUTHI MAANICHO - NENGUM DHANYAN THAN. MORIYO RAHEM...

6

O (Mor Thoma) named art thou,  
By the church that keeps thy feast;  
May thy Lord His peace bestow,  
Making it for ever flow.

(MARTHOMA) SALGUNA NIDHIYE!  
NIN SMRUTHI KONDAADUM SABHAYIL  
ANAVARATHAM NIN NADHANTE  
SHAMAVUM SHANTHIYUM AMARATTE.

7

Blest be priests whose love for Christ  
Mark'd their sacred altar's task;  
Watching angels haste to come,  
Leading them to courts of joy. Barekmor

Son of God, forget them not-  
Priests of Thine who served Thee right;  
Grant them Pleasantness of face  
On Thy advent day sublime. Moriyo Rahem...

NIRMALA MADHBHAYIL KARTHURU-  
SNEHAAL SUSROOSHICHORAAM  
VAIDEEKARE PINCHELLUM VA-  
NEERENMARDHEVAGARE. BAREKMOR

BHANGYA DHEIVASUTHA! NINNE  
SUSROOSHICHORU VAIDIKARE  
NINNA GAMANA MAHA NAALIL  
ORTHU MUKHA PRABHAYEKENAME. MORIYORAHEM...

8

Thine, O Lord, are both the world  
Thy power extends everywhere  
Guard the living by thy cross  
Save the deceased by Thy love grace. Barekmor

Praise we Thee, who giveth life  
Raising those who from the tombs  
Praise the father, who sent Thee  
Praise the Holy Spirit too. Moriyo Rahem...

NADHA! THAVAKAM IRULO - KAM  
NIN ADHIKAARAM THAANE - NGUM  
SLEEBAYAAL JEEVITHARE - KAA  
THANPAAL MUKTHI MRUTHARKE - KA. BAREKMOR

STHOTHRAM! MRUTHA JEEVA PRA - DANE!  
KABAREEN ETTIDUNNO - NE!  
NIN PRESHAKA THAATHANUM A - MALAN  
ROOHAYKYUM HALLELUIAH. MORIYO RAHEM...

9

Grant, O Saviour, that the dead Who ate Thy flesh,  
Who drank Thy blood, the chalice of salvation,  
May be raised up from their graves-yea, incorrupt.  
Clothed in glory full and bright Lo, they wait Thee. Barekmor

Borne aloft in state upon-clouds of glory.  
Comes the prince who giveth life to the dead ones  
Righteous ones the trumpet hear-of His angels;  
They Proceed in glorious stoles-To His presence. Moriyo Rahem...

REKSHAKANE! NIN GATHRATHE BHAKSHICHUM NIN  
VILAYERUM REKTHA KAASA PAANAM CHEYTHUM  
MRUTHAR AYORENAASHAM NEEKI JEEVIPICH-  
ANIYENAM NINNE NOKKUNN AVARIL KAANTHI. BAREKMOR

MRUTHARE JEEVIPIPAAN EZHUNNALLUM RAAJA  
MUKILAZHKIN MEL AKOSHITHAN AYIDUNNU  
NAYAVANMAR THAN MUNKOMBIL NAADAM KETTTT-  
ANKIYANI NJETHIRELPANAYI POYIDUNNU. MORYIO RAHEM...





