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CATECHISM OF THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. MATTHEW
THE EVANGELIST



GOD WHO PRESERVES



MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM

GOD WHO PRESERVES

STANDARD - VI



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M. C. E. S. Commission for Catechesis
Santhinilayam, Tiruvalla - 689 101

INTRODUCTION

The Command of Jesus Christ to “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15) is the foundation for Catechesis or faith formation. This faith formation has been continuing in the Church from the days of the early Church in different ways. Catechesis is based on the theological positions of each epoch. A serious awareness on the liturgical, spiritual, theological, and disciplinary patrimony of the Malankara Catholic Church led to the promulgation of a unique catechism for the Malankara Catholic Church. The entire Church rejoices at the fulfilment of this desire.

Catechism should never become an intellectual pursuit. True Catechesis should lead the pupil to a life of worship and witness. Catechesis should attempt to lead, nurture and confirm the pupil in the life of faith of the Church to which he or she belongs. Thus the catechumen will be able to know and experience Christ in and through the Church and participate in the mystery of salvation and be in communion with the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ continues his Salvific Mission in and through the Church. Therefore we have concentrated on an ecclesial centred catechesis. This catechesis is founded on the spiritual heritage of the Malankara Catholic Church.

In classes one to four, we prepared the children to think of the divine mysteries of salvation history and to thank God with utmost reverence. Our effort in classes five to seven is to progressively make the students confront revealed truth. In these classes they learn about God successively as Creator, Protector and Redeemer beginning with the creation of the universe and reaching the redemptive life of Jesus.

The text book of class six deals with God, as Protector. God, who created the universe and humans, constantly preserves and safeguards them. In the previous class, the mysteries of revelation extending from Creation up to the entry of Israel into the (Promised) land of Canaan were explained. Class six continues this theme. The first part introduces Old Testament narratives of Israel from entry into Canaan up to their exile and waiting the expectation of the Saviour. The section on the liturgy is about the Eucharist, blessing of homes, funeral service, lent and fasting. History of the Malankara Church, from the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle reaching the sixteenth century is another topic. The fourth part is about various matters which contribute to the application of Christian values in daily living. The arrangement of this text book of class six is patterned on the process of information leading to worship and resulting in Christian witnessing.

Based on the principle that “the rule of prayer is the rule of faith”, this textbook will help our children understand better the prayers and songs that we recite in our services and thus allow them to truly experience our Liturgy. The prayers, hymns and practical suggestions given at the end of each lesson give more meaning and spiritual nourishment to the child.

We are profoundly grateful to His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, Catholics, Major-Archbishop of Trivandrum and the other bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church for their constant prayers, support and suggestions. My special thanks are due to our beloved Aboon Joseph Mar Thomas, the Apostolic Visitor to America and Europe for his continued support and guidance.

To the many priests, religious and lay faithful who have sincerely collaborated in this endeavour we offer our gratitude. I would like to thank Rev. Fr. Samuel Thykoottathil for his effort to translate the Malayalam Text into English. I acknowledge Rev. Fr. Abraham Kalakkudi for his valuable remarks and correction. We would like to thank the Professors of St. Mary’s Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum, and especially Rev. Dr. Philip Chempakasserry, Rev. Dr. Kurian Valuparampil, Rev. Dr. Chacko Aerath O.I.C., Rev. Dr. Thomas Kanjiramukalil and Rev. Dr. John Padipurackal. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the diocesan directors of catechism Rev. Fr. Joseph Poovathumtharayil, Rev. Dr. Antony Chethipuzha, Rev. Fr. Alexander Valiyaveetil, Rev. Fr. Robinson Kunnackad and Rev. Fr. Varghese Valikodath. Our thanks are also due to the Text book committee – Prof. Mary Mathew, Shri. N.G. Philip and Shri. M.V. Thomas. So also to Mr. Mathews Orathel for designing the text book and pictures. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Joseph Kalariparampil for his assistance. Our indebtedness to Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt who is the master brain behind this work is also sincerely acknowledged.

I pray that through this catechism text each child may be brought to and nourished in and confirmed in the faith of the Malankara Catholic Church and thus be able to know and experience Christ’s love more profoundly.

+ Thomas Mar Koorilos
Chairman, M.C.E.S. Commission for Catechesis



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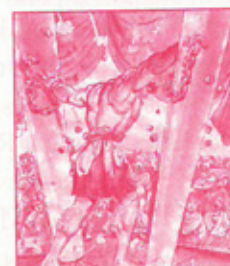
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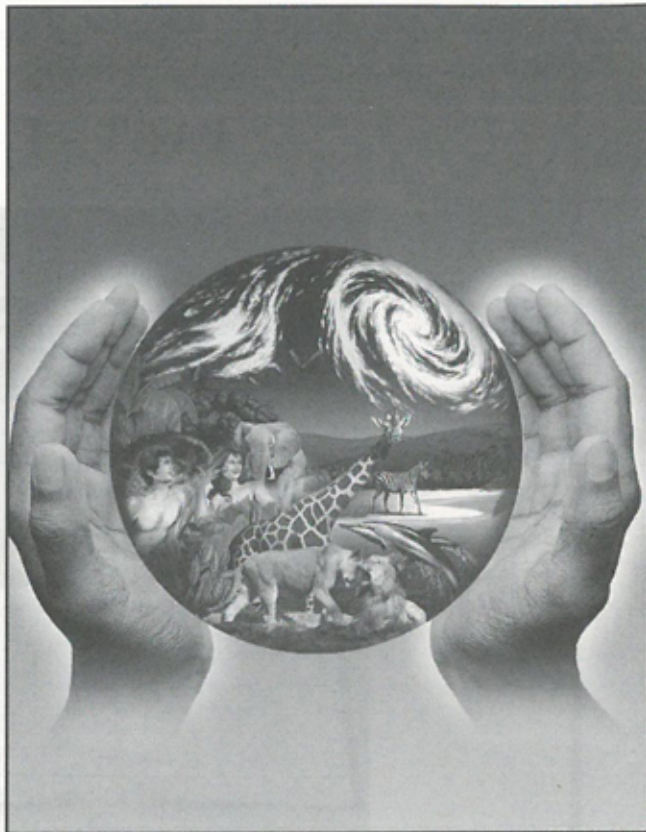
HOLY BIBLE



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THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF ISRAEL

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. At the end of creation, God created man in his own image and likeness and made him dwell in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve committed sin, trespassing the command of God. Though God punished them, he did not abandon them completely. In order to save man, who committed sin, God specially called and set apart Abraham, the son of Terah, belonging to the genealogy of Noah, the just.



God promised that he would bless all peoples on the face of the earth through Abraham. The providence of God continued through the birth of Isaac, the son of Abraham. God repeated his promise to Jacob, the son of Isaac. God was continuing his love and providence to Israel, when he led Israel to Egypt during the period of famine and when he delivered them from slavery through the leadership of Moses.

God, who liberated Israel from Egypt, led them to the land of Canaan, which he had promised. During the forty years of journey through the wilderness, the people often sinned against God. Even then, God did not reject them. God pardoned them through the intercession of Moses and

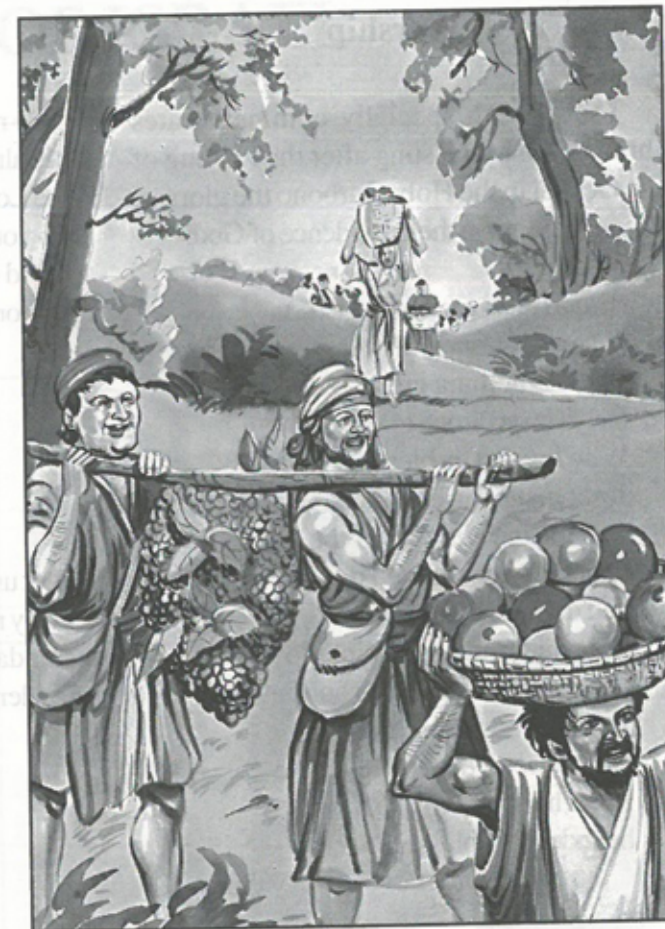
protected them. Moses passed away on the mountain of Nebo, close to the land of Canaan.

The People of God in the Land of Canaan

It was Joshua, the successor of Moses, who led the people of Israel to the land of Canaan, on the western side of Jordan. There was God's living presence among the people of Israel. The people of Israel took the Ark of the Covenant wherever they went. The presence of God was revealed through the Ark of the Covenant. The people of Israel crossed river Jordan in the

presence of the priests, who carried the Ark of the Covenant, accompanied by the blowing of horns and shouts of victory. The people of Israel captured the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. It was the city of Jericho that Israel possessed first. Following that, Israel settled down in different parts of the land of Canaan. Joshua gathered together the people of Israel at Shechem and renewed the covenant with God. Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten after summoning the people to maintain fidelity to the Lord and to his Covenant.

The life of the people of Israel, from the special call and separating of Abraham, went on depending upon the providence of God. The providence of God can be seen throughout the history of Israel.





Worship

The Church specially commemorates through the hymn sung after the reading of the Gospel in the Holy Qurbano the glory of living, relying on the providence of God:

(Ellam gnan parisodhichen..)

"I have examined all things
There is nothing greater than
Relying on divine grace
Who loves it, is blessed;
Joseph, having embraced it,
became the King of Egypt
Prophet Moses loved it
and divided the ocean;
Hananiah and companions loved it
And they escaped from burning fire;
It's more attractive than gold
And sweeter than honeycomb
He, who worships the Lord,
he indeed, is blessed".

(Order of the Holy Qurbano)

We remember the providence of God in the Psalm of the Evening Prayer and pray thus: "The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and coming in from this time on and for evermore".

Life Witness

Let us find refuge in the providence of God at every moment of our life. Let us glorify God in our daily life, remembering the immense providence of God.

Memorise

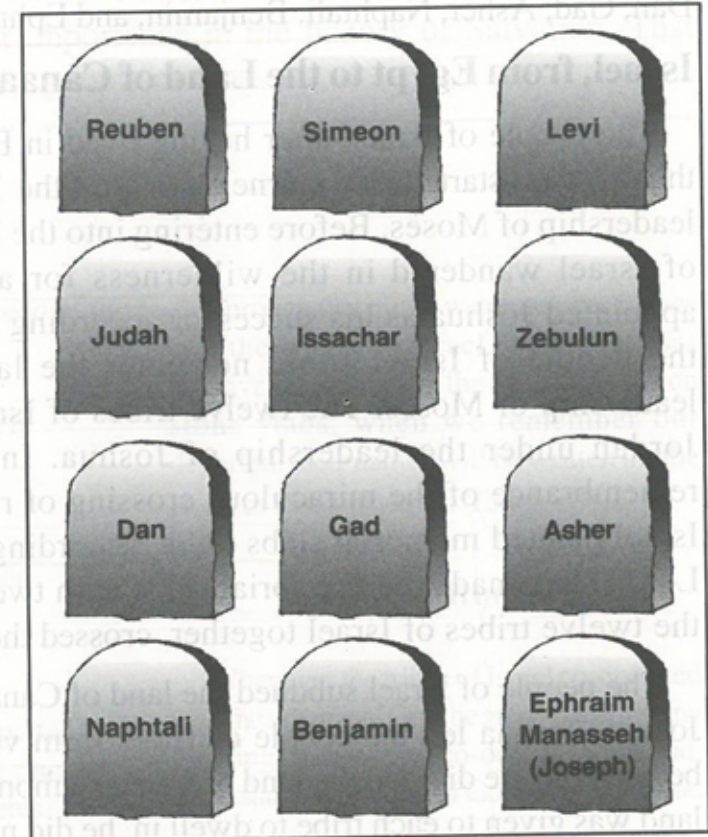
"The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want".
(Psalm 23:1)

Questions

1. Explain two occasions in the life of the Israelites, when they experienced the providence of God.
2. What was the importance the people of Israel gave to the Ark of the Covenant?
3. How did the people of Israel cross, River Jordan?

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

God called Abraham, the father of the faithful and formed a nation of people through him. God protected and made this people grow through Isaac, the son of Abraham and his son, Jacob. Then, the people of God grew through the twelve sons of Jacob. God changed the name of Jacob into Israel. Therefore, the people of God began to be known after the name, Israel. The tribes of Israel were known after the names of the twelve sons of Jacob.



The Sons of Jacob

Jacob, having obtained the blessing from Isaac, absconded from the land of Canaan, having been afraid of his brother, Esau. Jacob absconded to Haran, where his maternal uncle Laban was staying. There, Jacob married Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban. Out of his sons, Jacob loved Joseph most. When Jacob became old, he called Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, blessed them specially and raised them along with his other children.

The Tribes

The descendants of Jacob were known as twelve tribes. These tribes unitedly formed Israel. Though the twelve sons of Jacob were known as

Tribal Fathers, later on, no tribe was known under the name of Joseph. The tribe of Joseph was known under the names of his two sons. The tribes of Israel were the following: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Benjamin, and Ephraim-Manasseh.

Israel, from Egypt to the Land of Canaan

The people of Israel, after having lived in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years, started the journey towards the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses. Before entering into the land of Canaan, the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for about forty years. Moses appointed Joshua as his successor according to God's instruction. But the people of Israel could not enter the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses. The twelve tribes of Israel together crossed river Jordan under the leadership of Joshua. In order to perpetuate the remembrance of the miraculous crossing of river Jordan, the people of Israel planted memorial slabs there, according to the instructions of the Lord. They made the memorial slabs with twelve stones signifying that the twelve tribes of Israel together, crossed the river (Joshua 3-4).

The people of Israel subdued the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Joshua led the people of Israel from victory to victory. When he became old, he divided the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel. When land was given to each tribe to dwell in, he did not divide and give any land to the tribe of Levi. The reason was that it was the priestly tribe. But, people of each tribe gave away from their ownership, cities and pastures to the tribe of Levi, to dwell in. It was the tribes of Ephraim-Manasseh that received the inheritance, instead of Joseph. Thus, Joshua divided the land among the twelve tribes. The tribe of Judah got the largest portion of land.

Tribes, in the History of Israel

It was the Judges, who led Israel after Joshua. After the Judges, the royal rule started in Israel. All the tribes were united during the royal reign. Especially during the reign of King David, the tribes of Israel were united into one. Then, Solomon became king of Israel. After the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam could not lead all the tribes of Israel, united. The tribes of Judah

and Benjamin together formed the country of Judea and the other ten tribes formed the country of Israel.

The tribes have wielded decisive influence in the history of Israel. The number 'Twelve' has great importance in the history of Salvation. That signifies the perfection of the people of God.

Worship

We sing thus in the third *Kaumo* of the Night Prayer of *Qyomtho*:

(Arkkai Kazhchakalivide...)

"For whom gifts are offered here

He is one blessed, indeed!

He will have remembrance

In the heights of heaven.

So that the Lord may remember

The names of the tribes

Moses had them engraved on

Stone slabs for us to recall

The names of all your departed

To be remembered in this church

And be written in the heights

And at the Messiah's coming

That they shall enjoy with him

Enter them in 'Book of Life'".

Through this hymn we remember Moses and the tribes of Israel. Just as Moses engraved the names of the tribes of Israel on stone slabs, when we remember our departed, their names will be written in 'the Book of Life' in heaven (Exodus 28:21).

Life Witness

Whenever the tribes of Israel co-operated with the scheme of God, he granted them many blessings. Let us also co-operate with God, understanding the will of God in our daily life.

Memorise

"God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble".

(Psalm 46:1)

Questions

1. How many are the tribes of Israel? Which are they?
2. What is the reason why memorial slabs were planted when Israel crossed river Jordan?
3. Why was the tribe of Levi not given their own land?
4. Explain the influence of the tribes in the history of Israel.
5. How did Israel enter the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua?

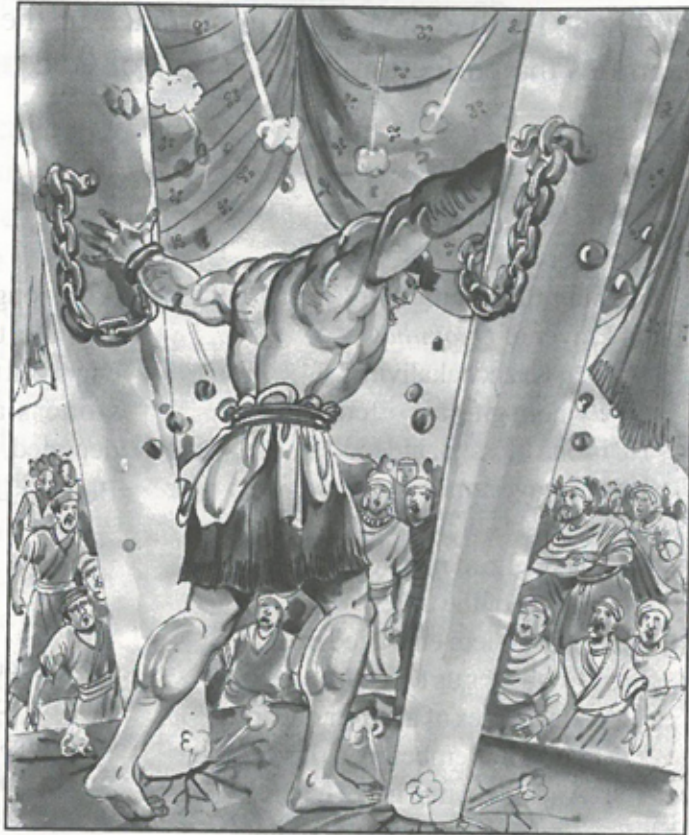


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THE JUDGES

After the death of Joshua, the Judges led the people of Israel. The Judges were commissioned by God to protect the tribes of Israel, who had settled down in the land of Canaan, from external foes, from the death of Joshua to the commencement of the royal rule in Israel. The people of Israel, who entered the land of Canaan and settled down there, accepted many life-styles and modes of worship of the Canaanites. The people who had agreed in the covenant at Shechem, to be faithful to God made under the leadership of Joshua showed infidelity to God. The anger of God blazed against the people who violated the agreement. God punished the people who rejected him, by leaving them in the hands of the enemies. Whenever the people repented about their faults and entreated God, God released them by raising Judges from among them. The Book of the Judges of the Holy Bible deals with the history, how God protected Israel through the Judges.

In this Book, we see the history of twelve Judges, who led Israel. The history of the last few Judges of Israel is not written in this Book. The



following are the chief Judges: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Samuel

Deborah

Deborah was the prophetess and judge of Israel. Deborah and Barak were called and separated by God in order to save the people of Israel from the slavery of Jabin, king of the land of Canaan. Barak with the help of Deborah defeated the Canaanites. It was the Lord, who led the war and gave victory to the Israelites. They executed judgement in Israel for a long period.

Gideon

The people of Israel did evil against the Lord. Hence the Lord handed them over to the Midianites, their enemies. Therefore the life of the Israelites became intolerable. God called Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the hands of the enemies. Even though the Lord asked Gideon to fight against the Midianites, he tried to evade saying that he was weak. **“I will be with you”** (Judges 6:16), so saying, God strengthened Gideon. Gideon asked for a sign to confirm that it was the Lord, who sent him. The Lord gave a sign as requested by Gideon. Gideon chose three hundred as instructed by the Lord, from among the thirty-two thousand Israelites, who came prepared to fight. He gave victory to the people of Israel over their enemies, under the leadership of Gideon. Thus, God revealed his providence to Israel, his own people. Gideon continued to lead the people of Israel.

Jephthah

When the Ammonites attacked the Gileadites of Israel, the Gileadites installed the strong and brave Jephthah as their leader. Jephthah sought the help of the Lord to conquer the Ammonites. The Lord handed over the Ammonites to Jephthah. Jephthah made judgement in Israel for six years.

Samson

The Philistines were the strongest enemy, the Israelites had to confront with. The land that the tribe of Dan got as their share was near the Philistine cities. The Philistines used to attack the tribe of Dan. It was during that

period that Samson was born to Manoah from his barren wife, according to the plan of God. Samson was the person, whom God chose and prepared in order to release the people of Israel from the dominion of the Philistines. An angel revealed the divine plan about him while he was yet in his mother's womb. Samson was prevented from drinking wine or other intoxicating drinks. The angel had also instructed that the barber's razor should not be used on his head, for God had chosen him for the vow of Nazir.

The Nazirites were forbidden to marry from among the Gentiles. Samson married Delilah, a Philistine woman, against the will of God. Delilah decided to deceive Samson at the compulsion of the Philistines. Delilah understood that the strength of Samson was in his hair. When he slept, she shaved his head. Thus, the Philistines carried away Samson, who had lost his strength. They plucked out the eyes of Samson, who was under the custody of the Philistines and he was locked up in prison.

Samson was exhibited as an object of ridicule at a big festival. The dishonoured Samson prayed to the Lord to receive strength to avenge the Philistines. Inspired by the strength of the spirit of God, Samson caught hold of one of the pillars of the house in which he was tied, with his right hand and another with his left hand and shook them violently. The building collapsed and fell on the enemies. Along with the people who had gathered there, Samson also died. Thus, Samson took revenge on the Philistines. Samson was Judge over Israel for about twenty years.

Samuel

Samuel was the last Judge in Israel. He was the son of Elkanah and Hannah, of the tribe of Ephraim. Samuel was born with the special blessing of God due to the heart-felt prayer of barren Hannah. Hannah had promised that if she were to have a son, she would dedicate him for the service of God throughout his life. Accordingly she dedicated Samuel in the house of God at Shiloh. Under the protection of Eli, the priest, Samuel did the service of the church and grew in the spirit of God.

One night, Samuel was lying in the church, near the Ark of God. Then, the Lord called him: "**Samuel, Samuel**". He heard the call. Thinking that

Eli called him, Samuel went near him. And he told thus: "You called me. Here I have come". Eli replied: "I did not call you. Go and lie down". Samuel went and lay down. Again the Lord called him. But he did not understand that it was the Lord. When the Lord called him the third time, Eli understood that it was the Lord, who called him. Therefore Eli told Samuel: "If you are called again, answer 'Lord speak; behold! your servant listens'". Samuel went and lay down. Again the Lord called him. Samuel did as Eli had told him. God revealed to Samuel about the imminent judgement to fall on that family due to the evil deeds of the sons of Eli (1 Samuel 3:1-14).

Samuel was a powerful judge and prophet. After the death of Samuel, royal rule started in Israel. Israel became an organized force with the royal rule.

Worship

In the third *Kaumo* of the Night on Thursday, we recall in *S'himo*, God's calling of Samuel and making him Judge of Israel. Through this hymn we pray that God might dwell in the hearts of those who worship him:

(Ravil Smueline Daivam...)

"In the night did God call
Samuel and made him
Leader of Israel,
so that he might rule over them;
In the night – you should reign
In the hearts- of your worshippers".

Life Witness

When the Judges fulfilled their special mission, it was a blessing to the people of Israel. Let us try to fulfil the mission, God entrusts us in our daily life. Then, it will be a blessing to us. Samuel teaches thus: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Memorise

"Human success is in the hand of the
Lord, and it is he who confers
honour upon the lawgiver".
(Sirach 10:5)

Questions

1. Who are the Judges?
2. What is dealt with in the Book of Judges?
3. Who are the important Judges?
4. How did Samson take vengeance on the Philistines?
5. Write a note on Samuel, the last Judge of Israel.





ROYAL RULE IN ISRAEL

The people of Israel demanded Samuel that they should have a king. God commanded Samuel to anoint a king according to the demand of the people. Saul was the son of Kish belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. Once Saul set out with a servant in search of his lost donkeys. When they did not get any information about the donkeys, the servant urged Saul to seek advice of Samuel, the man of God. Accordingly, Saul and the servant arrived near Samuel



Before Saul came to Samuel, God had revealed about his coming to the prophet. On the previous day of the coming of Saul, God informed Samuel thus: **"Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines"** (1 Samuel 9:16).

Saul came to Samuel. He spent a day with Samuel. Before sending Saul away, Samuel took a vessel of olive oil and poured it on his head and anointed him. Then he kissed him and said: **"The Lord has anointed you ruler over his people Israel. You shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their enemies all around"** (1 Samuel

10:1). Samuel greeted Saul and bade good-bye to him saying: **"God will be with you"**.

Then, Samuel gathered the people of Israel at Mizpah. They cast lots to know, who should be the king of Israel. On that occasion also the Lord selected Saul. The people declared Saul as king. On another occasion, the Ammonites, the enemies of the Israelites, attacked Israel. Inspired by the spirit of God, Saul gathered the people and defeated the Ammonites. The people, who won the war, gathered together and once again declared Saul as king. Thus, Saul became the first king of Israel.

The Rule of Saul

At that period, the Philistines were the arch enemy of the Israelites. It was at the time when the Philistines tried to establish dominion over Israel, that Saul undertook the reign. The first thing Saul did after becoming king was to organize a standing army. The aim of Saul was to defeat the Philistines. Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul waged war against the Philistines with the help of a group of soldiers. The Lord gave them a big victory through the adventure of Jonathan. Jonathan believed in the Lord and completely took refuge in him. Therefore the Lord was with him. Saul fought against the neighbouring enemies such as the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Philistines, etc. Wherever he went, he won victory. Saul could save the people of Israel from the surrounding enemies.

The End of Saul

Saul went astray, step by step, from Samuel and God. When he was not worthy, Saul offered Sacrifice reproachfully. Thus, he lost his right to continue as king. **"For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel"** (1 Samuel 15:26). This verdict marked the end of the royal rule of Saul.

Since the Lord rejected Saul, God asked Samuel to anoint a new king. According to the instructions of God, Samuel anointed David, son of Jesse, an inhabitant of Bethlehem as king, instead of Saul. Following the anointing, the spirit of the Lord, strongly came upon David. At the same time, the spirit of the Lord left Saul. Saul envied David, who won victory over the

Philistines. Saul thought it necessary to do away with David for his own existence. At that time, the Philistines came with great preparations to conquer Israel. Saul, who got into the battlefield, sustained fatal wounds. Saul died there (1 Samuel 31).

Saul was the first king of Israel. He was a good administrator and commander-in-chief of the army. But, the fact that he disobeyed God was the cause of the defeat of Saul. It is David, who succeeded Saul.

Worship

Saul, the king defied Samuel, the priest and judge. Saul denied the loftiness of the priesthood of Samuel, who was the custodian of divine commandments. The authority of Saul was terrestrial. Through this hymn, the Church reminds us that royal power should be subordinate to priesthood. In the prayer of the III Hour of *S'himo*, we sing thus about Kingship and Priesthood:

(Thava rajathwam swasathamam...)

"Your kingship is eternal – Halle-eluah
Kingship and the Priesthood are- two
different high ranks

Behold! From them are flowing laws and
prescriptions

Human laws take origin from king's authority
And from that of the priesthood,
commandments of God

Questions

1. How did God reveal to Samuel about the coming of Saul?
2. How did Samuel anoint Saul as king?
3. Describe the reign of Saul.
4. How was Saul rejected by God?
5. What was the reason why Saul felt jealous towards David?

Kings do have authority on earth
The priests do have it on earth and in heaven
One, who founded priesthood lofty,
He is blessed".

Life Witness

Saul was rejected from the presence of God because he did not maintain fidelity to God. He was dispelled from the royal rank on account of disobedience. Let us be faithful and obedient to God. Thus, let us be acceptable before God.

Memorise

"Your kingdom is an everlasting
kingdom and your dominion endures
throughout all generations".
(Psalm 145:13)



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Lesson 5

DAVID, THE KING

Saul, the first king of Israel, was rejected from the office of kingship. God asked Samuel to anoint a new king to continue to lead the people: **"Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons"** (1 Samuel 16:1). Samuel did as the Lord commanded him. Samuel invited Jesse and his sons to offer sacrifice along with him. Jesse had eight sons. The first seven sons only were with the father at that time. Samuel enquired the will of the



Lord to know whether anyone of them was worthy to become king. But, God did not choose any of them. David, the eighth son had gone to pasture the sheep at that time. Jesse sent a messenger and brought David according to the instructions of Samuel. When David arrived God said to Samuel: **"Rise and anoint him; for this is the one"** (1 Samuel 16:12). Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. From that day onwards the spirit of the Lord strongly dwelt on him.

David and Goliath

When Saul was the king of Israel, the Philistines came for war against the Israelites. There was among them a wrestler, named Goliath. Goliath challenged the Israelites to have a duel with him. He put the condition that if any of the Israelites were to fight against him and kill him, then the Philistines

would be slaves to the Israelites and if the opposite happened, then the Israelites would be slaves to the Philistines. Saul and the people of Israel were greatly afraid, when they heard Goliath's challenge. At this time David came to the military camp of Israel in order to visit his brothers, who were soldiers in the army of Saul. Then he happened to hear the challenge of Goliath. With the permission of Saul, the king, David prepared to encounter Goliath. David told Saul thus: "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:37). Then David approached Goliath taking his staff and sling in his hand and five smooth stones from the brook.

David took one stone from the bag, slung it, and forcefully threw it on the forehead of Goliath. The stone sank into his forehead; Goliath fell down. David killed Goliath. Thus, the people of Israel defeated the Philistines. Saul had appreciation for the ability of David and he made him stay with him.

Since David did all things entrusted to him successfully, Saul appointed him chief of the army. Later on, when he had the doubt that the people of Israel loved David more than him, Saul wanted to destroy David. In order to escape from the efforts of Saul to kill him, David ran away secretly from the king's presence.

David, the King

David became the king after the death of Saul. The reign of David was the golden period of Israel. David was thirty years old when he undertook the rule of Israel. David was the strongest king in the history of Israel. He was both king and prophet.

The Sin of David

Once David sent the army to fight against the enemies, Ammonites. On this occasion David took interest in Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was a soldier taking part in the war. He made her his own using his royal power. On that account, David tried to destroy Uriah. David had Uriah killed through deceit.

Prophet Nathan, who understood the evil deed of David, came to the presence of the King. The prophet told a parable to David: 'there were two people in a city. One was rich and the other poor. The rich man had lot of cattle and sheep. But, the poor man had only one female lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up with fondness. Things being so, a guest came to the rich man's house. The rich man was unwilling to kill one of his lambs and prepare food. Hence he killed the young lamb of the poor man and prepared food for the guest'. When he heard this, David got wild with anger and said: "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die". Pointing his finger on David, who declared the verdict against himself, Nathan said: "You are the man". The prophet found fault with David for deceitfully making Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, his own. Nathan, the prophet pointed out the fault of David. When he was conscious of the cruelty of his mistake, David cried out before God. "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12: 1-17). This confession of King David was the proof of his repentance.

The Successor of David

Towards the end of the reign of David, revolts for authority cropped up in Israel. In the providence of God, David re-established peace in the country suppressing all revolts that rose against him. When David became old, he appointed Solomon, his son, as his successor. The priest of the Lord took the horn filled with oil from the Holy Tent and anointed Solomon. Solomon undertook the rule of Israel and he led Israel to glory.



Worship

We have many hymns and prayers about King David in the liturgy. We sing in the Service of house blessing:

"Having heard the prayer of David, God felt pity

And he absolved sin and gave him prophetic power".

We sing thus in the Morning Prayer of Tuesday in *S'himo*:

(David-uzhassinkal prarthippanethi..)

"David at the dawn

Arrived to pray

Within the church, he entreated thus:

O Lord, deign to hear

The voice of my grief

Listen to my word, you, my Saviour

Halleluiah o Halleluiah

Make me worthy of the remission of sins".

We see described in this hymn that King David went to the presence of God after he had sinned and prayed for the remission of his sins and that God had shown him compassion. These thoughts are in Psalm 51. We use Psalm 51 at the beginning of all our services.

Life Witness

King David maintained great fidelity to God. When he was in sin, he repented and requested pardon from God and returned to him. Let us also be faithful to God. If we are in sin, let us repent and return to God.

Memorise

"I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my
God all my life long".
(Psalm 146:2)

Questions

1. How did God choose David as king of Israel?
2. Describe the event, how David defeated Goliath.
3. How did Prophet Nathan point out the fault of David? Describe.

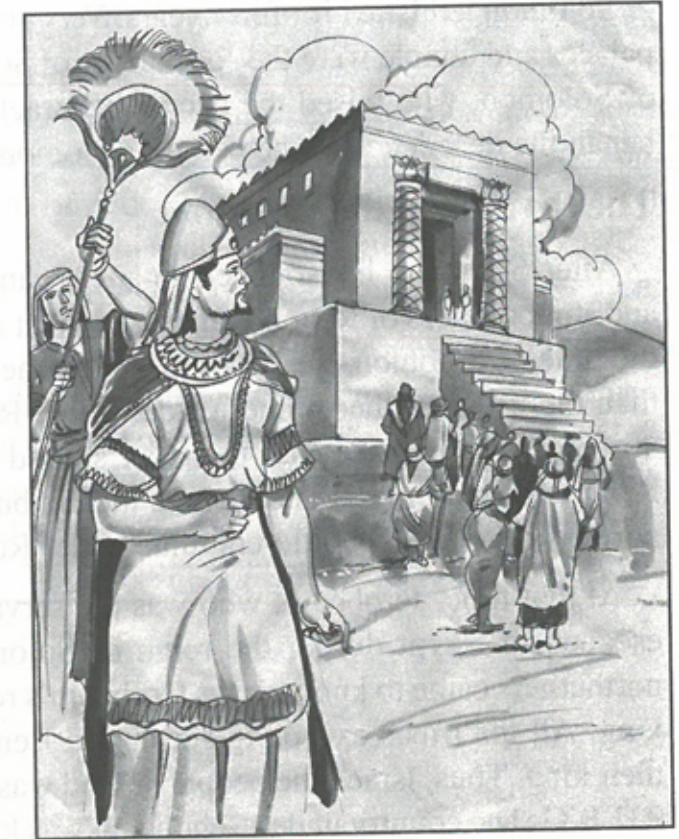
ISRAEL AND JUDEA

Solomon, the Wise

There was peace and prosperity during the reign of Solomon in Israel, because he did not face any real threat from the enemies of the neighbouring countries. Incomparable wisdom was reflected in all his endeavours. God gave him great wisdom as a result of his prayer. The Wisdom of Solomon was famous even in far away countries. He was known as 'Solomon, the Wise'.

The most important achievement of Solomon's reign was the temple; built for the Lord in Jerusalem. From the time of Solomon, the temple of Jerusalem was the centre of the religious life of the people of Israel.

The reign of Solomon was very peaceful. Yet he did not maintain absolute fidelity to the Lord. Solomon married gentile women and worshipped the gods of the gentiles. He built temples and halls of worship for the gentile deities. By marrying gentile women, Solomon went astray from the Lord, God of Israel and trespassed his commandments. Therefore, the Lord told Solomon thus: **"Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant...I will not,**



however, tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen” (1 Kings 11:11-13).

Solomon led Israel for forty years. Very strong groups of army, beautiful palaces and temple were the specialities of Solomon's reign. With the death of Solomon, who raised the people of Israel to the summit of their glory, began the decadence of the people. Solomon died in the year 931 B.C.

The Division of the Kingdom

After Solomon, his son Rehoboam became the king. The foolishness and stubbornness of Rehoboam caused great trouble in the country. During the time of Solomon, the tribes of the northern side had to pay greater tax than the tribes of the southern side. When Rehoboam undertook rule, the northerners requested that their tax should be reduced. But the unwise Rehoboam not only did not reduce the tax but also increased it. Hence the northerners decided not to continue under Rehoboam.

At that time, Jeroboam, who was the servant of Solomon and who had escaped to Egypt during the reign of Solomon, returned to Israel. The northerners came to know about Jeroboam's return and they made him their king. All the tribes excepting Judah and Benjamin accepted Jeroboam as their king. Thus, Israel, the people of God was divided into two countries in 931 B.C. The country under Rehoboam was known as Judea and that under the leadership of Jeroboam, as Israel.

From Greatness to Exile

There were continuous wars waged between Israel and Judea. The good majority of the kings of Israel were unfaithful to God. Hence, quarrels were continuous in Israel. The kings were not prepared to retreat from their evil ways even after being forewarned by the prophets. Idolatry and infidelity led the country to ruin. The northern country Israel, established in 931 came under the dominion of Assyria in 722 B.C. The history of Israel is that of the collapse of a country from its summit of glory. It was Hosea (734-724 B.C.), who ruled Israel, last. The Assyrians captured many cities of Israel during the reign of Hosea. At the end they captured also the city, Samaria.

With that, the northern country, Israel, including ten tribes, disappeared from history.

The centre of attraction of the country of Judea was the temple of Jerusalem. Among the kings, who ruled over Judea, all were not faithful to God. There reigned idolatry in Judea just as in Israel. The people of Judea also, who rejected the only Lord God, came under foreign dominion. Judea existed as one country after the fall of Israel for a period of about one and a half centuries. The last king of Judea was Zedekiah. During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, conquered Judea and subdued it. Thus, in 587 B.C., Judea was in exile, having been dominated by Babylon.

Israel, God's own people, did not foster fidelity to God. They lived as they liked and worshipped alien gods. They went astray from the status as the people of God, violating their covenant with God. But God sent the prophets even on those occasions to bring them back from their fault. The period of the prophets started along with the royal rule in Israel.



Worship

King Solomon, the wise, has described the deep relationship between God and Israel in his Book, the Song of Songs. The Church remembers this at the time of the Sacrament of Matrimony:

(Upamakalal...)

"Solomon has spoken thus in parables:

'Comely One, who is this

Whom you admire immensely?"

His vineyard is Israel

Whiter than vine of Jacob

Redder than Nardin's oil

Stronger than Lebanon's cedar;

Behold him! He is truly the Son of God

We do praise him; indeed!

He is praise-worthy".

(Service of Matrimony)

Life Witness

Since the people of Israel were unfaithful to God, they had to experience many catastrophes and sufferings. God, who was faithful in his covenant, continuously showed mercy to them and helped them. Let us also try to be faithful to God and stand firm in his love.

Memorise

"Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever".
(Psalm 106:1)

Questions

1. How did Solomon, the wise, show infidelity to God?
2. Describe the reign of Solomon.
3. What was the reason why Israel was divided?
4. What was the means God used in order to make the people of Israel return from their fault?
5. How did the people of Israel go from greatness to exile?

Lesson 7

ELIJAH AND ELISHA

Along with the Royal rule, the period of the Prophets too started in Israel. The prophets were a very decisive and strong factor in the religious and social life of Israel. They dedicated their lives entirely in order to confirm Israel, God's own people, in the faith of the only God.

In Hebrew, the word 'Nabi' means prophet. The prophets foretold the things that were to happen. The prophets of Israel spoke on behalf of God and revealed the will of God to the people.

Prophets were those whom God had directly called and set apart. They were known as 'men of God'. The prophets, who spoke for God, urged the kings and the people to live in the true path and to be faithful to God. They prepared the people to practise the covenant and to obey the commandments of God. The prophets took very strict stand against idolatry. The messages of the prophets were full of God's mercy towards Israel, his love and his concern.

The prophecies and works of certain prophets are available in the Bible in the form of books. Prophets, who have books in the Old Testament, after their own names, are called 'the canonical prophets' or 'the epistolary



prophets'. But, those who do not have books, after their own names, are called, 'non-canonical prophets' or 'non-epistolary prophets'. In this lesson, we shall learn about the non-epistolary prophets. Prophets Elijah and Elisha were very important persons in the history of Israel.

Elijah

Elijah was a prophet in Israel. He exercised prophetic mission in the northern country, Israel, between 870 and 850 B.C. Elijah is the greatest prophet in the history of Israel. He exists as the sole symbol and representative of all the prophets. The meaning of the word Elijah is 'my God, Yahweh'. Yahweh is the name, by which the Israelites called God. Ahab was the king, who ruled Israel during the time of Elijah. Under the instigation of his wife Jezebel, the king worshipped Baal and built temples and altars in honour of him. Elijah told Ahab thus: "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (1 Kings 17:1). After this prophecy about the drought, Elijah absconded from the presence of the king. God had specially provided and protected the prophet. In order to sustain the prophet in life, God gave water from the brook and food through a crow. Afterwards the prophet stayed with a widow, as a guest till the drought was over. When the son of the widow, with whom Elijah was staying, died, he gave life back to him.

There was no rain in Israel for three years, as Elijah had foretold. After three years, according to God's command Elijah went to Ahab. Ahab was searching for Elijah at that time. Ahab went to Elijah as informed by the prophet. Elijah accused King Ahab of insulting God and serving Baal and thus being the cause of the sufferings and the drought for the Israelites.

Elijah asked Ahab to bring the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal to the mountain of Carmel in order to convince them who the true God was. As the prophet demanded, Ahab summoned all of them together. Then, Elijah suggested a test. He said that prophets of Baal would offer sacrifice to Baal and he, to the Lord God. He put the condition that on whose sacrifice fire descended and burnt it, his God would be the true one. The test that, 'He who sends fire and accepts the sacrifice would be the true God' was acceptable to the people.

According as Elijah had said, the prophets of Baal made necessary preparations for the sacrifice and cried out and entreated Baal from dawn until noon. But nobody answered their entreaties. Then, Elijah made preparations for the sacrifice. After that Elijah prayed thus: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, reveal this day that you are the God of Israel, that I am your servant and that I did this according to your command. Kindly answer my prayer O God". God heard Elijah's prayer, filled with humility and faith. Suddenly fire came down from God and accepted Elijah's sacrifice. Having seen this, the people cried out and said: "the Lord is God". When the people confessed faith in the Lord, Elijah said that there would be rainfall again. It happened as Elijah said and the drought came to an end (1 Kings 17-18).

After that the spirit of the Lord led Elijah to the mountain of Horeb. There, the prophet experienced the presence of God in a soft sound. Thus, the prophet was able to reach the summit of the profound divine experience. The life of Elijah was ablaze with zeal for the Lord. Elijah was the prophet of divine justice. Elijah, who lived for the Lord, was taken into heaven in a chariot of fire.

The Successor of Elijah

Elijah appointed Elisha, the son of Shaphat, as his successor. The meaning of the word 'Elisha' is 'God saved'. When Elijah passed Elisha, he dropped his outer garment on the latter. This was a sign that Elisha was his successor. Elisha followed him. Elisha worked in Israel for over fifty years. He was the mouthpiece of God's unending compassion.

During his lifetime, Prophet Elisha imparted consolation to many poor, sick and oppressed people, by working miracles. The prophet fulfilled the need of a widow by miraculously increasing oil and thus providing for her need forever. Elisha prophesied that a son would be born to the barren woman of Shunem. It happened as he said. Later on when her son died he raised him and gave him back to her and made her happy. The prophet cured Naaman, the leper, of Syria. Thus, Elisha revealed God's compassion and providence for the people by working many miracles.

Worship

Prophets were the friends and messengers of God. The Church remembers this in the Morning Prayer of Monday:

(Sarvesa nin snehitharam...)

"Almighty through prayers of your friends, the prophets,

And petitions of apostles, who – preached Gospel

Grant grace, so that peace may reign

In the four quarters of the earth".

The words, 'Nibi/nibia' or 'Seer in Advance' are generally used in the order of our liturgy instead of 'Prophet'. The prayer 'Answer me Lord...' which the priest says in the Holy Qurbano at the invocation of the Holy Spirit, reminds us of the fire that descended upon Elijah's sacrifice.

Life Witness

Elijah and Elisha were zealous in divine matters. Let us also be zealous in things divine. Let us dedicate ourselves for divine matters in our daily life.

Memorise

"I will sing of your steadfast love,
O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will
proclaim your faithfulness to all
generations".
(Psalm 89:1)



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THE MAJOR PROPHETS

After the starting of the royal rule in Israel, it was the prophets, who played the important part in making the people stand close to God. Again, it was the prophets, who maintained the people, who were under exile due to foreign dominion, in the faith of the only God, who gave them the inspiration to live as a community and who led them forward. The prophets, who raised their voice against injustice and corruption, were those who had completely dedicated themselves for the sake of the Lord God.

The prophecies and the works of these prophets are in the Bible. The exact historical background of many of these prophets is not available. The prophets handed over the messages of God to the people. In the scheme of God, it is the message that is important and not the messengers. The prophets revealed the nature of the unseen God's love and concern for the people. The epistolary prophets are divided into two groups: 'The Major Prophets' and 'The Minor Prophets'. The following are the Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Amos, Micah, Zechariah, Habakkuk, etc., are known as the Minor Prophets. They are thus differentiated in accordance with the length of the books under their name.



Questions

1. Who were the prophets? How are the prophets grouped?
2. What was the mission of the prophets?
3. What is the meaning of the words Elijah and Elisha?
4. How did Elijah prove that the God of Israel is the true God?
5. How was Elijah taken into heaven?
6. What were the miracles Elisha performed?

Isaiah

Isaiah carried out the mission of the prophet in the second half of the eighth century B.C. The meaning of the word Isaiah is 'Yahweh, the Salvation'. Isaiah was the member of a noble family.

Once Isaiah had a vision. He saw the Lord being seated on a lofty throne. Around him stood the Cherubs, one of the choirs of the angels. They proclaimed to each other; **"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory"**. Then, one of the seraphs approached Isaiah with a live coal from the altar. The seraph touched the lips of Isaiah with the live coal and said: "this has touched your lips. Your impurity is blotted out; your sin is forgiven". Afterwards, the Lord said thus: **"Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"**; and Isaiah replied: "here am I; send me". The Lord God entrusted Isaiah the prophetic mission (Isaiah 6:1-9). Isaiah did service as prophet of God. Isaiah proclaimed God's immense fondness and love for Israel: **"Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands"** (Isaiah 49:15-16). The prophetic book that contains most of the prophecies about Jesus, the Saviour, is that of Isaiah.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah was born as a member of the priestly family in a village near Jerusalem. The meaning of the word Jeremiah is 'let God raise'. Jeremiah got his call to become prophet during the period of King Josiah, who brought about religious renovation in Judea. Jeremiah underwent a lot of sufferings, physically and mentally, for proclaiming the message of God. Jeremiah fulfilled his mission as prophet for more than forty years, till the fall of Judea. Since the people of Israel rejected God, Jeremiah proclaimed thus: **"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water"** (Jeremiah 2:13).

Jeremiah prophesied that God would punish the people, who had grieved the Lord through idolatry, injustice and outrages. The prophet gave the

promise that they would be saved, provided they repented. The group of priests and those in authority turned against Jeremiah, who criticized them. During the period of Jeremiah (587 B.C.), the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar, who was king in Babylon, took away the inhabitants of Judea in chain to Babylon. The prophet, on this occasion stood with the rest of the people in Judea, taught them the ways of God and encouraged them. Jeremiah told the people that Babylon was to be considered only as an instrument in the hand of God and that God would show mercy to his people at the end. Later on Jeremiah was bound and sent in exile to Egypt. Even after reaching Egypt, Jeremiah continued to convey to the people of God the words of the Lord. The tradition is that the people stoned and killed Jeremiah, who said things not pleasing to them.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel is one who accomplished the prophetic mission during the history of Israel in exile from 593 to 573 B.C. Ezekiel was a priest. God entrusted the prophetic mission to Ezekiel through a vision. During his prophetic mission, which extended for about twenty years, he prophesied mainly about punishment and salvation. The prophet openly showed the infidelities of Jerusalem and Judea. The prophet warned the people that they would incur severe punishment for them and that no one would be able to escape it. After that Ezekiel appears as a prophet, who imparts hope to the people who undertook penance. The prophet wept with the people and consoled them. He promised that the Lord would directly lead his people and would give Israel security and prosperity. Ezekiel advised the people of God and preached to them the ways of God from the point of view of the priestly tradition. Prophet Ezekiel gave instructions to the people of Israel to go forward, believing in the strength of God and not to lose hope even when there was no king and royal rule, no temple and worship.

Daniel

Daniel and friends were chosen for royal service in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Daniel stayed in the palace, being faithful to the Jewish customs and practices even though the pagan customs

and practices were compulsory. Daniel, who interpreted the dream of the king, was respectful before all. But, some people, who were envious of the rise of Daniel, approached Darius, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar. A law was made: 'those who worship anyone other than the king would be thrown into the lion's den'. They instigated king Darius to throw Daniel, who worshipped only the true God, into the lions' den. Accordingly, Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. But, the Lord God saved Daniel from the mouth of the lions. Daniel prayed thus: "You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you" (Daniel 14:38).

Daniel was a staunch believer in God. Daniel was ready even to sacrifice his life for his unshakable faith in the Lord. The firm faith and devotion in God and the careful observance of the Jewish customs and practices of Daniel and his friends was a model even to the gentiles.

Worship

About the vision of Isaiah, we sing thus during the Holy Qurbano:

(Srappikale kandessaya...)

'Isaiah has seen the Seraphs – Halleluiah
Before the holy of holies – Kurieeleison.
Each one has six pairs of wings – Hall...
And they are fiery angels – Kurie...
They cover their face with two wings – Hall...
In order not see your face – Kurie...
With other two wings, they cover legs – Hall...
That your blaze may not burn them – Kurie...'

Life Witness

Prophets were those who had fully dedicated their lives to the will of God. Let us also try to put into practice the will of God in our daily life and live accordingly.

Memorise

"Before I formed you in the womb
I knew you, and before you were born
I consecrated you; I appointed you a
prophet to the nations".
(Jeremiah 1:5)

Questions

1. How are the epistolary prophets divided? Explain with examples.
2. What was the vision of Prophet Isaiah?
3. Write notes on: 1) Jeremiah 2) Ezekiel 3) Daniel.



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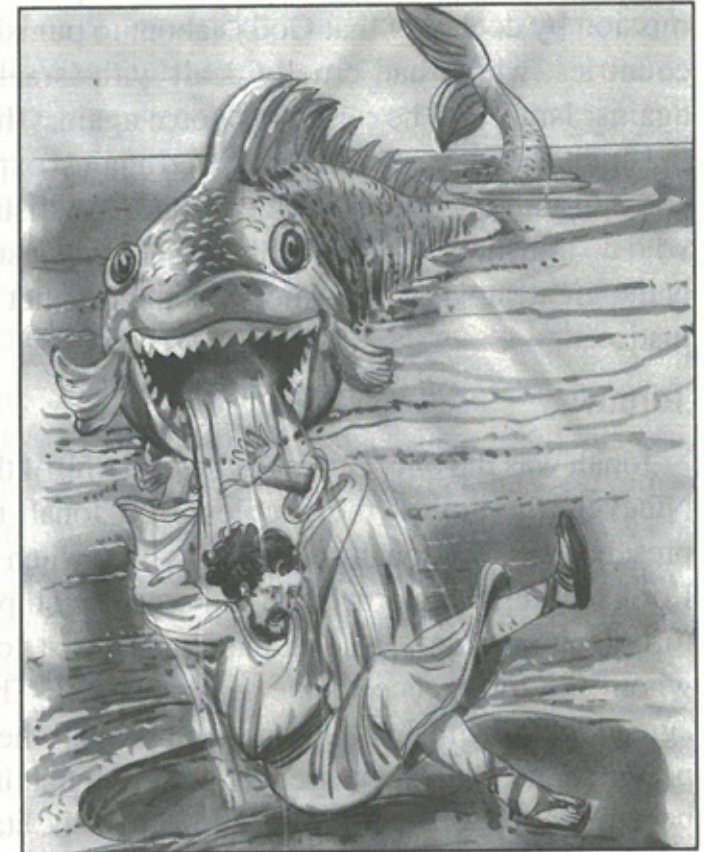
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THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Epistolary Prophets of Israel are grouped into major and minor, based on the length of the books. The books of the Minor Prophets are comparatively small. The Minor Prophets are twelve in number. Here, we shall deal with the important ones.

Hosea

The meaning of the name Hosea is 'the Lord saves'. Hosea undertook the mission of the prophet in the second half of the eighth century B.C. Hosea sternly criticized the group of priests, who forgot their obligation and were immersed in idolatry and irregularities. Hosea found fault with the people for not keeping fidelity to God. Hosea compares the relationship between the Lord and Israel to that of husband and wife. Israel often dealt with God like an unfaithful wife. Hosea proclaimed about the love of God, which went in search of and brought back Israel that had gone astray. Hosea declared judgement against the infidelity and atrocities of Israel. But the chief prophetic mission of Hosea was to introduce the immense love and concern of God, who forgets their misdeeds and brings back the people towards him.



Amos

Amos is the first among the epistolary prophets. Amos, who was prophet in the Northern Country, Israel, was a shepherd. Amos began the prophetic mission by declaring that God is about to punish severely the neighbouring countries, which had cruelly dealt with Israel. Next, the prophet turned against Israel and he raised his voice against the social injustice prevalent in Israel. Amos very strongly reacted against exploiting the poor and against corruption. Amos made evident that God dislikes the sacrifices of those who do injustice. Amos taught that showing justice to the poor and destitute is the greatest worship. Amos was the prophet of social justice and divine justice.

Jonah

Jonah was the one, God had chosen to fulfil the mission of the prophet in Nineveh, the city of the gentiles. But, Jonah tried to run away from the presence of God. Jonah set sail in a ship, which headed to Tarshish. But the Lord sent a great storm upon the sea. The ship was about to wreck in the turbulence of the sea. The passengers cast lots to know on account of whom the turbulence of the sea happened. The lot fell on Jonah. Jonah agreed that the mishap fell on them, because he tried to run away from the presence of God. The passengers threw Jonah into the sea. At once the sea became calm. A fish swallowed Jonah and he stayed in the belly of that fish for three days and three nights. According to the command of the Lord, the fish spewed Jonah out upon the dry land. The word of the Lord came to Jonah again. Accordingly, Jonah stood up and went to Nineveh, the great city. Jonah forewarned them that the city would be destroyed due to the evil deeds of Nineveh. The people, who listened to the word of Jonah, turned away from their atrocities, repented and fasted. So God did not send the punishment, which he had threatened to send on them.

The people of Nineveh, who had sinned, having repented, changed their minds and returned to God and He pardoned them gladly. There are no boundaries for the compassion of God. From the life of the people of Nineveh it is evident that God desires all peoples to be saved.

Micah

Micah was a prophet from the South West of Jerusalem. The meaning of the word Micah is 'who is like Yahweh?' Micah was a person with deep religious conviction. Micah gave clear warning that for the sins of the people and for the irresponsible activities of the leaders of the people, they would get punishment. The prophet gave strong warning against the modes of worship of the gentiles. Micah prophesied that God would directly come down to give adequate punishment for the transgressions of the people. Micah also made the hopeful prophecy that 'a Saviour shall be born in the house of David in Bethlehem of Judea'. Micah declared that to be a good man is to do justice, show mercy, and humbly behave before God.

The following Minor Prophets too had fulfilled prophetic mission in Israel: Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The prophets were those who proclaimed God's punishment and salvation for Israel and his compassion and love for his people. The prophets were the voice of God. Though the people had abandoned the prophets often, they stood firm in the mission, which God had entrusted them. It was the prophets, who revived the people, who from their greatness went into exile. Through prophecies about the Saviour to come, they could uphold the people in hope.



Worship

We remember the prophets and their mission in the liturgy. We remember in the Morning Prayer of Sunday about how God intervened in the life of Jonah, thus:

(Yaunan than arthanaye Daivam...)

"Petitions of Jonah, God did

Accept and in the deep sea

He had commanded the strong fish

Which spewed him on the third day;

Listen and be reconciled

Through grace, grant our petitions

For we have made you angry

The martyrs, who died for your sake

Are praying always for us".

Life Witness

The prophets remained faithful to God and conveyed his love and compassion to the Israelites. Let us also try to give others the love and compassion of God by remaining faithful to him.

Memorise

"O Lord my God, in you I take
refuge; save me from all pursuers,
and deliver me".

(Psalm 7:1)

Questions

1. How was the relationship between God and Israel in the point of view of Hosea?
2. What was Hosea's chief prophetic mission?
3. God did not send the punishment on Nineveh. What was the reason?
4. Amos was the prophet of social justice and divine justice. Explain.
5. What did prophet Micah mean, by 'a good man'?
6. Write notes: 1) Amos 2) Jonah 3) Micah.



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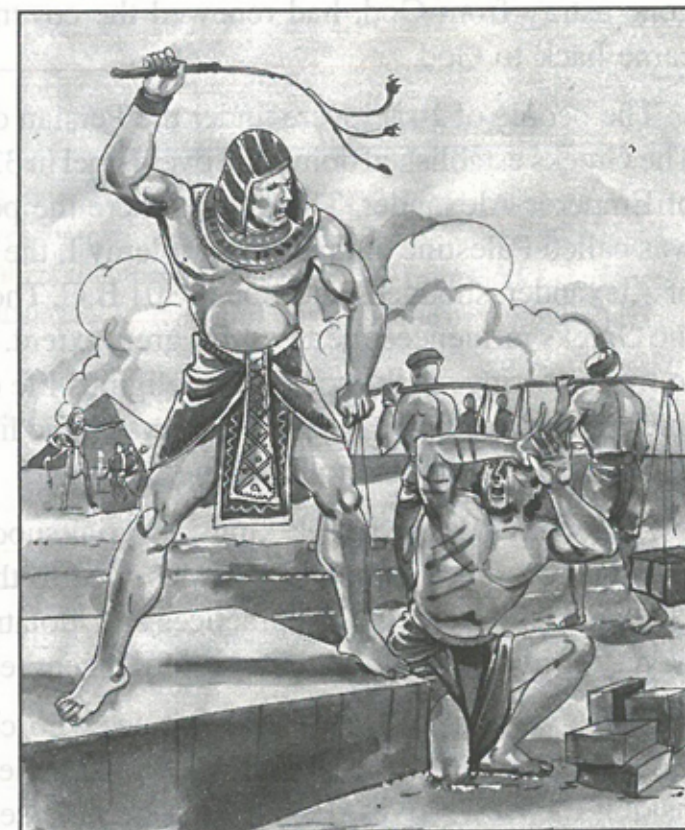
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Lesson 10

FROM THE EXILE TO THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR

EXILE

The people of Judea and Jerusalem had to leave their own country and cities and had to live as slaves in Babylon. This is said to be the Babylonian exile. The people of God had to go in exile as a punishment for their infidelity. The prophets give them warning, that they would be punished for their infidelity. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel were with the people, who were in exile in Babylon, in



order to console them and to instil hope in them. The experience of exile helped Israel, which had gone astray from God, to come back to the faith of the only God. The prophets gave them also the hope that God would deliver them from exile and lead them back to Jerusalem.

The people of God stayed in Babylon in exile from 587 to 538 B.C. Cyrus, the king of Persia, subdued Babylon in 538 B.C. and permitted the Israelites to go back to Jerusalem. The people, who returned to Jerusalem, were under the Persian dominion. During this period, the Israelites began to be known under the name, Jews. The people who returned to Jerusalem reconstructed the destroyed city. The renovation of Jerusalem was completed with the reconstruction of the temple. They made the rededication

of the temple in 515 B.C. Ezra and Nehemiah gave leadership to the people, who returned from Babylon to confirm them in religious life and to execute the works of renovation. The Israelites, who violated the covenant and had gone astray from God, had renewed the covenant with him. Thus, Israel came back to God.

The people of Israel were under the Persian dominion for two centuries. The Greeks established dominion over Israel in 332 B.C. under the leadership of Emperor Alexander. The place, where the people of Israel were living, was called Palestine at that time. Ptolemy I, the Greek ruler, after the death of Alexander, subdued Palestine in 301 B.C. The lifestyle and the culture of the Greeks influenced the Jews to a great extent. The Greek culture was able to make stirrings in the social and religious life of the Jews. The Jews were interested in leading a happy and comfortable life. It was at this period that a lot of Jews emigrated to Palestine.

Antiochus III, the Greek king in Syria, subdued Palestine in 198 B.C. His successor, Antiochus Epiphanies tried to thrust upon the Jews, Greek language, culture, religious practices and idolatry. Thus, the people of God were forced to accept the lifestyle of the gentiles.

There were many Jews in Palestine, who confessed faith in the Lord God, even amidst persecution. Many proclaimed faith in the Lord by even risking their own lives. Persecution became severe under the Greek rule. Many Jews sacrificed their lives in the persecution. The Jews were forced into idolatry and to eat the prohibited flesh of pigs. Some Jews were prepared to encounter the persecution of the Greeks. Judas Maccabeus gave them leadership. Those who joined him were known as Maccabites. The Jews won victory under the leadership of the Maccabites. They rededicated the temple of Jerusalem in 165 B.C. After a century, in 63 B.C. Pompeii, the chief of the Roman army, subdued Palestine. At the time of the birth of Jesus, Palestine was under the Roman rule. Herod became king in Palestine in 37 B.C.

The thought about the Saviour became strong, when the people of Israel were under foreign rule. The things, which God spoke through the prophets,

inspired the people to wait for the coming of the Saviour. The prophets held the people of God united through the hopeful prophecies about the coming of the Saviour.

Worship

During the time of the Maccabees, Smoony and her seven sons offered their lives for the sake of faith. The Church remembers this event in the Morning Prayer of Thursday:

(Eesanodarthichushassinkal...)

"The saintly Smoony had prayed thus

To God, at the dawn of day:

O God from the cruel king

Antiochus, you do save me;

He killed my sons like a lion

And is waiting to tear me".

Life Witness

The people of God had to undergo many sufferings during the period of exile, because they had gone astray from God. Let us try to remain close to God and be faithful to him.

Memorise

"No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again".

(Sirach 33:1)

Questions

1. What was the reason of the exile of Israel in Babylon?
2. How did the Greeks influence the life of the Jews?
3. How did the people of Israel in exile, receive hope?
4. How were the people of Israel freed from the slavery of Babylon?
5. What evils did the people of God suffer under the rule of the Greeks?
6. Why was a Saviour necessary for the people of Israel?
7. How did the prophets make the people of God stand together?





THE PROPHCIES ABOUT THE MESSIAH

It was the expectation of the Messiah to come, that imparted hope and solace to Israel, the people of God. The Hebrew word Messiah means 'one, who is anointed'. From its Greek word, the name 'Christ' is derived. In the time of the Old Testament, there was the faith that the Saviour Messiah would be born, from among the people of Israel. It was the prophets, who bore the lion's share in imparting this hope to the people.



The hope that 'the Messiah would come to save them' was formed in the Israelites during the exile and thereafter. They considered that the mission of the Messiah to be born in the tribe of David was to save Israel and to regain Jerusalem. By the word Messiah, the Old Testament meant, the king to be sent by God in the fullness of time.

The Jews considered the Messiah as a super human person, capable of delivering them politically. But, the Messiah, whom the prophets hinted at, was the divine person, who would give salvation to all people. God chose the tribe of David for that. Several prophets foretold about the Messiah to come, the anointed of God.

One prophecy about the Messiah is that of Isaiah: This prophecy, known under the name 'Immanuel Prophecy', is the promise that prophet Isaiah made to king Ahaz. It is as follows: **"The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel"** (Isaiah 7:14). Prophet Isaiah said this about the Messiah to come. Isaiah gives other prophecies, too, about the Messiah (Isaiah 9:1-7, 11:1-9). The prophet hints that the Messiah would be: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. The prophet assures that the inheritor of the House of David would re-establish justice and peace. At the time of the advent of the Messiah, there would be seen all over, peace like that of Paradise. Isaiah gives the hopeful prophecies like 'the one to come will be born in the house of David'.

Micah, who is the contemporary of Isaiah, also gives prophecies very clearly about the Messiah. The prophet said thus about the birth of the Messiah: **"O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to rule in Israel"** (Micah 5:2). The prophecy of Micah was that the coming of the Messiah, who would be born in the clan of David to lead Israel, will be from Bethlehem. Micah also proclaimed that the Messiah is from before ages; the children of Israel would be gathered together in his coming; and the Messiah would pasture the people of Israel with the glory of the Lord.

Jeremiah has prophesied about the Messiah thus: **"The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely"** (Jeremiah 23:5). Jeremiah gives through the prophecy about 'the branch of righteousness', the assurance that the Messiah would be born in the house of David.

Ezekiel prophesied that he who is to come would be the shepherd of the people (Ezekiel 34:24-25). The Messiah would be the shepherd and servant, who pastures and sustains the people. The prophet stressed that the clan of David would last forever.

There is the hint about the imminent coming of the Messiah in the prophecies of Zechariah. Zechariah gives the final form of the hope of the

people of the Old Testament about the Messiah: **“Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”** (Zechariah 9:9).

There are descriptions, which give hope about the coming of the Messiah in the Bible, not only in the prophetic books, but in many other books also. At the time when Jacob the forefather blesses his children, he blessed Judah thus: **“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him, and the obedience of the peoples is his”** (Genesis 49:10). This allusion is one foreseeing the coming of the Messiah. Verses 20-38 of Psalm 89 make it clear that the Messiah is the anointed one from the house of David. Here, we see the assurance that salvation is made possible through the tribe of David.

The hope of the people of Israel about the Messiah fructify with the coming of Jesus. It is in Jesus that all the prophecies of the Old Testament about the Messiah are fulfilled. Thus the expectation of the people of Israel became fruitful with the birth of Jesus. Jesus is not only the Saviour of Israel, but of the whole world.



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Worship

The Church commemorates through this hymn the prophecy made by Isaiah about the birth of Jesus. We sing thus in the Morning

Prayer of Sunday:

(Ammanuel...)

“God among us

Miraculous Baby

‘Virgin is pregnant

And she gives birth to a child’

Prophet Isaiah told this truth;

O Child, who was born from the

Holy Mary, ever virgin

Glory and praise to you, O Lord”.

Life Witness

Let us try to put hope in God in our daily life and to live placing hope in God in all the difficulties of our life.

Memorise

“The young woman is with child
and shall bear a son, and shall
name him Immanuel”.

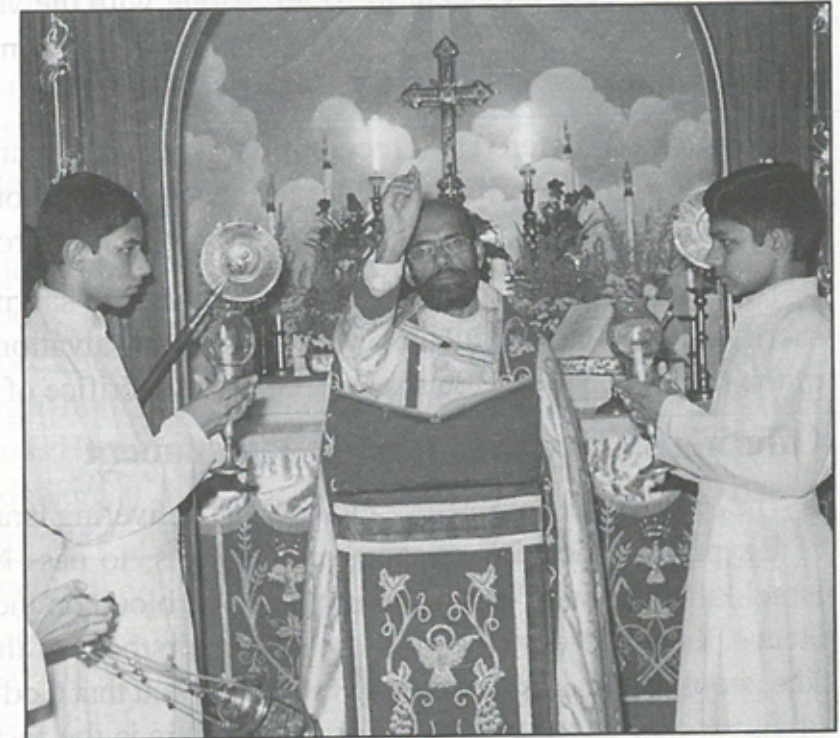
(Isaiah 7:14)

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word Messiah?
2. What did the Israelites consider about the mission of the Saviour?
3. Make clear the ‘Immanuel Prophecy’.
4. What was the chief message of the prophecy of Micah?
5. What was the prophecy of Zechariah about the coming of the Messiah?
6. What was the allusion of Jacob about the Messiah?
7. Write down the prophecy of Jeremiah about the Messiah.

HOLY QURBONO-INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church, which originated in Jerusalem, adopted many religious practices and modes of worship from the Jewish religion. The Christian Church grew up in the background of the Jewish religion. The sacrifices and festivals of the Old Testament times have immensely influenced the Christian liturgy.



Sacrifice in the Old Testament

Sacrifice is very important in all religions. In the worship of the Jewish religion, sacrifice was the most important service. Individuals and heads of families offered sacrifice from the beginning stage of the people of Israel. We see many kinds of sacrifices in the Old Testament: The Sacrifice of Abel (Genesis 4:4), the Sacrifice of Noah (Genesis 8:20-23), the Sacrifice of Abraham (Genesis 22:1-13). At the time of Moses, the offering of sacrifice became the basic factor of the life of the people of Israel. Various kinds of sacrifices and their rules are described in the Book of Leviticus, chapters 1 to 7.

PART - II



LITURGY



Unblemished bull or lamb or young ones of pigeons were sacrificed. The thing offered was killed, its blood was sprinkled on the altar and its flesh was burnt. Sacrifices such as, the Burnt Offering, Peace Offering and Sin Offering were prevalent in Israel. Along with the various sacrifices, it was the common practice, to offer bread and wine on the altar, to offer incense, etc.

Sacrifice was offered as a recognition of personal relationship with God. The Jews offered sacrifice in order to recognize the glory of God, to be in communion with God and to obtain remission of sin from God.

The Sacrifice of Calvary of Christ is the true sacrifice. Through this sacrifice Christ gave to all absolution of sin and salvation. All the sacrifices of the Old Testament were the symbol of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

Offering of Sacrifice in the New Testament

The Pasch is the commemoration of God delivering Israel from the slavery of Egypt. The meaning of the word Pasch is 'to pass by'. The people of Israel killed a young lamb and sprinkled its blood on the lintel of the door. Hence, the angel-destroyer did not kill the firstborn of the houses of Israel. The people of Israel joyfully celebrated the event that God killed the firstborn of Egypt and gave deliverance to Israel. This is the festival of the Pasch. For the celebration of the Pasch, they used to eat the burnt flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread together with bitter leaves and drank wine reciting psalms.

On the feast of the Pasch of the Jews, Jesus celebrated the Pasch with his twelve apostles. On the night of the Pasch, Jesus took bread, blessed, broke and gave to his apostles and said: **"This is my body. Take this and eat"**. Then he took the cup filled with wine and after saying thanks, gave them and said: **"This is my blood poured out for remission of sins. Take and drink"** (Matthew 26:26-30). **"Do this in remembrance of me"**, so saying he instituted the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus took bread, broke and gave as his body and wine as his blood as symbol of his offering himself as sacrifice on the cross. Jesus broke the bread and gave, as the symbol of breaking his body for mankind. He gave

wine, as symbol of shedding his blood for the salvation of man. The body and blood of Jesus of the Holy Qurbano signify the total self-oblation. Shedding of blood is inevitable in every sacrifice. The blood is separated from body in sacrifice. Jesus became sacrifice through his death on the cross. His body and blood were separated. Jesus was signifying his death on the cross at the Pasch. He taught that the Holy Qurbano is sacrifice through giving the bread as his body and the wine

as his blood. The sacrifice of the Holy Qurbano was the thanksgiving Jesus offered to God, the Father. In this sacrifice, the thing offered and the priest, is Jesus himself. This sacrifice is the greatest manifestation of his love for mankind.

"Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). According to this command, the bread and wine, which the priest blesses and sanctifies, are changed into the body and blood of Jesus. We get eternal life through receiving the body and blood of Jesus. The Holy Qurbano is the sacrament instituted for the salvation and eternal life of the whole mankind. Jesus gave the power to the Church to continue this sacrifice till the end of the world. Accordingly, this offering of the sacrifice is continued in the Church even today.



The creation of the universe, the history of Israel through the calling of Abraham, the birth of Jesus, the baptism of Jesus, the public life, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Second Coming; all these are commemorated and celebrated in the Holy Qurbono.

Holy Qurbono, in Christian Life

The Holy Qurbono is the centre and crown of the Christian life. For, it is the re-enactment of the mysteries of salvation from the creation of the universe up to the second coming of Jesus. The Church sees the Holy Qurbono as 'the Sacrament of Sacraments'. All other Sacraments lead to this Sacrament. We offer ourselves as sacrifice together with Jesus through participating in this holy sacrifice. Hence this is the sacrifice of the Church. In each sacrifice we remember the miraculous things, God has done to us through Jesus Christ. We, who partake of the same bread and drink from the same cup, become one body in Jesus. The experience of the Holy Eucharist is the experience of unity and solidarity. The Holy Qurbono is the divine banquet, which joins the community of men in love and unity.

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Worship

The second Sunday of the Liturgical Year is known as 'Hudos Eetho'. The meaning of this word is 'the renovation of the Church'. On that day, in the hymn sung after the Gospel reading, the sanctity of the church and the perfect sanctity of the sanctuary are specially remembered.

(Parisudhalayamullil...)

"It is fire, the sanctuary
Indeed fire, the Sacrifice
Fire of course encircles it
Yes, it is served by fire.
Beware you, priests of God,
Am Halleluiah, eu Halleluiah
Lest the fire consume you".

Life Witness

The Holy Qurbono is the centre of Christian life. Let us express our love and thanksgiving towards God by participating devoutly in the Holy Qurbono.

Memorise

"Offer to God a sacrifice of
thanksgiving, and pay your vows
to the Most High".
(Psalm 50:14)

Questions

1. Which are the main offerings of sacrifices in the Old Testament?
2. Why did the people of Israel celebrate the Pasch?
3. How did Jesus celebrate the Pasch with the apostles?
4. Of what symbol did Jesus break and give the bread and pour and give the wine?
5. What is the reason why the sacrifice of Jesus is said to be the expression of his great love for mankind?
6. How did the Church understand the command of Jesus: "Do this in memory of me"?
7. What is the reason why the Holy Qurbono is said to be the centre and crown of Christian life?

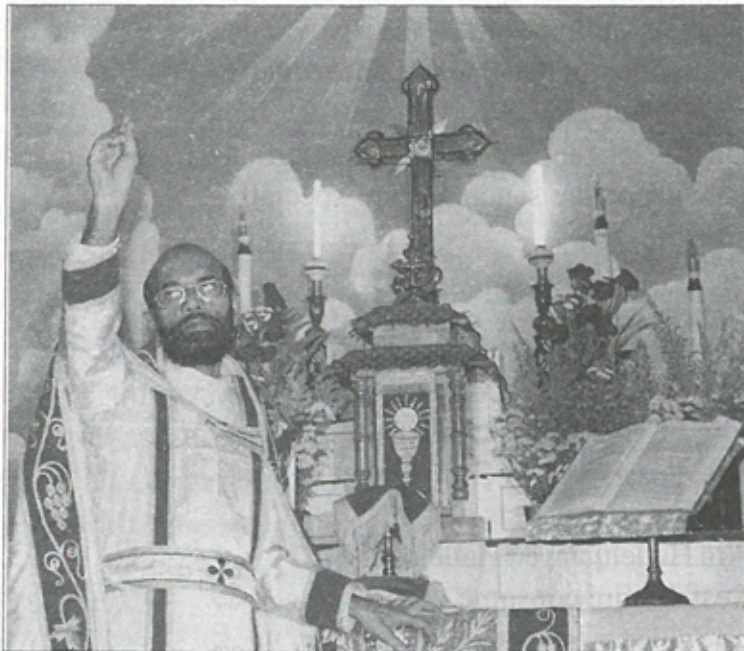
THE STRUCTURE OF HOLY QURBONO

There are two parts for the Holy Qurbono according to the order of the liturgy of the Malankara Catholic Church. The first part is the secret Preparatory Service and the second part, the Public Service. The first part is called in Syriac 'Thuyobo', literally Service of Preparation. The public service is divided into two parts. These two parts are known as the Service of the Catechumens and the Service of the Faithful or Anaphora.

1. Preparatory Service

All the works of salvation of God, from the creation of the universe to the second coming of Christ are remembered in the Holy Qurbono. The facts that God created the universe, that he created man, that he called Abraham and led Israel in the Old Testament, are all remembered in the first service.

At the beginning of the morning prayers, when the candle is lit and the veil is drawn open, it signifies the creation of the universe, the beginning of the divine revelation. When the priest enters the sanctuary after the morning prayers and requests the prayers of the faithful, the veil is drawn across the door of the sanctuary. This signifies the creation of man and his first sin.



This shows the separation of man from God. The service of the preparation consists of prayers of penitence and the preparation of the bread and wine on the Altar (*thronos*). The service of preparation is divided into two: the Service of Melchizedek and the Service of Aaron.

1.1. Service of Melchizedek

The Service of Melchizedek is the preparation of bread and wine on the *thronos*. Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, received Abraham, carrying bread and wine. This event is remembered here (Genesis 14:18). Melchizedek represents the priesthood of Christ.

1.2. Service of Aaron

Aaron, the chief priest of the Old Testament, is another representative of Christ. Remembering the priestly service and incensing of Aaron, the priest puts on the sacred vestments and incenses the offering in the Holy Qurbono. The history from Aaron up to that of Christ is remembered here.

2. Public Service

2.1. Preparatory Service or The Service of the Catechumens

The priest makes a procession around the *thronos*, incensing while the people sing the praises of the Incarnate Lord. The intercession of Mary, the blessed Mother and John the Baptist is invoked in this prayer. The incensing of the priest signifies the worship of the shepherds and the wise men to child Jesus at Bethlehem. Then, the priest says the Trisagion - 'Holy are you O God' and proclaims the divinity and death of Jesus on the cross.

Scripture Readings

At this time, the public life of Jesus and his teachings are commemorated. There are three Readings from the New Testament in the Holy Qurbono. There is the practice of reading four lessons from the Old Testament during the preparatory service.

Prayers for the Forgiveness of Sin

The priest incenses and prays at this time for the atonement of sins. These are the prayers said in order to receive remission of debts and

absolution for sins from God, before entering into the important part of the Holy Qurbono.

Blessing of the Censor

The blessing of the censor is done, glorifying the Trinity. The blessing of the censor in the name of the Holy Trinity is done in order to signify that the prayer of the Church is acceptable to the Triune God, like the sweet-smelling incense. Next, the Creed is recited. This is the time of authentically proclaiming the faith of the Church. During the creed, the priest washes hands, entreates peace, kneels down before the *thronos* and prays. He washes hands as part of the spiritual preparation. This also signifies, the Lord washing the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper.

2.2. Anaphora or the Service of the Faithful

The meaning of the Greek word 'Anaphora' is 'offertory'. This is the most important part of the Holy Qurbono. This is said to be the service of the faithful, because only the faithful, who have received baptism, take part in this service.

Prayer of Peace (Kiss of Peace)

The kiss of peace is given in accordance with the command of the Lord that one should be reconciled with God and one's brethren before offering sacrifice (Matthew 5:23, 6:12). The priest says the prayer of blessing over the people, who stand with bowed heads after the prayer for peace. Then, he raises the white veil and flutters it. Through the raising of the veil, it is signified, that heaven is opened and the divine mysteries are revealed on earth through the Holy Qurbono. Then the celebrant blesses the people and invites their attention to the heavens, opened.

Praise of the Angels

On this occasion when heaven is opened symbolically, those in heaven and on earth, angels and men together glorify God. The people say this prayer: 'Heaven and earth are full of your glory...' This prayer is based on Isaiah 6:3.

Institution of the Holy Qurbono

At this time, we remember, Jesus taking bread and wine and changing them into his body and blood and giving them to his apostles, in the background of the Pasch. The priest blesses the bread and wine with the sign of the cross and consecrates them, remembering the Last Supper of Jesus.

Observance of the Remembrance

Jesus commanded at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me". According to this command, we remember here the death, burial, resurrection and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Invocation of the Holy Spirit

It is the Holy Spirit, who completes everything. Hence, this prayer is to invite the Holy Spirit (*Rooho*) to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.

Intercessory Prayer

We are submitting our petitions at this time to God, when the sacred body and blood of our Lord are present on the altar. This prayer is known as '*Thubden*' (again). There are altogether eighteen prayers in the intercessory prayer; six said loudly by the deacon and twelve said by the priest, six secretly and six loudly respectively. The first three prayers, said by the deacon are for the living and the other three are for the dead.

Service of Fraction

In this service the priest behind the sanctuary veil breaks the bread and mixes the blood with the body. Here, the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus are commemorated. The breaking of the body of Christ on Calvary is signified through the breaking of the bread. The death of Jesus and his resurrection are remembered.

Lord's Prayer

This is the time when we, who have become the children of God through the death and resurrection of the Lord, address God with courage of the

soul, "Our Father in heaven" and pray. This is the prayer that our Lord had taught us.

Celebration of the Sacred Body and Blood (Elevation)

We commemorate the Holy Trinity when the priest takes chalice and paten in his hands and celebrates the sacred body and blood. When the priest raises the sacred body and blood in his hands and celebrates, we see Jesus, the High Priest, offering himself as sacrifice before the presence of the Father. Then, we specially remember the holy Mother of God, the saints and the departed ones and entreat their intercession and pray. At this time, covering with the veil, preparations are made for the procession carrying the sacred body and blood. The covering with the veil signifies the ascension of Jesus and its opening signifies the second coming of Jesus.

Reception of the Sacred Body and Blood and Prayer of Thanksgiving

The coming of the priest to the western side carrying in his hands the sacred body and blood commemorates the glorious second coming of Jesus. Each Holy Communion is the foretaste of the eternal banquet together with Jesus. On this occasion, we offer thanks to the Lord, the Son and to God the Father for granting us grace to receive the sacred body and blood.

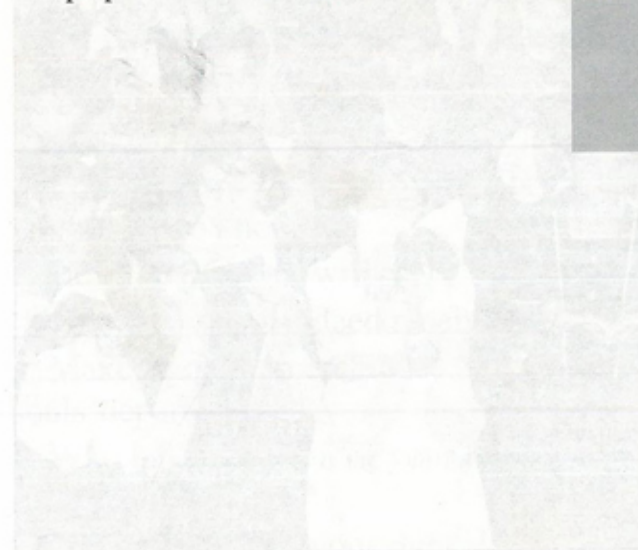
Final Blessing

The priest dedicates the people to the Holy Trinity, by giving the Holy Eucharist, the viaticum (food for journey). He bids them good-bye by blessing the people in the name of the Holy Trinity, and asking for their prayers.



Life Witness

Holy Qurbono, the Sacrament of Sacraments, is the centre of Christian life. The faithful associate with the Holy Trinity through receiving the sacred body and blood of Jesus. Hence, let us take part in the Holy Qurbono with preparation and fearful devotion.



Memorise

"When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift".

(Matthew 5:23)

Questions

- 1 What is the Service of Preparation? Describe.
- 2 What is remembered in the Preparatory Service?
- 3 Why is the kiss of peace given?
- 4 What is the meaning of the Greek word Anaphora? Why is it said to be the service of the faithful?
- 5 What is remembered in the institution of Holy Eucharist?
- 6 What all things are remembered in the service of Fraction?
- 7 Describe the structure of Holy Qurbono.



THE HYMNS OF HOLY QURBONO

Music gives joy to human mind. Music can raise human mind to the presence of God and can bring divine grace down to men. The words of St. Augustine 'he who sings prays twice' show the importance of liturgical hymns. Music has great importance in the Malankara liturgy. Our liturgy is musical. The various hymns of the Malankara Qurbono are introduced through this lesson.



1. (Velivu niranjoreeso...)

"In your light we see the light Jesus full of light

You are the true light, which enlightens all creation

Let your light enlighten us

Heavenly Father's own splendour.

Pure and holy one, who dwells in mansions of light

Keep us free from evil thoughts, hard tribulations;

This hymn is sung at the service of the preparation of the Holy Qurbono. We can summarize the meaning of the hymn thus:

Jesus, full of light, we see light by your light. You are the basic light of all. O Lord Messiah, the ray of the Father, enlighten us by your light.

Holy treasure, who dwells on light, remove all temptations and evil thoughts from us. Help us to do

Grant us purity of mind

So that we may do right deeds.

Just as Abel's lamb and Noah's gifts pleased your will

And you took delight in Abraham's sacrifice;

Accept our prayers and fast

And graciously answer us.

Come and entreat sinners for remission of sins

For the Lord opens his door for all those who knock;

He, who petitions will get,

And who seeks indeed receives.

Make a good remembrance of the souls departed

Who have partaken of your body and your blood;

Let them stand at your right side

On that day your glory dawns".

2. (Bhoovila-sesham...)

"Chosen apostles

Went into the four quarters of this entire earth

And among gentiles

Preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour;

Blessed are those, who embrace

This Gospel, for they shall

Inherit heaven's kingdom".

good deeds with purity of conscience.

Abel offered sacrifice of the lamb to you. Noah offered sacrifice to you after he had landed from the ark. Abraham offered sacrifice to you (Genesis 4:4, 8:20, 22:9-13). O Lord, who received these sacrifices, receive our fast and prayers we offer you and guard and preserve us.

Sinners, come and entreat for remission of sins. The Lord will open the door of his mercy to all those who knock at his door, who entreat will get and who seeks will find (Matthew 7:7-9).

O Lord, make good remembrance of the departed, who received your precious body and blood and were pleasing to you. Let them stand on your right side at your second coming. (John 6:35-58).

This is the hymn sung before the first reading from the New Testament. The apostles having been inspired by the Holy Spirit set out amidst all peoples to preach the Gospel. They preached the Gospel up to the frontiers of the earth. They proclaimed that those who receive the Gospel would inherit the bliss of heaven (Mark 16:15-20, Acts of the Apostles 2:1-41).

3. (Paulos sleeha...)

"Preaching of Paul, holy apostle, I heard

If someone shall teach anything
Other than what I have taught you
Though he be heaven's messenger
Accursed shall in heaven be.

Diverse doctrines spread on earth
Many are those who embrace them;
Who stands firm in God's teachings,
He shall ever be called blessed".

4. (Daiva Jenanee...)

"O Mother of God
Blessed of virgins
We commemorate you
With sweet fragrance forever;
By your prayers O Mother
All-pervading peace on earth
Good will in his Holy Church
Let them reign, we plead unto you".

5. (Anpudayone nin vathil...)

"O gracious Lord, at your door
Our supplications knock
Needy ones, we beg of you
Despise not us, your servants.
Chastise us in your mercy
And let your wrath be appeased
Open the door of your mercy
Let our prayers be answered.

This is the hymn sung before the reading from the Epistles of St. Paul. "I heard St. Paul, the apostle, advising thus: If some one shall teach any thing other than the Gospel, we have taught you, even if he be a messenger from heaven, he shall incur the curse of the Church. Different kinds of false doctrine spread on earth. But the one who follows the right doctrine till the end will be blessed" (Galatians 1:8).

O Virgin, Mother of God, May you be remembered with sweet-smelling incense. O Mother, let there be tranquillity in the whole world and peace in the holy Church through your intercession.

This hymn is sung during the Service of the Fraction of the bread. 'The community of faithful confess their sins and entreat God's mercy along with the priest. They glorify God for being made worthy of this gift. Merciful Lord, behold! These servants knock at your door. Despise not the servants, who plead unto you. Chastise us in your mercy and

Lord, for your help, we implore
Give us your help, your servants
O Good One, in your mercy
Grant us our petitions.
In your immense mercy, Lord
Have pity on us, servants
You, who are full of goodness,
Recall not our transgressions".

6. (Nam Daiva suthanmaravan...)

"That we become God's children
Those who taught us during life
We shall recall to our minds;
In your heavenly home O Lord
Give them eternal bliss with
Your holy and blessed ones".

7. (Nadha krupa...)

"O Lord, have mercy on us
Answer and shed your mercy
Glory to you, have mercy
Let your grace be upon us –
Halleluiah".

8. (Sthuthi Daivathinnyarathil..)

"Glory to God in the highest
To your Mother, exaltation
Crown of glory to the martyrs
And grace on the departed –
Halleluiah".

protect us. Open the door, having heard this prayer and sanction our petitions. Lord, behold your servants who call you, pleading help from you. O Good One, mercifully grant our petitions. You, who are full of goodness, forget our evil deeds in your kindness.

'We ought to remember the Fathers, who, during their life, have taught us to become the children of God, in our prayers and in the Holy Qurbano. God will console them with the Just and the Saints. Lord, bless us with compassion'.

'Lord, have mercy on us in your tender love. Answer our prayers and have mercy on us. Glory to you; have mercy on us. Let there be your grace upon us'.

'Let there be glory to God in heaven; exaltation to his Mother, glorious crown to the martyrs and grace upon the departed'.



9. (Bhoovake namikkum...)

"The whole world behold,
worships you

Every tongue sings praise to you
You are the hope of the departed
And you are their resurrection –
Halleluiah".

10. (Kazhchayithil...)

"Let your Holy Will be pleased
O Lord, in this sacrifice
May the dead be justified
And vigilant angels rejoice".

11. (Agnimayanmar...)

"Gazing at Him fiery angels do
stand trembling

And you see him under the
species of bread and wine;

Angels clothed in lightning tremble
looking at Him

And man's face shines when he
takes Him most brilliantly.

Mysteries of the Son of God are
fire in heaven above

Prophet Isaiah saw Him and bears
witness to us;

These are the mysteries of divinity
and they are served

Adam's children are nourished by
them on this altar.

Like chariots of Cherubs, is firm
this sanctuary

'Lord, all the inhabitants of the
earth prostrate before you. Every
tongue shall glorify you. You are the
hope of those who are buried. You
are the only one, who resurrects
them. Glory be to you O God'
(Philippians 2:10-11).

'May this Qurbano be pleasing to
you. Let those who died in faith be
justified and the vigilant angels
rejoice'.

'The fiery angels dread with fear
at the sight of God. But, you see that
God in the form of bread and wine
on the holy *Thronos*. The angels,
who are clothed in lightning, are burnt
as they look at God. But, the face of
men, who eat that God (Son of
God), shines brilliantly. Isaiah, who
has seen the mystery of the fiery
angels among the heavenly armies,
bears witness to the people thus: The
Messiah, the mystery, who dwells in
the bosom of God, is divided and
given to the children of Adam here
on the *Thronos*. This sanctuary is
firmly built like the chariot, which the
angels carry. The heavenly armies go

And the heavenly armies are there
standing around;

The Body of the Son of God is
on this Table

Behold! Adam's children hold in
hands and celebrate.

The priest of God is dressed in
vestments and devoutly

Gives Christ's Body and his
Blood to those, who ask for'

If envy can exist among heavenly
beings

Indeed they have envy for the
children of men".

12. (Ente kadangale sesham...)

"Blot out all my debts, O Lord
By your hyssop of mercy
And cleanse me from all my sins
Making holy through your grace.

O Saviour, by celebrating
Your saving sacred mysteries
Make me worthy for a share
Of those made holy by them.
O Lord in your eternal
Kingdom, which is the heaven
I shall indeed serve you there
Now, always and forever.

Unceasing praise to you, Lord
Grace on us on judgment day
Kindness of the Supreme Judge
May fall on me, a culprit.
O merciful Lord most dear
Shower your mercy upon me

in procession around it. The children
of men, in their hands carry and
celebrate the body of the Son of
God on this *Thronos* (altar). Here,
the priest, like one wearing silk, gives
the Holy Eucharist to those who ask
for it. If envy could exist among
heavenly beings, the Cherubs will
surely feel envy to the children of
men'.

This is the hymn, the people sing
when the priest cleanses the sacred
vessels and when he bids good-bye
to the altar.

'By your Grace, let all my debts
be blotted out. Let me be made equal
to your Saints, since your mysteries
are celebrated. Grant me the blessing
to serve you in heaven. Have
compassion on this sinner on the Day
of Judgment. O merciful Lord, have
mercy on me also. Shower your
mercy upon these priest and servers,
who offered this sacrifice'. Next, the
departed ones are remembered.





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Behold! I am, your servant
Let your mercy fall on me.
Upon this your priest O Lord
Who offered this sacrifice
And upon us, your servers
Shower your mercy, we pray, Lord”.



Life Witness

When we understand the meaning of the hymns of the Holy Qurbano and sing devoutly, that will become a source of more divine blessing. Let us sing the hymns of worship devoutly.

Memorise

“As you sing psalms and hymns
and spiritual songs among
yourselves, singing and making
melody to the Lord in your hearts”.
(Ephesians 5:19)

Questions

- 1 What is the meaning of the hymn “In your light we see the light Jesus...”?
- 2 What is proclaimed in the hymn, ‘Chosen apostles...’?
- 3 What is the meaning of the hymn, which begins, ‘Preaching of Paul...’?
- 4 What do we entreat God in the hymn, ‘O gracious Lord at your door’?
- 5 What is the meaning of the hymn, ‘Gazing at Him, fiery angels...’?

HOUSE BLESSING

The word ‘Sacrament’ originates from the Syriac word *Qadesh*. The meaning of the word sacrament is ‘to make holy’. Sacraments are visible signs, which signify and produce what they signify. There are seven Sacraments in the Church. Besides the Sacraments, there are also the Sacramentals in the Church. ‘The church blessing’ and ‘the house blessing’ belong to the latter group.



Through the church blessing a place is dedicated and is sanctified for divine worship. Through the house blessing, a house is sanctified and prayers are said so that the tranquillity and peace of God may remain there.

Service of House Blessing

The house and its premises should be kept clean for the service. The following preparations are to be made for the service: a cross on a table, with two lighted candles on either side of it, water in a vessel for blessing, kept in front of the cross and a sprinkler. The priest, wearing the black robe and stole (*hymnico*), starts the introductory prayer of the service of house blessing.

Introductory Prayer

In the introductory prayer, the priest entreats that the tranquillity and peace of the Lord might dwell in the house and that those who dwell in it might be

filled with every kind of goodness and prosperity. It is also prayed for that they might please God throughout their life in matters private and public and that their departed ones might be granted good remembrance and consolation.

Kukkilion

After the introductory prayer, the *Kukkilion* is sung:

(Ennalmavine ningaluyarthunnen...)

"Lord, I raise my soul to you - Halleluiah o Halleluiah

Let me not be confounded, my refuge.

Let not my enemies exult over me -Hall...o Hall...

And let not your devotees be - put to shame.

The unjust shall be put to shame -Hall...o Hall...

Make me know your ways, O my Lord.

For you, I wait all day long - Hall... o Hall...

Lead me in your truth - and teach me".

This psalm is the prayer, which calls and entreats the Lord, who guides the path. 'O Lord, to you I lift up my soul. Since I trusted in you, do not let me be put to shame. Lord, show me your paths and teach me in your truth' (Psalm 25:1-15). This is what is prayed in this *Kukkilion*.

Ekbo

One of the characteristic features of the Malankara liturgy is that the *Ekbo*, follows the *Kukkilion*.

(Manuja priya nee...)

"Lover of mankind, you saved the

Prophet Jonah from the sea;

Save me also, by your grace,

Who is in the sea of debts. Staumen..."

This is the prayer for salvation. We pray here, 'O God, lover of men, just as you saved Prophet Jonah from the sea (Jonah 2:10), save me also in your grace, from my manifold injustices'.

Proemion, Sedro

The priest prays that the house may be blessed through his intercession and that prosperity might come upon all those who have gathered there.

The basic unit of the community is the family. Every Church community is composed of several families. Just as divine grace flows from the Church to her children, so also, in order that the divine grace might flow from families to the members of families, we pray at the time of the house blessing for the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. As a result of which, the holiness and purity of the Church subsist in the family. At this juncture, the hymn 'O gracious Lord at your door' is sung.

Reading of the Gospel

Generally the Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 19:1-10 is read at the time of house blessing. The house of Zacchaeus is one among the few houses Jesus visited during his public life. Zacchaeus had true conversion in the presence of Jesus. Through that the house of Zacchaeus got salvation. This Gospel passage reminds us that our house too gets that salvation when Jesus comes and dwells in it.

Supplication of Mar Jacob

The petition of Mar Jacob is sung after the reading of the Gospel. Mar Jacob of Edessa has written this hymn.

(Nadha ninnude ardrata niryum...)

"Kindly open your merciful door to me Lord

Having heard these petitions and shower mercy on us.

The Lord takes pleasure in those prayers said secretly

And the Just did not reach glory with loud cries and shouts.

Moses paved a path in the sea through his prayers

Men of Israel crossed it safely, while Pharaoh was drowned.

Having heard his prayers, God had pitied David

And he pardoned him and gave him prophetic power.

From the burning furnace did the children seek God

And he saved them without any harm from fiery dungeon.

Those that frighten me O Lord, in life are three things

They are Death and Throne of Judgment, and the Fire of hell".

This prayer teaches us how to pray. Here, we remember that through secret prayers, the Just reached the heights and that as a result of the prayer

of Moses, the sea was divided and God protected the people of Israel. God accepted the repentance of David and through their prayers God protected Hannaniah and his companions from the furnace of fire. In this prayer, the Old Testament portions are remembered.

Blessing

After the special prayers, each room in the house is blessed in the name of the Holy Trinity with the holy water, making the sign of the cross on the doors.

We can see Yahweh, who protects the houses of Israel, in the Old Testament. The houses of Israel were protected at the time of the Pasch by marking the lintels with the blood of the tender lamb (Exodus 12:23-26). Similarly, God promises protection and blessing even today at the time of the house blessing. When the priest blesses water in the name of the Holy Trinity and sprinkles on the lintels and on the community, he ensures the protection from diabolical assaults and imparts divine blessing.

After the blessing, the *Kukkilion* of the Mother of God and of the Saints is sung; seeking their intercession.

Supplication of Mar Ephrem

Following the *Kukkilion*, the hymn composed by the Eastern Father, Mar Ephrem is sung:

(Matha kadeesanmar than...)

“God, grant grace through the prayers

Of Mary and all the Saints

Bless this house and its inmates

In your ardent love for us”.

Hoothomo (Concluding Prayer)

Then God is thanked for all his blessings. The priest blesses all those who have participated in the service, in the name of the Holy Trinity. Here ends the House Blessing.

The whole house is blessed in the name of the Holy Trinity through the house blessing. But, over and above that, the sanctification of the inmates of the house takes place in this service. By dedicating the family through the prayers, the protection of Jesus is requested for and the control of the house is entrusted in the hands of the Lord. Thus, the house is made holy, those, who dwell there, are blessed, and the house becomes the dwelling place of God.

Life Witness

The house blessing is the time of God's blessing. Let us devoutly take part in this service, where God specially blesses our house.

Memorise

“Today salvation has come
to this house”.
(Luke 19:9)



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Questions

1. What is Sacrament? What is the meaning of the word?
2. What is the importance of house blessing? What preparations are necessary for this?
3. What is the Gospel passage read in the service of house blessing?
4. Which tradition of the Old Testament do we follow in house blessing?

the dead body is buried. At the end, the prayer of incensing for the dead is said. Then the priest gives the final blessing.

We remember in these prayers that the earthly life is a temporary one and that death is a journey from here. The faithful pray that the soul that sets out on the journey from here might be saved from judgment of punishment on the day of resurrection. The Messiah, through his death on the cross, has destroyed the dominion of death, which began with Adam. A great faith that the resurrection of the dead shall take place with the second coming of the Messiah is contained in these prayers. The whole community prays that God might show mercy on the faithful departed, who have received the unseen divine grace through receiving the Sacraments. The funeral service gives to all a hope that human life does not end with death and that there is a life after death.

Memorial Service in the Order of the Malankara Liturgy

The tradition of recalling the faithful departed and praying for them is seen in all the services of the Malankara liturgy. This is especially true of the Holy Qurbano. In the secret prayers at the beginning of the Holy Qurbano, all who have pleased God from Adam till date, are remembered. In several parts of the Holy Qurbano, the departed ones are remembered and prayed for.

These prayers impart great faith that we have to prepare while we live in this world for the life eternal and that there is a life with God after death. When the departed ones are remembered and prayers said for them, the priest sings the *Kukkilion* "The father pities his children..."



Kukkilion of the Departed

(Makkalilappan...)

"The father pities his children –
Halleluiah
Likewise God, his devotees.
Man's life, like grass, withers away
– Halleluiah
And like lilies, it blossoms.
Barekmor.

(Sharanathale...)

Trusting in your grace O Lord,
Your servants, who departed;
Let them be raised by your call
To paradise from their graves.
Staumen kalos...

(Uyirekunnon raja...)

The king, who is to give life
Descended from heaven above
And imparts life
To all those who departed;
And each one from his grave
Rises up with a new life
Giving praises
To him, who vivifies. Barekmor...
'He who eats my Body
And who drinks my precious Blood
Never shall I
Let him go to Sheol;
For I came there and died
So that he might live forever'
Glory to the saying of our Saviour.
Moriyo...

'Just as the father shows
compassion to his children, God also
will show mercy to his devotees.
Man's life is like the grass of the field.
And it is like the flower shrub and
temporary' (Psalm 103:13-16).

This *Ekbo* means: 'Lord, you call
your servants, who departed in your
hope, with life-giving voice, raise
them to life from their graves and
make them enter paradise'.

This hymn means: 'the life-giving
king (the Lord Messiah), came down
from heaven and gives life to the
deceased'.

'The Lord will not abandon to
Sheol, those who have eaten his body
and drunk his blood. Glory be to the
Lord who said that he had come on
earth and died for them in order that
they might live forever' (John 6:51).

Through this hymn we entreat:
'Lord, the promise you gave to the
thief at your right hand side, while
you were hanging on the cross, grant
the same to all those who lived and
departed as worshippers of the Holy
Trinity'.

(Maramathinuyire...)

On the cross O Gracious Lord
Your boon, which the good thief got
Grant it to the one, who praised you,
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

Life Witness

It is our duty to remember and pray for the departed. Let us remember and pray for the deceased in our daily prayers and holy sacrifices.

The funeral services and the memorial prayers remind us of one thing; that is, our life on earth should be a preparation for the life after death. God makes the final judgement in accordance with our works here. Hence let us live virtuously. Let us pray for the departed.

Memorise

“I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even
though they die; will live”.

(John 11:25)



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Questions

1. Mention two instances in the Old Testament where the dead were buried.
2. Why is the dead body laid with its head on the Western side?
3. “Human life does not end with death”, what does it mean?
4. Which is the *Kukkilion* that remembers the deceased in the Holy Qurbano? Explain its meaning.

FAST AND ABSTINENCE



The word ‘Fast’ means to observe a vow, to keep vigil or to sit close by. We can understand fast as observing the vow of meagre food or to lead a disciplined life. To fast has the grades of meaning such as, to dwell with God or to stay close to him.

Fast and abstinence are religious practices, we see in all religions. All religions consider fast and abstinence as means to acquire spiritual strength. By fast and abstinence, we aim at an order of life with disciplined thoughts of God, taking restricted food. The vows and works of austerity, which we see in the Indian tradition, are the basic works for the spiritual growth of a person. A person gains spiritual strength through fast and abstinence.

Fast and abstinence are inevitable factors of Christian life. The Christian life is a pilgrimage in view of heaven. We need spiritual strength in this journey to encounter evil forces. We receive strength for each step towards

the kingdom of heaven through fast and abstinence. In the spiritual pilgrimage, the children of the Church are strengthened by fast and abstinence.

Fast and Abstinence in the Holy Scripture

We can see in the Old Testament that Moses fasted for forty days in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 9:11). So also, we read in the Old Testament that Jonah fasted and the people of Nineveh wore sackcloth, put on ash and observed fast. We see in the New Testament that our Lord observed fast for forty days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:1-2). Jesus taught that the spiritual foes would not retract except through fast and abstinence. Similarly Jesus instructed that we also should observe fast and abstinence (Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:20, Matthew 17:21). Fast and abstinence are the spiritual arms Jesus gave us to defeat the evil forces of the world.

The ancient Christian community was one, which fasted and prayed (Acts of the Apostles 13:2, 14:23, 2 Corinthians 6:5, 11:27). St. Paul, the apostle regards abstinence as an ideal means for the control of the mind (1 Corinthians 9:27, Galatians 5:24).

Fast and Abstinence in the Church

The Church considers 'the Season of Fast' as the period of real renovation of the children of the Church. From the very early age, there was in vogue in the Church, fast and abstinence. There is no abstinence from food during the days from the feast of Resurrection to that of Pentecost and on Saturdays and Sundays and on Feast days. The Church had promoted fast on other days.

The Important Seasons of Fast in the Malankara Church

The Fifty Days' Fast, the Twenty-five Days' Fast and Three Days' Fast are compulsory fasts to be observed in the Malankara Church. The others, though not compulsory, the faithful, in general, used to observe for spiritual advancement.

1. Fifty Days' Fast or the Big Fast

The Big Fast is the commemoration of the forty days' fast of Moses in the wilderness, the forty years' of journey of the Israelites in the wilderness

and the forty days' fast of the Lord. The custom of observing forty days' fast for a period of 7 weeks came into practice in the Syrian Church. That is how the habit of observing fifty days' fast originated. This fast is being observed in preparation for the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. It is at the end of this fast that we observe the Passion Week.

2. Twenty-five Days' Fast (December 1-25)

The 25 days' fast originated in the 9th Century in preparation for the feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ (Christmas). The observance of this fast helps us, through receiving Jesus into our hearts, to grow in unity with God.

3. The Three Days' Fast

This started in Persia by the end of the 4th Century. The observance of this fast helps the children of the Church to come close to the experience of conversion like the people of Nineveh. This is observed on three full days i.e., on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 18 days prior to the beginning of the fifty days' fast.

4. Thirteen Days' Fast (The Apostles' Fast) (June 16-29)

The Church observes the Apostles' Fast in connection with the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. The aim of this fast is to increase the spirit of apostolate like that of the apostles.

5. The Fifteen Days' Fast (Soonoyo) (August 1-15)

This is observed in preparation for the feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God. It is observed so that the children of the Church also might reach heaven like the Mother of God.

6. The Eight Days' Fast (September 1-8)

This fast is observed as a pious exercise in preparation for the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God. The children of the Church observe this fast, seeking the intercession of the Holy Mother, for their particular intentions.

Fast and Abstinence in the Season of Fast

In the early Church, the people of God used to abstain from food on days excepting Sundays. Later on they reduced the practice to Fridays

only. The Church commands to fast on all Fridays of Lent excepting the 40th Friday. So also the Church instructs to observe fast on the Monday of reconciliation, the beginning of Lent and on Tuesday of the Three Days' Fast. The general instructions prescribe that we should abstain from one meal on fast-days. Children, old people, the sick, those engaged in hard work, and those who are in the family way are exempted from fasting. The Church instructs to observe fast for at least one hour before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Abstinence

To abstain from meat on all Fridays, and during the seasons of Fifty Days' fast, Twenty-five Days' Fast, and Three Days' Fast, is the teaching of the Church. But there is no abstinence on Fridays during the 18 days after the Three Days' Fast till the beginning of the Fifty Days' Fast and the period of fifty days after Easter till Pentecost.

The law of the Church is that during the Three Days' Fast, on the Monday of the beginning of Lent (Reconciliation), on all Fridays of Lent and on all days from the 40th Friday till Easter, the faithful should abstain from fish and egg and on Good Friday, besides the things mentioned above, milk and milk products also are to be abstained from. There is no abstinence on the closing date of the season of fast, whatever the day be.

Fast in My Life

All of us have the call to reach perfection of the heavenly Father (Matthew 5:48). We will be able to achieve it only through the sanctification of life. We ought to see fast as a means that leads men to conversion, which is helpful for this sanctification. The indivisible parts of Fast are abstinence, prayer and almsgiving. The prayers of the Malankara Church induce us to these:

(Karthave krupa cheyyaname...)

"Observe a forty days' fast

And feed those, who have no food

You shall pray seven times a day

Like David, son of Jesse".

(Soutoro)



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Worship

The hymn sung after the reading of the Gospel in Holy Qurbano, invites us to be perfect in the Messiah, being zealous in the observance of Fast:

(Yajamanan varumannerath...)

"Be zealous in the weapon of observing the fast

Those, who died in the Messiah, won the crown by this;

By this Moses shone on the mountain

The Lord has also, won over Satan

Prophet Elijah has soared up in chariot by this

Martyrs as well as the Just became glorious by this;

Halleluiah o Halleluiah".

Life Witness

In the modern world, which is immersed in materialism and licentiousness, the greatest means for approaching the presence of God is fast and prayer. We avoid the worldly evils and grow in virtues by obtaining conversion and spiritual renovation through fast. Thus, let us try to be good witnesses to the Christian life.

Memorise

"It is written, one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".

(Matthew 4:4)

Questions

1. What is meant by fast and abstinence?
2. Explain the importance of observing fast from the Holy Scripture.
3. Which are the main fasts in the Church? Explain the importance and season of each.
4. What does the Church teach regarding the observance of fast and abstinence?
5. Do you think that fast and abstinence are necessary for the spiritual renovation of life? Are you prepared to do so?

THE ARRIVAL OF THOMAS, THE APOSTLE

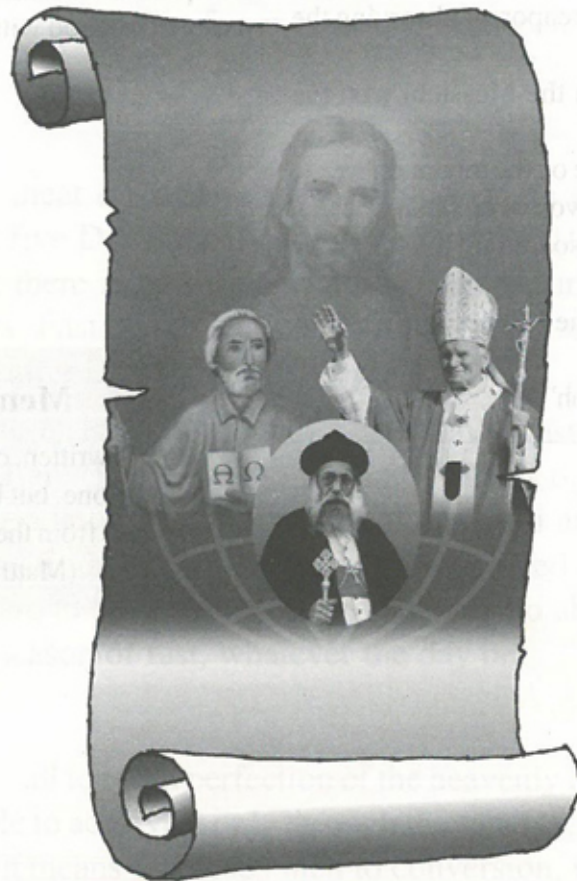
Jesus called the disciples to share in his mission. From them he selected specially twelve. They are the twelve apostles. After his death and resurrection, Jesus spoke to his apostles: **“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation...”** (Mark 16:15-18, Matthew 28:18-20). Thus, the apostles went into the four quarters of the world, preaching the Gospel. Thomas, the apostle was one among the twelve. He came over to India to preach the Gospel. So he is known as the apostle of India.

Life History of St. Thomas, the Apostle

Thomas, the apostle, was from Galilee of Palestine. Fishing was his hereditary occupation (John 21:1-3). He heard the call of Jesus and followed him. Thus he became the disciple of Jesus. The apostle was known as Thomas, which means ‘twin’. The Greek word of the name Thomas is Twin (Didimus) (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts of the Apostles 1:13). When Peter went for fishing, Thomas also was among those who went with him (John 21:1-4). There are several allusions about the apostle in the Gospel according to St. John (John 11:6, 14:5, 20:28-29). We can see in



PART - III



CHURCH HISTORY



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some old manuscripts that the apostle is known as Thomas and Judah Thomas.

Proclamation of the Gospel

There is the tradition that Thomas, the apostle preached the Gospel in several places. The apostle proclaimed the Gospel in places such as Edessa, Mesopotamia, Persia, Media, Hirkania and Bactria.

It was in India that he mainly did his apostolic work. He arrived in the North and South of India more than once. He established several Church communities throughout India. The Christian community, known under the name 'Thomas Christians' in South India, is the greatest proof of the apostolic work of St. Thomas, the apostle.

The Journey to India

The apostles went to four quarters of the world from Palestine to preach the Gospel. But, it is not known that anyone else came to India, the far off country, except Thomas, the apostle. Thomas, the apostle continued his journey to India after preaching the Gospel in Edessa and Persia.

Two special reasons are pointed out for Thomas, the apostle to come to India: The presence of the Jews in Kerala. There were some Jewish colonies then, which had come for trade in Kerala. They had trade with the Western world. There is still a Jewish synagogue at Kochi. It may be the presence of the Jews that brought Thomas, the apostle here. Apostle Thomas could speak to the Jews in Aramaic and through them he could communicate with others. There were a lot of Jews in places like Kodungalloor, Palayoor, etc.

The second reason that brought Thomas, the apostle here was that there was the facility for travelling. The discovery that, through the help of the monsoon wind, one could reach India within a short time, expedited the trade relationship of the Western world with Kerala. Hence along with them the apostle came to Kerala.

The Apostolic Work in India

Thomas, the apostle arrived at Malliankara, near Kodungalloor in 52 A.D. The apostle formed many Church communities through proclamation of

the Gospel. It is the tradition that Thomas, the apostle established seven churches, that is, Christian communities in seven places. There are seven churches in Kerala, which claim the heritage of Thomas, the apostle. The following are the seven centres: (1) Kodungalloor, (2) Kollam, (3) Niranam, (4) Nilackal, (5) Kokkamangalam, (6) Kottakavu and (7) Palyoor.

The Malankara Church

Thomas, the apostle firstly came to Malliankara, a place near Kodungalloor. It was there, the apostle initially proclaimed the Gospel and established the Church. For that reason, the Church established by the apostle is known as the Malankara Church. Malankara also means 'a land of hills'. This apostolic Church is known as the Malankara Church from the time of Thomas, the apostle. All other names are of later origin. The Christians over here were called 'Malankara Nazranikal' and 'MarThoma Nazranikal'. The Christian community formed here grew up as a Church, a community of worshippers.

The Martyrdom of Thomas, the Apostle

The apostle went from Kerala to Chozhia Mandal, the present Tamil Nadu. The centre of his apostolic work was Chinnamalai of Mylappoor. The apostle converted many in Mylappoor. But, some, who were angry at this, worked against the apostle. They killed him throwing a spear at him while he was praying at Chinnamalai. Thus, the apostle became a martyr. The disciples of Thomas, the apostle buried the dead body in Mylappoor. A big church was built above that, later on. The tomb of the apostle is in the cathedral of Mylappoor. The chief portion of the relics of St. Thomas, the apostle has been transferred to Edessa in Mesopotamia in the third century. A portion of the relic was deposited in the St. Thomas Church, Kodungalloor, Kerala in 1953.

The Christians of Kerala celebrate July 3, as the commemoration of Thomas, the apostle. The Catholics of the whole world celebrate July 3, as the day of commemoration of St. Thomas, after Vatican II. This is known as 'Dukrono'.



Worship

The Church remembers the zeal of the faith of Thomas, the apostle, and about his spirit of apostolic work in the Morning Prayer of Sunday:

(Pularkale girimukalil...)

"St. Thomas, industrious servant,

Valiant warrior of true faith

Architect, who built his own house;

His head is raised up to the sky

The tree, which has spread its branches

The Holy Spirit dwelt in him

Races came from all the parts

So that they obtain blessings

They celebrate his memory".

(Sunday, Morning Prayer)

Life Witness

We, the children of Thomas, the apostle, are obliged to bear witness to faith and to work zealously like the apostle.

Memorise

"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe".

(John 20:29)

Questions

1. What was the reason why the apostles went all over the world and preached the Gospel?
2. What is the proof that Thomas, the apostle did apostolic work in India?
3. What were the reasons why St. Thomas, the apostle came to India?
4. How many churches did Thomas, the apostle establish here? Which are they?
5. Write a note: The Martyrdom of Thomas, the apostle.

THE MALANKARA CHURCH UNTIL 16TH CENTURY

Thomas, the apostle, the disciple of Christ came to Kerala in 52 A.D. He marked the beginning of Christian community here by establishing churches in seven places. This Christian community was known as the Malankara Church and as Thomas Christians. The written documents of the early history of the Malankara Church are few. On the basis of the lack of historical documents the early history is known as 'the dark period'. The subject treated in this lesson is the history from the coming of Thomas, the apostle up to the 16th Century, when the Western missionaries came to Kerala and started missionary work here.

**The Persian Relationship**

Malankara Church, in the early period, was related to the Persian Syrian Church. Thomas, the apostle is the common Father of both the Persian and Indian Churches. Hence, it is considered that there was occasion for both the Churches to be related.

In the 4th Century, the Persian Church became strong and she began to start relationship with other Churches. The Indian Church then entered into closer relationship with the Persian Church. The indigenous Bishops,

successors of Thomas, the apostle, gave leadership to the Church in Kerala till the 7th Century. The indigenous bishops of the Malankara Church were spiritual Fathers. It was the priest representative, known as the arch-deacon (*Archadiacon*), who managed the temporal affairs. The Malankara Christians used the East Syrian Liturgy. By the 16th Century the Malankara Church lost the formal relationship with the Persian Church. There are records that some leaders of other Churches visited the Malankara Church during this period. Along with that, Christians from other places immigrated into Kerala, from time to time. Some Christian families, under the leadership of Thomas of Cana emigrated from Persia and settled down at Kodungalloor, after the 4th Century. The Canaanite Christians are the descendants of this Christian community.

From 1498, the Portuguese came here to have direct trade with India. The first one who came was Captain Vasco de Gama. The local Malankara Christians gladly welcomed the Christian brethren from the western world. The Christians here rendered all necessary help for them. Similarly the Portuguese also helped the local Christians in many ways. They entered into relationship with the Malankara Church and participated in the Sacraments. A lot of missionaries from Portugal came here to preach the Gospel of Christ, among the members of the various castes and religions. The most important one among them was St. Francis Xavier.

St. Francis Xavier (1552)

Francis Xavier was a priest of the Jesuit Religious Order (Society of Jesus). He arrived in Goa in 1542 and went around many places in India and preached the Gospel. Thus he made thousands of Christian faithful.

He arrived in Travancore in 1544. He travelled along the seashores of Kerala and preached the Gospel and afterwards went to other parts of India. Then he proclaimed the Gospel in China and Japan. Francis Xavier died in 1552 and his body is still preserved in Goa.

The Portuguese Movements

The Portuguese tried to control the Church here by force. They tried to enforce the rites of worship of the Western Church and its practices in the Church here. The Christians here were using the East Syrian Liturgy. But

the Portuguese missionaries were using the Latin Liturgy or the Western Liturgy. They had also chalked out plans to change the Syrian Liturgy used by the Christians over here and to introduce the Latin rite instead.

The Enforcement of the *Padroado*

It was the king of Portugal, who sent traders and missionaries to India. The Pope had granted jurisdiction to the Portuguese king over the mission countries. This was known under the name '*padroado*'. *Padroado* is a Portuguese name. It means 'tutelage'. It is said in the document that all the lands and seas, discovered or to be discovered, would be under the patronage of the Portuguese king, forever. Thus the new places in India and the churches of those places and those that are going to be built in future came under the rule of the Portuguese Vicariate. All the churches and the church properties were subjected to the patronage of the Portuguese king. On August 4, 1600, *padroado* was formally enforced on the Malankara Church. Thus the dominion of the Portuguese king over the Malankara Church was established.

Mar Jacob and the Portuguese

It was Mar Jacob, the Persian Bishop, who ruled here when the Portuguese came here. The Portuguese maintained great friendship with Mar Jacob (1504-1552). They permitted Mar Jacob to celebrate Holy Qurbano on the Portuguese altars. The Christians over here also allowed the Portuguese to celebrate Holy Mass in the Malankara churches. Thus there was sacramental communion between the local Christians and the Portuguese. The Portuguese Christians and the Malankara Christians considered each other as brothers. Though the liturgical rites and practices were different, both the groups considered that they were members of the same Church. Thus, there existed an atmosphere of love and friendliness.

Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham

It was Mar Joseph, the Persian bishop, who took charge after Mar Jacob. He served ten years in Kerala (1558-1568). There was rift in many things between Mar Joseph and the Portuguese. He died in 1569. The Persian



bishop Mar Abraham came to Malankara in 1588 after Mar Joseph. He did service to the Church with Angamali as centre.

Between Mar Abraham and the Portuguese there were differences of opinion in several matters. These rifts became strong and in the course of time paved the path for the synod of Diamper, the Coonan Cross Oath and several subsequent events.

Worship

The Church remembers that the works of faith of St. Thomas, the apostle are most blessed and that the remembrance of that Father would remain till the end of the world:

(Tharalamkrithmam vanam...)

"The sky is adorned with the stars,
The face of the earth by vegetation
And the - Blessed Mar Thoma
By his - precious deeds.
The sky shall be without the stars,
The earth also shall be empty
Your re-membrance Mar Thoma
Shall be - eternal".

(S'himo, Monday Morning)

Life Witness

Let us try to bear witness to the faith in Jesus and to proclaim the same.

Memorise

"How beautiful are the feet of those, who bring good news".
(Romans 10:15)

Questions

1. Describe the Persian relationship with the Malankara Church.
2. How did the Portuguese relate with the Malankara Church?
3. Describe the missionary work of St. Francis Xavier.
4. Prepare note on the enforcement of *padroado*.



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PART - IV



CHRISTIAN LIFE

GOOD AND EVIL



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God created Adam and Eve and made them dwell in the Garden of Eden. He commanded them: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Genesis 2:16-17). Freedom is the greatest gift God gave to man when he created him. God gave freedom to the first parents either to eat or not to eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. To obey what God says or to do his will is what is meant by good. God is the supreme good. He is the source of every good. What is meant by evil is, not to obey God or not to do his will. The first parents misused their freedom and chose evil instead of good. They defied the command of God and they rejected God, the supreme good.



Only man is capable of discerning between good and evil. When we choose good, using the freedom God has given us, we rise to the level of the children of God and experience the divine joy. But, when we choose evil, we go astray from divine joy like the first parents who went away from the experience of paradise. We are created to know good, to love and to live the same. The Book of Deuteronomy says thus about the selection of good: **"I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live"** (Deuteronomy 30:19). Here, good is blessing and life is evil, curse and death.

How do we know Good?

'Do good, don't do evil', such a divine voice is in every man. We call this 'conscience'. Similarly, God has given Commandments to man to do

good and not to do evil. We understand good, through the Commandments. Similarly, National Laws, Church Laws and Social Laws, all help us to understand what is good. God has given us, who have become the children of God through baptism, the special ability to discern virtue. God is the perfection of good. He, who lives in God, lives in virtue.

The Necessary Factors to Choose What is Good

1. Know what is good : There is good and evil in the society in which we live. God has given the special ability to man to discern good and evil. So also, we will be able to know good and evil from the experiences of our daily life. The clear discernment that God is the supreme good and in him alone is our salvation will help us to choose good. The thought that all get joy when we do good and the thought that when we do evil, many others will experience sadness and pain also will urge us to choose good.

2. Firm Decision : Only the one who has taken a firm decision could choose always good. Satan came to tempt Jesus who was weak after his forty days' fast. Jesus was able to defeat the temptations of Satan, because he had the firm determination to choose good. Jesus could always choose good on account of his firm decision to do the will of the Father.

3. Freedom : Only the one, who enjoys real freedom, could choose always good. One cannot choose good if one is a slave to bad habits or engaged in bad friendship or under bad circumstances. A person is in the bondage of evil if he lived in evil and is a slave to it. He does not enjoy real freedom. Hence, in order to choose good we should be free.

4. The Help of the Holy Spirit : Human desire, ability and efforts alone are not enough to choose the good and to exist in it. If only we receive the grace and blessings of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to discern good and to do the same. Hence, we need the constant relationship with God, prayer and divine grace to do good.

World in which We Live

Every decision of our life is a choice of good or evil. If we constantly choose good, we will grow in good. On the other hand if our interest is in evil, we will grow in evil. If one who continuously grows in evil, there is a possibility that after some time, he would become a slave to it. We should

take every decision of our life carefully. We should make sure that all our decisions and all the works we do, lead us to good.

With regard to us, children, we love God and we are interested to do the will of God. We desire that we always do good and give joy to all. This good thought and desire are a gift given by God. The period of childhood is a period to be lived carefully. But, there is the possibility that due to evil friendship and through living continuously in evil circumstances our childhood may turn to evil. There is chance for following evils through evil friendship, drinking, smoking, obscene pictures, obscene films, narcotics, etc. Evils of this kind will lead our whole life to evil. Hence we should take great care during the period of our childhood, to grow in good and to do good things. We have to be careful to choose good friends and to keep away from evil friendship. We ought to put into practice in life, qualities such as, respect for parents, teachers and elders; the desire to learn well; to help others; to give joy to all; and to work with interest in spiritual matters. Thus we will be able to grow in good.

Worship

The children of the Church remember at the last part of the hymn "O gracious Lord, at your door..." (Anpudayone nin vathil) in the Holy Qurbano, the good things of God and pray that God might not remember the evil things committed by men in his sacred presence:

"O Good One! in your mercy,
Grant us our petitions.

In Your immense mercy, Lord,
Have pity on us, servants
You, who are full of goodness,
Recall not our transgressions".

(The order of the Holy Qurbano)

Life Witness

Let us try to choose good in this world, which is full of good and evil, and to remain close to God.

Memorise

"Do no evil, and evil will never
overtake you. Stay away from wrong,
and it will turn away from you".
(Sirach 7:1-2)

Questions

1. What is meant by good and evil?
2. What are the factors necessary to choose good?
3. Find out from your life, the circumstances to remain close to God in a world full of good and evil by choosing good.

VIRTUOUS LIFE

Christian life is a holy or virtuous life. Virtues are the preparation and practical skill of the human mind in Christian life to desire and practise good. Virtues will help us under all circumstances to follow the divine commandments. Virtues help a person to control the evil desires of man and live in accordance with the will of God.



Practice or Habits

Repeated actions are called habits. Practice can lead to good or evil. Practice towards good leads us to virtue and practice towards evil leads us to sin. Due to constant effort we can reduce an evil habit or even remove it. Some evil habits will lead to disaster. A man making drinking a habit brings great disaster to his family and to the society. The practice of saying small lies in order to avoid small punishments may form into an indelible habit in life. When we have good habits, we will be led to a virtuous life.

To Acquire Virtues

When we qualify virtues as good practice or good habit, it signifies human effort. Constant effort and alertness are necessary for growth in virtue. The interest for good and the constant effort to grow in good will help a person to grow in virtue. Therefore, in order to grow in virtue, the full cooperation of the person and steady ardour are necessary.



OBEY THE LAWS

There are signposts on the side of roads to help us in our travel. We travel in accordance with the instructions of these signposts. If we observe the instructions of these signposts we would reach our destination. In our daily life too, instructions are necessary to reach our destination. To do good things and to avoid evil ones we ought to have instructions. These instructions, which show the way of virtue, we would call, laws. Laws are given for our good. Therefore we have to obey laws.

Universal Laws

We see many realities in the universe. For example: the sun rises; water flows to the low land; the earth attracts everything towards its centre. Similarly, the animals, birds and beings in the water behave in an orderly manner. They have some definite ways and modes. We understand that in their animal instincts, there are certain rules and regulations. They live according to the laws God has set for them.

Natural Laws

Man also discerns certain laws in his nature. There are certain instructions he hears in his mind. He receives persuasion to do good and to avoid evil. There are certain orders, which human nature demands from him. He ought to understand it and accept the same with his will power. For example: to worship God, to deal honestly, to obey parents and teachers, etc.



Man-made Laws

It is not enough that man has laws, which he can discern by his very nature. His living conditions are broad; obligations many. Man is one, who has to safeguard the universe and the earth and the vegetation and animals in it. God has entrusted him their protection. Besides, he has in his course of life, to make others co-operators and has to help them. To fulfil this, directives are necessary. For this, laws are given.

A person should have relationship with God, the Creator and Father. He should have love for other men, his brothers. He should live in co-operation with them. One should be interested in the good of the community in which he lives. There should be order and system for all these. When things go according to order and system there will be peace and tranquillity in the life of a person. Good community and nation are formed when such persons gather together. God has given laws to men in order to realize these objectives. The Church gives moral laws to man to discern between good and evil in order that his life might be joyous. The nation gives necessary laws for the common good.

Divine Laws

We read in the Old Testament that God had specially chosen the people of Israel. God separated them for the fulfilment of a mission. This mission was to inform all men the love and compassion of God. In order to fulfil this, God gave them the Ten Commandments. The New Testament is the completion of laws and prophecies. Jesus Christ, the Son of God summarized the Ten Commandments into two: love of God and love of man. The substance of law is the following: love God and love man. The completion of law consists in love and in works of love. Besides, Jesus teaches that one who loves his brethren, loves God and has entered the path of eternal life.

Obedience to Laws

Each one of us lives in a community; together with others. The nation gives us laws. These laws will help that in a community; all may live in peace and in co-operation. Justice should be upheld in all transactions and engagements among men. The aim of the national laws is to realize common good. The citizens should observe the laws in order to promote justice,



peace and fraternity within the community and to promote economic and social progress. It is the laws, which determine the service that each one has to render for the growth of the community. To exercise franchise, to remit tax, to enter into various services for the progress of the country; all these are necessary for the good of the nation. Each law is meant to protect certain value and to promote the same.

As children of God, we ought to keep the laws of God. From these laws we can understand what kind of life God expects from each one of us. The National laws aim at the temporal good of each individual and community. As good citizen, each one should observe the laws for the good of all. Then there will be order, peace and prosperity in the country.

Childhood is the period of formation. We, who are children, are undergoing training for a good life at home, in the church and in the school. We ought to obey our parents; observe the order of discipline of the school and regularly take part in the religious instruction class and in the services of the church; deal respectfully with the teachers; and love friends. This training will enable us in future to lead a law-abiding life.

Worship

Through this hymn we pray that we may be made worthy to live in grace observing the Commandments of God:

(Nin kalpana marge...)

"Through your commandments

Discipline me so that I

May live in your grace;

I shall observe them

Gifts, which you gave me;

Put your guard at the door

Of my limbs, that they

May not be stolen".

(S'himo, Saturday, Soutoro)

Life witness

Laws are given for our good. Hence let us try to grow as good individuals, obeying them.

Memorise

"The one who keeps the law makes many offerings; one who heeds the commandments makes an offering of well-being".

(Sirach 35:1)

Questions

1. What are laws? What is the need for obeying them? Why are the laws given to men?
2. What is the substance of divine laws?
3. What is the difference between natural laws and man-made laws? Give examples.



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MORNING PRAYERS BEGINNING AND KAUMO

SUPPLICATION

Awaken us, Lord, from our sleep in the sloth of sin that we may glorify your wakefulness. O living one, without death, awake our death from the sleep of death and corruption, so that we may honour your compassion. O Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, since you are glorified and blessed both in heaven and on earth, make us worthy to glorify and bless you along with the heavenly angels and glorious hosts, who praise you, now and at all times and forever. Amen.

Lord, bless us through the prayers of those who please you. The prophets, who spoke about you by the Spirit, the apostles, who announced your revelation and the martyrs, who died for the sake of your love, shall entreat you for our sake. O Saints, pray along with us to the Lord, whose will you have fulfilled, so that punishments and the rod of wrath may be thwarted from us. Lord, have mercy on us because of their prayers and supplications. Amen.

SUPPLICATION

O you, who are kind to the sinners, have mercy on us on the Day of Judgement. In the abundance of your grace, forgive us our debts and sins. O gracious one, grant the petitions of those distressed, who knock at your door. O heavenly Father, we beseech you, accept our services and bless us. O Lord of those who are in the heights and the hope of those below, accept our prayer and bless us. Amen.

Halleluia, Halleluia, Halleluia, glory to you O God (three times).

Be compassionate towards us in your mercy, O God of compassion. We ought to remember our fathers, who taught us, while they were alive, to be children of God, in our sacrifices and our prayers. The Son of God will raise them up in the heavenly kingdom with the Just and the Righteous in the world, which does not pass away. Lord, help us in your grace.

Glory be to the Trinity; Glory be to the Trinity. We glorify the Trinity, which is glorious, co-substantial and eternal. O God, to you belong glory at all times. Amen.

THE HYMN OF THE ANGELS

As the heavenly angels glorify you in the heights, so we, weak and sinners, glorify you. At all times and seasons, glory to God in the heights and on earth, peace and tranquillity and good hope for the sons of men.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you. We raise a hymn of praise to you.

We give thanks, because of your great glory, to you O omnipotent God the Father, heavenly King and Lord Creator; to you Lord God, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, along with the Holy Spirit.

Lord God, Son and Word of the Father, Lamb of God, who takes and has taken away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

You, who take and have taken away the sins of the world, incline your ear and receive our petitions.

You, who sit at the right hand of the Father in glory, have mercy on us.

Because you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit. Glory be to God, the Father. Amen.

At all times and on all days of our life, we will bless you and will glorify your eternal and ever blessed name.

O omnipotent Lord, God of our fathers, you are blessed. Your holy name is praiseworthy and it is ever strengthened by praise.

You deserve praise. Glory is due to you. Honour is well with you, God of everything and Father of truth, to you and to your Son and to the Holy Spirit. And that, now and at all times and forever. Amen.

(Moran yesu M'seeho...)

Lord Jesus Christ, do not shut the door of your mercy against us. Lord God, we confess that we are sinners; have mercy on us. Your love made you descend from your place to us and by your death our death was wiped away. Have mercy on us. Amen.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.... (Refer Class IV).

SUPPLICATION

How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord, and to sing praises to your exalted name; to declare your grace at the dawn of the day and to confess fidelity to you during the night.

Lord, listen to my voice in the morning. In the morning time I shall be seen ready before you.

Lord, have mercy on your people. Lord, remit and pardon all our sins.

O holy one, over-shadow your right hand upon us and heal all our infirmities, on account of your holy name. Amen.

Dedication of the Day

Merciful God, we dedicate this day to you. We offer you the Holy Eucharistic Celebrations, prayers and all the good works performed today in all the churches throughout the world. Together with that, we also offer you our petitions, joys and sorrows and all our endeavours.

Guide us today along your path. May your power sustain us this day. Grant us that all our thoughts, words and actions bring honour to your sacred name.

Lord, keep us away from the snares of Satan and from temptations to sin.

Compassionate Lord, protect us and sanctify us today by being with us in the front and back, at our right and left, above and below us and within us.

Let the prayers and the blessings of the Mother of God and all the Saints; be with us now and forever. Amen.

O Blessed Trinity, send to us your eternal grace and power for our help. May your salvation be always with us. Amen.



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