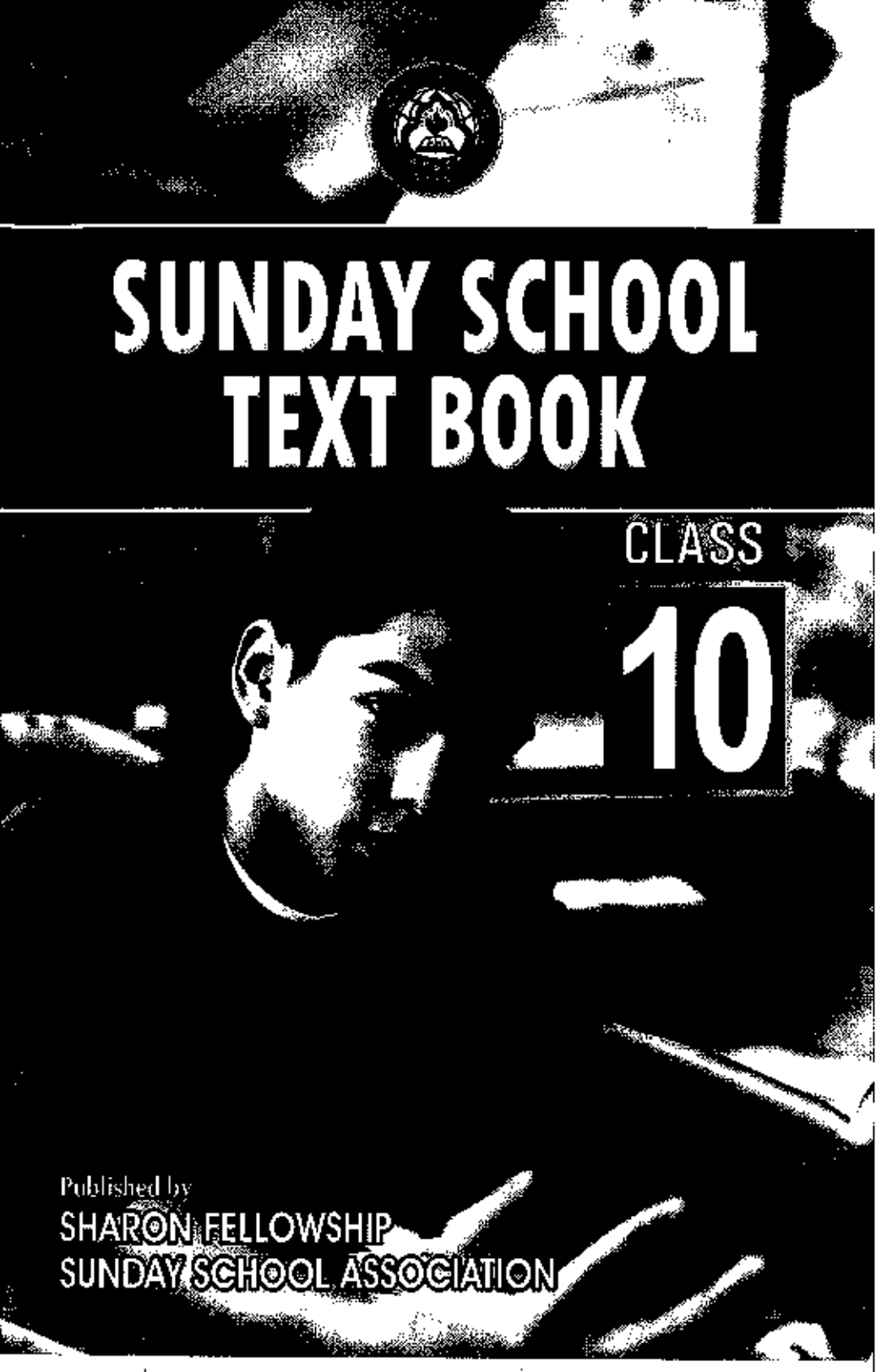




SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOK

CLASS

10

Published by

SHARON FELLOWSHIP
SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOK
CLASS - 10



Published by
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SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOK

Class - 10

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SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Sharon, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India- 689 101

PREFACE

Sunday school has a great impact in the growth of the church. Because majority of believers accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour through Sunday School. Along with believers the servants of the Lord in any generation received their basic bible knowledge through Sunday School. Also it is noteworthy to mention that many of churches were begun through Sunday School.

I am so delighted as the Sunday School activities in Sharon Fellowship churches are striving forward in an active and well-organized method. This is a commendable service as it relates our kids with Lord. Because Sunday School can develop powerful warriors for the expansion of the kingdom of God.

I am so happy as our Sunday School's syllabus is revising by including the contemporary elements to get a quality Christian education for our children. I am so grateful to those who worked hard for including this book of 10th class under our new revised syllabus. I pray that this book may become a great blessing to our kids around the world.

May the God who has revealed Himself be pleased to use this work to lead many into knowledge of Himself.

In Christ,

Tiruvalla
15-11-2016

Rev. John Thomas
(General President)

CURRICULAM COMMITTEE (2015-2017)

Pastor Jacob George

Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy

Brother K. Thankachan

Brother T. Thankachan

Pastor P. A. Chackochan

Brother Koshy Mathew

Brother T. O. Podikunju



SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Sharon, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India- 689 101

FELICITATION

Sunday School have a great role in molding a spiritual generation. It is so proud to state that the children who got fundamental teachings through Sunday School are unique in their generation by maintaining high moral, ethical and spiritual standards. They rise above in their character formation and spiritual growth through Sunday School and becomes a blessing to many.

Through Sunday School activities church is molding a spiritual generation and a good quality citizen in the society. Therefore our churches as well as the servants of the Lord should give high priority to the ministry of Sunday School. There are lots of world famous personalities who found Jesus Christ through the ministries of Sunday School. Let our kids too become world famous in Christ through our Sunday School activities.

I appreciate the ministers of Sharon Fellowship Sunday School Association for completing the tremendous task of publishing thirteen text books including the pre-school text. I also praise the Lord for enabling them to publishing this 10th standard's revised text book. I especially pray that may our children and churches be blessed by your esteemed effort.

In Christ,

Manakala
15-11-2016

Rev. Dr. T. G. Koshy
(Senior General Minister)

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Pre-School-Evg. Babu Thomas

Class 1-Timothy Institute

Class 2-Timothy Institute

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Class 4- Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy

Class 5-Pastor Titus Johnson

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Class 7- Pastor Koshy Oommen

Class 8-Mrs. Jessy Koshy

Class 9-Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy

Class 10-Pastor Shibu Mathew

Class 11-Pastor Sabu Paul

Class 12-Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy



SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Sharon, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India- 689 101

FOREWARD

Sunday School is a necessary aspect of the Church. The growth and existence of a church is depended upon the ministries among the youngsters and the kids of it. If our youngsters and kids get good - quality Christian education surely they will become a great asset to our church and the kingdom of God.

From its very beginnings Sharon Fellowship Church gave much importance to the ministries of Sunday school. God enabled us to develop a well-ordered syllabus of Sunday School from Class 1 to 10 in 1998. Later on the text books of 11th and 12th classes were published.

Through the syllabus that we published, a Sunday school student will get a good study of the Word of God from its beginning to end. Along with this student will get a basic knowledge about church history, other religions, geographical territories, life of missionaries etc. A student who covers these twelve books should get all the fundamental biblical knowledge as from a Bible college.

I praise God for enabling us to publish this 10th standard's Text Book by including the contemporary changes. I also appreciate the ministers, who worked hard for completing this mission. I pray that let this Text Book be a blessing to thousands of Sunday school students.

Aluva
15-11-2016

Dr. T. P. Abraham
(Acting President)

INTRODUCTION

Sunday school is doing the great ministry of relating children with Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore there is no wrong in saying that today's Sunday school is tomorrow's church. From this it is clear that the future of church is depending upon Sunday school. It is from this perspective that every church should see Sunday school and encourage its activities.

Sunday School Teaching is neither a trivial task nor simple mission. Rather it is very important like any other service of the Church. It is a mission that God entrusted upon us by considering us as Faithful. Therefore teaching ministry of Sunday school should be done with enough prayer and prayer

Sunday school studies may enable our children to receive Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. It may also help them to grow in Christ and also to become the witnesses of Gospel where ever they are. This new curriculum of Sunday school is helpful to attain the above mentioned aims. Teachers should study it well and teach students with this aim.

Sharon Sunday School Association decided to revise the old curriculum by including the contemporary elements to get a quality Christian education for our children. As a part of it, this text book of 10th class is reaching in your hands. I pray that its learner may be blessed by this text book

Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy
*Director, Sharon Fellowship
Sunday School Association.*

STATEMENT

Sunday School is a necessary aspect of the Church. The growth and existence of a church is depended upon the ministries among the youngsters and the kids of it. If our youngsters and kids get good – quality Christian education surely they will become a great asset to our church and the kingdom of God.

Text books had been published from Sharon Bible College-Tiruvalla and Faith Theological Seminary-Manakala for the Sunday school studies of our children. Since all those books were distributed before few years there was a shortage for the textbooks in these years. Therefore there was a constant search for the text books from our Sunday school ministers.

God enabled us to publish the text books from 1 to 10 standard of Sunday school in 1998 through the leadership of Dr. T. P. Abraham (Acting President of S.F.C.). These text books got a very good response from Sunday school students and teachers of our own churches as well as from other denominations. Since the published text books were distributed completely we were able to publish several prints of text books of all classes.

We taught the 11th and 12th Standards of our Sunday School by depending on some other text books. Later in 2003 Sunday School Committee decided to publish the text books of 11th and 12th standards of our own. As a result God enabled us to publish the text book of 11th standard on 2004 and the text book of 12th standard

on 2008. Also in 2013 God enabled us to publish new text book for Nursery kids and text book with activity portion for 1st standard. After realising the rapid changes of the educational sector and of the contemporary generation we are re-publishing this text book with revised curriculum.

Through the syllabus that we published, a Sunday school student will get a good study of the Word of God from its beginning to end. Along with this student will get a basic knowledge about church history, other religions, geographical territories, life of missionaries etc. A student who covers this text book will get a thorough knowledge about the fundamental theological elements and an introduction to the heretical cults in this century.

The author of this text book is **Pastor Shibu Mathew**.

English Translation of this book is done by **Rev. Charley Joseph Zachariah, Harippad**. We extend our hearty thanks to the precious work behind it timely.

We pray that this text book may become a great blessing to lots of children and to churches. May the name of the Lord be glorified through this text book. May the God who has revealed Himself be pleased to use this work to lead many into knowledge of Himself.

For Sunday School Association

Pastor. Jacob George
(Coordinator, Curriculum Committee)

Brother T. Thankachan
(General Secretary)

Tiruvalla
15-11-2016

CHAPTER 1

Existence of God

- Reading Portion*** : Isaiah 40: 12-31
- Memory Verse*** : Revelation 1: 17, 18.
- Purpose*** : To know about the existence of God and to prepare to convince those who come with counter arguments that "God really exists."
- Introduction*** : "Is there a God?" "If there is a God how can you prove that?" Not even "believers" can give reasonable answers to these questions quite often. When atheists prove that there is no God, we who believe in God and experience His presence in our day today lives have the responsibility to prove that there is God. In this chapter we study about different theories about God and also we look at important evidences about that support the existence of God.

A. Existence of God: Different Beliefs

We can understand that from very ancient times man was thinking about God. As a result several opinions rised about the existence of God.

Following are the major opinions about the existence of God.

1. Theism

This belief has two streams of thought. They are Monotheism & Polytheism. Polytheists believe that there are separate gods to control distinct sectors and they worship them according to its characteristics

(e.g. Hinduism). This belief is against the Biblical truths of God is One, Omnipotent, eternal etc. Monotheism is the basis of Judeo-Christian belief. Islam religion is also maintaining monotheistic belief.

2. Deism

Deism is a division of monotheistic belief. According to this theory that began during the reformation period (18 – 19 century), God exists in this universe because of his sovereign power. This belief teaches that God created permanent natural laws during the time of creation. After creating this existing order God reserved himself to infinity and now supervising the world from there. This universe exists because of the undeviating laws (God is like a watch maker).

3. Atheism

This is the belief that there is no god or Atheism. According to this belief God didn't created man rather man created God. This faith that believes in reasoning accepts the theory of evolution without any doubt.

4. Agnosticism

Agnosticism argues that god is beyond the boundaries of time and space. We cannot understand anything about God through reasoning or intellect (no knowledge is possible about god).

5. Pantheism

Pantheism considers all as god. It believes that there are different kinds of god. It thinks that god can be found in all materials. (God can be found in grass, flower, worms, rust, iron . . . all is god).

6. Adhvaitha Religion

It believes that man and god are not two different entities; rather god is in all materials and I am also a god (Soul & Spirit are neither two rather they both are one). This is an Indian way of thought.

B. Existence of God: Evidences

There are two major ways through which evidences are brought for the existence of God. They are Natural Revelation and Special Revelation. Natural Revelation is the general revelation that is revealed through creation, history and through the consciousness of human mind. Second is the Special Revelation. It includes the divine revelations about Jesus Christ, Word of God and Godly revelations that were revealed throughout the time period. Based on the Natural Revelation there were certain prominent theological theories developed during the medieval period. They are;

1. Cosmological Argument

This theory is based on cause and effect synopsis. Anything in this world has a cause behind it. It considers god as the first cause without any former cause. The amazing order of this universe, its glory and perfection proclaims the intellect and sovereign power behind it.

2. Teleological Argument

Universe is going forward in a well-organized way. While man works in a conscious way, other materials also properly functions even though they have no consciousness like human beings. Every material of this universe functions with a purpose. It reveals that there was an intelligent being that set each of these materials with a proper function and purpose. That intelligent being is called God. If we consider this universe as a complex machine, then the intelligent being that created it is called god.

3. Ontological Argument

Ontological argument is based on the fact that, if we have a thought in our mind then surely there is a reality behind it. This theory argues that, every human beings mind has a thought about God and this thought points to the reality that there is a God.

4. Moral Argument

This theory is developed from ethical mandates. Because it states that human being from any culture or from any race have deep convictions about the ethical principles. Every person knows to discern good and bad. Also every human being is motivated in his mind to do well to others. The foundations of these ethical mandates are not naturally developed from human mind, rather moral argument believes that they are from an external source called god.

Even though common-man accepts all these theories, it is not much reasonable to prove the existence of God to an atheist. Christian believers knows God not through the reasonable arguments that we stated above, rather they experience God through their faith in Him. Every attempt to study about the invisible God has limitations.

Because He is so much beyond the reasoning, observations and experiments of human being. Here comes the importance of experience. Psalmist says that "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalms 34:8). That it is not possible to know God through philosophical thoughts or by reasoning. But knowing God through the experiences of faith is more reliable and clear.

Once a French Thinker namely Pascal stitched a very significant statement in his coat's upper crest. It is "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob . . . is not the god of philosophers."

Practical Lesson

In the midst of different theological theories and reasonable arguments it is always good to know God through our own experience. Therefore let us taste and see the Lord that revealed himself to this world through the word of God and Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. What are the major beliefs' about God?
2. Compare monotheistic and polytheistic faith?
3. What is Atheism?
4. What are the major teachings of Deism?
5. What is the theory of Adhvaitha?
6. Which are the major arguments that favour the existence of God? Explain?
7. What is the importance of experience in knowing God? Explain?

CHAPTER 2

Divine Characters Of God

Reading Portion : Jeremiah 10:1-16

Memory Verse : 1Timothy 6:15-16

Purpose of Lesson : To know about the divine characters of Yahweh that makes Him unique from other deities.

Introduction : The divine characters of the Lord Yahweh that we understood through the word of God are incomparable. Yahweh has a unique personality with divine attributes which is not found in the so called 'gods' and the concepts about god. The knowledge about these divine attributes of the Lord whom we believe and follow, helps to commit ourselves to the Lord and to abandon other 'gods'.

The divine attributes of God can be mainly divided into two sections.

1. Incommunicable attributes: These are the natural attributes of God that cannot be shared or transferred.
2. Communicable attributes: These are the ethical attributes of God that can be shared or transferred.

1. Incommunicable Attributes

The unique attributes found only in Lord Yahweh are called Natural Attributes. These unique attributes are

(a) Eternal God

Through this we have to understand that Lord Yahweh have no beginning and end. God was there before the creation of everything. Even if everything in this universe moves away or perishes God will be there. The adjectives about god "First and the Last" (Rev. 1:17), "The Alpha and The Omega" (Rev. 1:8) etc. denotes the eternal nature of God. This eternal nature of Yahweh exalts and glorifies Him above other gods. (Give attention to these Bible verses: - Psalms 90: 1-2; 102: 12, 27; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Timothy 1:17).

(b) Infinite/ Unchanging God

Eternal God is beyond the realm of changes. God is so much beyond the boundaries of space and time. As the time goes on, changes are happening to all materials in this universe. But no change is occurring to the Lord Yahweh. That is our Lord is the infinite and the unchanging God. (1 Samuel 15:29, Jacob 1:17; Malachi 3:6).

Though the Lord is infinite His ways of divine intervention to His creation was finite or changing from time to time. Example: Divine intervention of Yahweh in this age of grace is not same as the age of Torah.

(c) Omnipotent God

Human knowledge is very limited to measure the power of Yahweh. Through human reasoning we cannot completely understand God. The God who created this universe and everything in it is so powerful (Job. 42:2; Jeremiah 32:27; Psalms 33:9). Omnipotence is the attribute that no other 'god' can claim. This attribute reveals the majesty of Yahweh.

We can see several contexts in which the omnipotence of the Lord is revealed throughout the Bible. The mighty way through which Israel crossed the red sea by dividing it into two, provision of manna to the people of Israel for many years in the desert are a few examples of the omnipotent attribute of God.

(d) Omnipresent God

Only Yahweh can work in more than one place at a time. Everything in this universe is limited to the boundaries of time and space. But the Lord who is beyond the boundaries of time and space is present in every parts of the universe. Different evidences are recorded about this in the scriptures. "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" (Psalms 139:7, 8). Words of Jesus Christ in Mathew 18:20 ("For where two or three

gather in my name, there am I with them”) reveals the omnipresent nature of the Triune God. (Scripture portions that reveals the omnipresence of the God are 1Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23,24; Mathew 28:20)

(e) Omniscient God

The Lord who knows and understands everything is Omniscient in nature. Unlimited and infallible knowledge about the past, present and future is called the omniscient knowledge. Even though the knowledge of the human mind that is created by Lord is glorious, they are limited by the boundaries of space and time. But the knowledge of the Lord who is totally beyond the boundaries of space and time is omniscient. 1 Chro. 28:9; 2 Chro. 16:9; Psalms 94:11; Dani. 2:20; Job. 42:2 point out the Omnipresence of God.

2. Communicable Attributes

Communicable attributes are the attributes that reveals the ethical values of the Lord. These attributes can be shared with others or others can accomplish these divine natures of God. Some major divine communicable attributes are described below:

(a) Holiness

Holiness means detachment from the world. It is the divine dignity without even a little portion of contamination. Scripture portions of Leviticus 19:2; Exodus 19:4-6; Psalms 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isaiah 1:4; 6:8 etc. reveals the holiness of God.

(b) Righteousness

God is the supreme realm of truth and justice who executes righteousness and justice (Deuteronomy. 32:4; Isaiah 45:19).

(c) Mercy

Mercy is the divine nature that delivers the creation from its sorrow and gives forgiveness and endurance to the sinner who confesses his/ her sins. Psalm 103:8-18 is the beautiful portion that portrays the divine mercy of God.

(d) Love

The unity of the three distinct personalities of trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is based on love. God is the loving Lord who gave himself to others, for reconciling human beings who moved away from Him because of their disobedience. (1 John 4:8)

(e) Grace

Grace is the favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves (Ex.33:19; Rom. 9:15; 1 Peter. 5:10).

(f) Goodness

Goodness is the divine virtue that is extended to the ones who are in problems and troubles. (2 Sam. 24:14; Mathew 9:27)

(g) Truth

The attribute of truth reveals that Lord God is the only true God. His words and knowledge is true. Also God is the highest domain of truth. (Jer. 10:10; John 17:3; 1 John 5:20)

(h) Faithfulness

The attribute of God's faithfulness means that Lord will do what He says. It also means that Lord will fulfill the promises He gave to His chosen ones (Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 7:28).

Practical Lesson

The incommunicable attributes of God reveals the majesty of Lord. Therefore let's submit ourselves to this incomparable God. Also let's practice the communicable attributes of God in our lives and develop a good personality before God and society.

Questions

1. What are the divine characters of God?
2. What are the differences between Lord God and other gods? Explain with examples?
3. What are the major differences between human and divine knowledge?
4. Why can't we flee away from the Spirit of God? Explain?
5. Substantiate the differences between the incommunicable and communicable attributes of God?

CHAPTER 3

Trinity

- Reading Portion** : Mathew 3:16-17; 2Thess.2:13-14; Titus 3:4-6
- Memory Verse** : Ephesians 4:4-6
- Purpose of Lesson** : To know that God is the unity of three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Introduction** : Yahweh is the only true God with three eternal and perfect persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God gave knowledge to Human beings. But this human knowledge is limited by the boundaries of space and time. Therefore there are lots of limitations to understand the doctrine of Trinity through human reasoning. Lot of people became heretic when they tried to define this doctrine through human reasoning. Therefore we should understand this subject with much vigilance and alertness.

Triune God

The word 'Trinity' is not found in Scripture. Even though the word is not there the concept of 'Triune God' is a divine revelation that was revealed from the beginning to the end of the Scripture. If we examine the whole Bible we can see a gradual progress about this divine revelation from the very beginning of the Old Testament. This divine revelation reaches to its apex in New Testament. As stated in the introductory part, Yahweh is the only true God with three - eternal and perfect persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though they are three distinct persons in appearance they all are one in essence. There is no difference in power and personalities between these three

persons. We may feel that each person is functioning in a unique and different way. But the reality is three persons are relating with one another in equal way.

TRINITY IN OLD TESTAMENT

Even though the Old Testament was written in the Jewish context of Monotheism, we can see the traces about Triune God or the Trinitarian nature of God in many scripture portions. Some of the major accounts are listed below.

(a) Elohim

‘Elohim’ is the Hebrew term used to denote God widely in Old Testament. This word is a plural word. This root word itself is a proof that God is the unity of distinct persons. For example, in Genesis 1:26 it is written that- Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. . .” Here we can see the word ‘us’ is used by God.

(b) In many portions of Old Testament Words like Father, Word of God, and Holy Spirit are recorded in relation with the acts of God. For example, Scripture records the account of creation as

- God, the Father created- Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 48:12, 13;
- Word of God creates- Genesis 1:3; Isaiah 48:13 (In John’s gospel, when John records about the pre-existence of Jesus he calls Jesus as Word. John 1:4 states that “Word became flesh.” That is creation happens through God’s words or by Scripture)
- Spirit of God creates- Job. 33:4; Psalms 104:30

(c) Genesis 18 records about three angles revealed to Abraham. This incident is recorded as the divine revelation of God to human beings. Many theologians consider the three perspectives as the three persons of ‘Trinity’.

Trinity In New Testament

New Testament was written in a purely Christian context. It includes the basic doctrines of early church. Therefore New Testament contains clear understanding about the doctrine of ‘Trinity’. Following ones are the major records in New Testament.

(a) Baptism

Trinity was fully revealed during the Baptism of Jesus, the Son of God. While Jesus was taking baptism, Father God spoke from heaven, and Holy Spirit descended from heaven in the form of a dove.

The presence of three persons in Triune God is visible here. (Mathew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; John. 1:31-34).

The very fundamental evidence of 'Trinity' is the commandment of Jesus about baptism in Mathew 28:19-20 – "... Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It substantiates that the three persons in Trinity are one in essence.

(b) Apostilic Teaching

Teachings of apostles and early church were based on the triune God. Not only in relation with baptism but also in the doctrines of - Salvation (Titus. 3:4-7; 1 John 4:13-15), Redemption (1 Peter 1:2), Election (Eph. 1:3-14), Gifts of Holy Spirit (1 Cori 12:4-6) - we can see the unified acts of the three persons of Trinity.

(c) Benediction

If we make a survey on the patterns of the benediction of early church we can understand that they believed in Triune God (2 Cori. 13:14). Apostle Paul recites benediction in the church as "May the Love of the Father, Grace of Jesus Christ and fellowship of Holy Spirit" be with the church.

(d) Incarnation of Jesus Christ

From Luke 1:35 it is clear that 'Trinity' was evidently revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. (1) The power of the Most High overshadowed Mary (2) Holy Spirit came upon Mary (3) Holy One was created.

Practical Lesson

Let's submit ourselves before the glorious Triune God whose attributes cannot be completely understood by the limited human reasoning. Solidarity with one another is the central feature of Trinity. Let's practice the unity in Godhead in our own personal, spiritual and social life.

Questions

1. What is Trinity?
2. How can we explain Trinity in the light of Old Testament?
3. How can we substantiate Trinity in relation with Baptism?
4. What was the role of the doctrine of Trinity in Apostolic Teaching? Explain.
5. How Trinity was revealed through the incarnation of Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER 4

Heresies Against Trinity

- Reading Portion** : Colossians 1:15-20; 2:8-9
- Memory Verse** : Philippians 2:6-8
- Purpose of Lesson** : To know about the heretical teachings that rise against the divine revelation of 'Trinity'
- Introduction** : 'Trinity' is a divine revelation that revealed in the scripture with much clarity. But there were lots of heretical teachers who misinterpreted the word of God. They integrated the tools of philosophical assumptions with this Christian belief and became cults and heretics in the end. Through this chapter let's look into major heretical contradictions against Trinity.

Christianity originated and expanded in the monotheistic Jewish context. Since the Jews exclusively believe that there is only one God they cannot accept the doctrine of 'Trinity'- especially they can't confess the teaching that 'Jesus is the Son of God'. Therefore Jews considered the doctrine of 'Trinity' as heresy and contempt against God. So Jews began to persecute the Christians who believed in this doctrine and stoned them to death according to their 'Torah'.

When Christianity extended to the polytheistic Hellenistic context there also raised wrong understandings about the doctrine of 'Trinity'. They interpreted the three persons – Father, Son & Holy Spirit- as three distinct gods.

From this context many Christian scholars tried to establish monotheistic faith based on 'Trinity'. They also defended against

polytheistic faith and practices. But many of these attempts became pure heresies. Following ones are the major heresies:

1. Monarchianism

Monarchianism¹ is a heresy that developed in the second century A.D. through the influence of Abionism and Docetism. It gives much emphasis to Father God and argues that other two persons are underneath to Him. They also argue that Christ is not God rather He was just a man. This heresy has two major subdivisions.

- (a) Adoptionist Theory
- (b) Modellistic Monarchianism
- (a) **Adoptionist Theory**

Theodotus, who was expelled from the church in Rome, made this theory in A.D. 190. But this theory was widely propagated by Paul of Samosata, a bishop of Antioch. According to this theory Father God is the only sole powerful God. His son Jesus Christ is not equal with Him. This theory also states that Jesus was merely a human being. Father God adopted Jesus because of his extra-ordinary qualities and gross devotion towards Him. They believe that this adoption process happened during the baptism of Jesus Christ. These are their main teachings.

- (b) **Modellistic Monarchianism**

Modellistic monarchianism considers God to be one person or the Father appearing and working in the different “modes” of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore they consider that the persons of ‘Trinity’ are for name sake only. They also teach that the manifestations of Father God as the Son and the Holy Spirit are merely temporary.

2. Arianism

Arius (250-336 AD), a priest of Alexandria made this theory. This theory raises arguments against the complete divinity of Jesus Christ and the equality of Jesus with Father God. Their major teachings are the following ones.

Arianism was based on the thoughts of Greek Dualism. Greek dualism believes that it is not possible for the most holy God to have relation with the unholy material world. They believe that only the Father God is eternal, sovereign and Most Holy God without beginning and end. They argue that Jesus Christ was just a person who was

created by the Father God. Arius substantiated his theory based on the verse 'the firstborn over all creation' in Col 1:15. Arius also taught that, since Jesus Christ was a creation of the Father God he was not equal with the Father God and there was a particular period where Jesus was absent in the course of history. He also stated that Jesus Christ was depended upon the Father in everything Jesus does.

These heretical teachings against Trinity were propagated to the different parts of the world within a short span of time. It influenced common people very much and became the topic of debate among prominent theologians for a long time. These heresies were defended at the synod in Nicaea on 325 A.D. and there formulated the Nicene Creed that establishes the doctrine of 'Trinity'. We hold on to the doctrine of Trinity which is evidently revealed in the Scripture and widely accepted by the Christian church.

Practical Lesson

As we know there is no limitation to the heresies and wrong teachings even today. So we should not blindly believe what we hear and see. Rather we should examine the teachings and doctrines in the light of the word of God. Let us leave away the Christian life based on mere assumptions and move forward with the clear knowledge about God and His works.

Questions

1. What is Monarchianism?
2. Explain Adoptionist Theory?
3. Explain Modellistic Monarchianism?
4. Elaborate the theory of Arianism?
5. Which subject is emphasized in the Nicene Creed?

¹ The greek term '*monarchia*' means an autocracy governed by a monarch who usually inherits the authority.

CHAPTER 5

Synods And Explanation Of Trinity

Reading Portion : Galatians 1:6-10; John 2:20-27

Memory Verse : 1 Peter 3:15

Purpose : To know about the synods that formed to guard the doctrines of 'Trinity'

Introduction : There were lots of heresies² raised from the very beginning of Christian church. The heresies that rose up during the early centuries later became so strong through diverse forms and even challenged the very existence of Christian church. Monarchianism and Arianism were two such heresies that we studied through last chapter. In the midst of these mutually contradicting doctrines it became necessary for the church to defend these heresies and to define or explain what 'Trinity' originally means. For this purpose certain synods were assembled together. Through this chapter let us learn about the synods that gathered together to define the doctrine of 'Trinity'.

1. Synod of Nicene (A.D. 325)

This Synod was convened to defend the teachings of Arius. This synod also responded against many heresies of this time.

The Roman Emperor Constantine assembled the prominent leaders³ of church in a place called Nicaea on A.D. 325 June 19 to August 25 to defend the heretical teachings and arguments of Arius.

Almost 318 Bishops from different places gathered here and they keenly discussed about the religion of Arius. Finally they defined the doctrine of Trinity with much clarity. Emperor covered all the expenses of this great Synod. This synod officially declared the teachings of Arius as Heretic and casted out Arius to Illyricum.

1.1. Nicene Creed

Synod of Nicene defined the doctrine of Trinity with much clarity. This definition is known as Nicene Creed. This doctrine of faith was widely accepted by every Christian churches. A portion related with Trinity is

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.”

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnated and was made man; He suffered, and the third day He rose again, ascended into heaven; From there he shall come to judge the live and the dead.”

“And in the Holy Ghost”

Definition about Trinity is very limited in this creed. Information about Holy Spirit also mentioned in a word only – “And in Holy Ghost”. This is a demerit of this Nicene Creed

2. Synod of Constantinople (A. D. 381)

Synod of Constantinople was a council of Christian bishops convened in Constantinople in A.D. 381 by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I. This council was assembled as per the request of Gregory of Nazianzus. Almost 150 bishops came together in this Synod. They summed up the Nicene Creed and also revised the portion about Jesus by adding the following clause.

“He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.”

The major controversy that rose after the Synod of Nicaea was the equality of Holy Spirit to the Father God and the Son Jesus Christ. To this problem the Synod of Constantinople gave solution and

explained the essence of Holy Spirit. Bishop Macedonius who was the successor of Arius argued that Holy Spirit is not God. Rather Holy Spirit is just a creation and Holy Spirit has no essence with Father. These Macedonians are called '*Pneumatomachi*' which means 'those who oppose Holy Spirit'. Synod of Constantinople declared these arguments against Holy Spirit as Heretic. Also it revised the portion about Holy Spirit in the Nicene Creed as

"We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the son together is worshipped and glorified."

3. Synod of Ephesus (A.D. 431)

This Synod was convened to defend the arguments of Nestorius (Patriarch of Constantinople). He taught that two personalities (Divine and Human) in Jesus Christ were untied together to form a new personality. He also argued that Mary should be called as "the mother of God". There were heated debates and arguments over these issues. But this Synod ended without any common doctrinal conclusions and decisions. But they finally decided to discuss these topics later at the Synod of Chalcedon.

4. Synod of Chalcedon (A.D. 451)

Eutichus was a prominent person who radically condemned the teachings of Nestorius. But he rejected the human nature of Jesus Christ in his teachings. Rather he taught that the human nature of Jesus Christ was completely merged with His divine nature. When the controversies of this kind became so prominent, Marcian the Emperor convened this synod on A.D. 451 in Chalcedon. Almost 600 bishops attended in this synod. They summed up the decisions of the former synods and defended the heresies until that day. Through this Synod clear explanations brought to define the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – the Triune God. Thus it came with the conclusion to the debates and arguments that lasted centuries.

Practical Lesson

Doctrines are the fundamental aspect of Christian faith. None of the doctrines are formed from an overnight. It was evolved through the process of centuries. It overcame every challenges raised by its opponents. Therefore we have to scrutinize the credibility of the doctrines that germinate within a short span of time. Let us hold on to the doctrines that are purely based on Scripture and follow the traditional truths and values. Let us deny the interpretations and assumptions against the word of God.

Questions

1. Explain the synod of Nicene?
2. What was the major subject of discussion in the Synod of Constantinople?
3. What is the relevance of the Synod of Chalcedon?
4. Elaborate the role of various synods for the explanation and defending of Trinity?

² There were lots of heresies intruded the basic doctrines from the very beginning of the church. Major heresies based on the Greek dualism were Gnosticism, Docetism, Abionism, Adoptionist Theory etc. Epistle of Judas, Epistles to Galatians, Colossians, and First Epistle of John records about it.

³ For this purpose the two divisions (Antiochian & Alexandrian) who formed because of the political situations and diverging theological perspectives were convened together. This is considered as the first ecumenical council.

CHAPTER 6

True God

- Reading Portion* : Exodus 20:1-2; Mark 12:29-33
- Memory Verse* : 1 Timothy 6:15-16
- Purpose* : To know that the Lord Yahweh is the one and only true God with three distinct persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Introduction* : Lord Yahweh is the Triune God. Though Yahweh has three distinct persons, the three persons are not three separate Gods as we see in other religions⁴ rather He is the one God. Even though human reasoning cannot understand it completely, this truth is evidently recorded in the scripture. Through this chapter let us learn more about the oneness of God.

One God in Old Testament

Even though the Old Testament was written from a strong monotheistic context there are strong references about Trinity in Old Testament. But we cannot find out those references through a simple reading. On the other hand strong and clear evidences about the nature of oneness of God can be easily traced from the Old Testament. Therefore it is clear that Old Testament gave more importance to the nature of Oneness of God than to Trinity. This is because the people of God lived in a religiously pluralistic world and had close relationship with the people who worshipped other gods. So it was more necessary to reveal the nature of Oneness of God than the nature of His Trinity. Some of the major portions in Old Testament that records about the oneness of God are recorded here.

1. Deuteronomy 6: 4:- “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one.” If we study this verse that describes the oneness of God in relation with other verses we can understand that the oneness described here refers to the unity in Trinity.
2. Exodus 3:13-14:- The self-revelation of God as “I am who I am” denotes ultimately to the oneness of God. It also refers to the unity between the three persons in Trinity.
3. Isaiah 42:8:- “I am the Lord; that is my name!” This verse clearly portrays the oneness of God. Not only our God is a jealous God but also He do not give His glory to anyone else and never share His praise with carved idols.
4. 1 kings 8:59,60:- “Lord alone is God and there is no other.” This verse is also a good example that reveals the oneness of God.

There are many other verses that denote the oneness of God. Especially the poetic and prophetic books give equal significance and evidences to the oneness and Trinitarian nature of God.

One God in New Testament

New Testament also gives strong evidences about the Trinitarian nature of God.

1. Mark 12:29-32:- “The Lord our God is the one and only Lord”. Jesus Christ Himself states this as the most important commandment. It is also noteworthy that after hearing this, the teacher of Old Testament religious law himself accepts Jesus Christ.
2. John 17:3:- “And this is the way to have eternal life – to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.” This verse explains the oneness of Jesus Christ. Also the reference about Jesus Christ as the one who sent by God the Father proves the credibility of the doctrine of Trinity.
3. 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6:- Here Apostle Paul validates the oneness of God. He states that idols are nothing, they are not god and there is no need for giving much importance to the food sacrificed to idols. As apostle Paul calls Jesus Christ as the only Lord this passage is strong evidence that proves the doctrine of Trinity.
4. Galatians 3:20:- Here Apostle Paul firmly says that “God is one”. Also in 1 Timothy 2:5 apostle Paul proves that “For there is

one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”.

5. James 2:19:- “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even demons believe” Thus here Jacob proclaims that even demons believe that.

From the above said verses it is clear without doubt that even though Lord Yahweh is the Trinity with three distinct persons He is the one and only true God.

Practical Lesson

Yahweh alone is the only True God. He is the only God who is worthy to be praised. Let's acknowledge this truth and follow Him with whole heart.

Questions

1. What is the theistic faith of Jewish religion?
2. Explain about the one God in Old Testament?
3. What was the perspective of Apostle Paul about one God?
4. What were the teachings of Jesus Christ about the oneness of God?
5. Prove God's oneness in the light of scriptures?

⁴ For example the concept of trinity is in Hindu religion also. Brahma, Siva & Vishnu are three distinct persons who does three functions separate from each other. But the 'Triune' nature of God is the unique characteristic of Christian faith.

CHAPTER 7

Jesus -The Perfect God

- Reading Portion** : Titus 2:12-13; Col 1:15-20; Psalms 24:7, 10.
- Memory Verse** : Philippians 2:10-11
- Purpose** : To know that Jesus Christ is perfect God and equal with the Father God.
- Introduction** : There are diverse opinions about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who incarnated to reconcile the fallen humanity. But the truth is the Jesus Christ is both the perfect God and perfect Man. Those who reject Trinity are rejecting the divinity of Jesus Christ. Some like Arius argued that Jesus Christ is merely a creation. Therefore there was a period when Jesus Christ was absent. New Testament records that lots of intruders troubled the church from its early beginning itself (Jude 4). They rejected the divinity of Jesus Christ. Through this chapter let us learn about the divinity of Jesus Christ.

A. Existence

As we studied in the previous chapters the existence of God is really different from the existence of human beings. God is eternal but human beings are ephemeral.

1. Eternal Existence

Scripture reveals that Jesus Christ is also eternal like the Father God. Lord Yahweh is recorded as the First and Last in Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. These verses refer to the eternal nature of God. Like this

in Revelation 11:8, 17; 2:8 Jesus Christ also says that "I am the First and the Last." Also Hebrews 13:8 clearly portrays the eternal nature of Jesus Christ.

2. Pre-Existence

Pre-existence means that Jesus Christ was present in this world even before His incarnation as a human being. Certain scriptures that prove the pre-existence of Jesus Christ are:

John 3:13, 31:- One who comes from heaven or from above

John 11:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2:- One who is prior to all creation/ one who functioned in the process of creation

John 10:30; 17:5; Philippians 2:6:- Jesus is equal with God/Jesus and Father is one.

John 8:58:- Jesus Christ existed even before Abraham (Here reflects the self-revelation of 'I am who I am' in Exodus 3:16).

Hebrews 13:8:- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

3. Self-Existence

Like the Father God, Jesus Christ also has self-existence. It means that He doesn't need the help of any other for His own existence. Only those who have self-existence can say that "I am the beginning and the end"(Reve. 1:8; 2:8). By saying this Jesus Christ reveals His self-existence.

B. Attributes

We studied about the attributes of God in the first chapter. All these divine attributes are perfectly evident in Jesus Christ. This clearly proves that Jesus is the perfect God. As we stated above Jesus Christ is eternal and unchanging God.

1. Jesus Christ, The Omnipotent

Through the following scriptures we can see that this incommunicable attribute is evident in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:3:- Jesus Christ sustains all things by His powerful word.

Mathew 8:26:- This verse reveals the power of Jesus Christ over the forces of nature.

Luke 4:39:- This verse proves the authority of Jesus over sickness.

Mathew 8:15,16:- Demons surrenders before Jesus Christ.

Luke 7:14; 8:55:- Jesus had authority over death.

Colossians 1:16-17:-Every thrones and authorities are subdued before Jesus Christ

Revelation 1:8:- Jesus as the Lord Almighty.

All these verses and statements prove that Jesus Christ is Omnipotent.

2. Jesus Christ, The Omnipresent

Neither humans, nor angels or devil can be present in two places at the same time. Only God can be present in more than one place at the same time. Scripture reveals that Jesus is Omnipresent.

Mathew 18:20:- For where two or three comes together in the name of Jesus, there He is with them.

Mathew 28:20:- Jesus Christ is with us to the very end of the age.

God can see and know us even if we are in the most rural parts of this world. Like that Jesus can hear the prayers of people from any part of world, because He is the only true and omnipresent God.

3. Jesus Christ, The Omniscient

Scripture states that Jesus is the omniscient God who knows everything.

Hebrews 4:12-13:- No creation is hidden to Jesus Christ, the true word of God.

John 16:30; 21:17:- Testimony about Jesus knows all things.

Mark 2:8:- Jesus who knows the thoughts of human beings.

1 Cori.4:5:- God who expose the motives of men's hearts.

Acts 1:24:- Prayer of disciples says that Jesus knows everyone's heart.

All these scriptures prove that Jesus Christ is omniscient and therefore He is the Lord.

C. Evident Addressing To Jesus As God

John 1:1:- Not only the Word was with God but also the Word was God.

John 20:26-28:- Thomas addresses Jesus as "My Lord and my God".

Titus 2:12-13:- The word 'great God', which is used to call Jesus Christ, clearly proves the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The scriptures about Jesus Christ as Judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1), forgives sins (Luke 7:39; Mark 2:9; John 5:14), receives worship (Revelation 5:8-14), the Father God calls the Son Jesus Christ as "God" (Hebrews 1:8-10) proves that Jesus Christ is the Perfect God.

Practical Lesson

The Lord Jesus Christ has power over everything. Jesus Christ can bring solution to any of our problems. So let's submit ourselves to follow the perfect God – Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. What is the eternal existence of Jesus Christ? Which are the scripture portions that prove His external existence?
2. Was Jesus existed even before His incarnation to this world? How can we explain the pre-existence of Jesus Christ?
3. What were the divine attributes that evident in Jesus Christ? Explain?
4. Which are the major portions that evidently addressed Jesus as God?
5. Prove that Jesus who incarnated in this world is God? (Write an essay within two pages)

CHAPTER 8

Jesus The Perfect Man

- Reading Portion** : Genesis 3:15; Philippians 2:5-8.
- Memory Verse** : 1 Corinthians 15:45
- Purpose** : To know that as Jesus was the perfect God He was the perfect man too.
- Introduction** : Jesus is both perfect God and perfect man.⁸
In the last chapter we studied about the divinity of Jesus Christ. Through this chapter let us learn about the humanity of Jesus Christ who is perfect God and perfect man at the same time.

The title Jesus Christ of Nazareth equally signifies both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also took a human birth like all other human beings. He lived and became the part of history like all other human beings. Jesus Christ designated Himself as the Son of Man. This very title itself proves that Jesus Christ was a human being. At the same time He was also the Son of God. Certain important scripture portions that reveal the human nature of Jesus Christ are the following ones:

1. **Jesus Christ was born and brought up like all other Human beings (Luke 2:7, 40).**
2. **Jesus had the emotions of human beings**
Mathew 8:10:- Jesus exclaimed by seeing the faith of centurion
John 11:35:- Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus
Mark 10:21:- Jesus loved others.

Mathew 9:36:- Jesus had compassion towards the crowd when he saw them.

Mark 3:5:- Jesus became angry and He was distressed after seeing the Pharisees

John 11:33; 12:27; Mark. 14: 33, 34:- Jesus was distressed and troubled. His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

3. **Jesus had all the weakness of human beings**

Mathew 4:2:- Jesus was hungry

John 4:6:- Jesus was thirsty

Mathew 8:24:- Jesus slept

Luke 22:44:-Jesus sweated

Mathew 27:50:- Jesus died

Mathew 27: 59, 60:- Jesus was buried.

4. **People saw Jesus as human being, Mathew 13:53-58.** People of Nazareth viewed Jesus as a common man. They did not recognize the divine qualities in Him.

All these statements are a proof that Jesus is the perfect God.

Why Jesus became perfect man?

If we examine the scriptures we can see the reasons for the human nature of Jesus Christ. Major ones are listed below.

1. To become a propitiation for humanity.

Jesus Himself stated that son of man came to search and redeem the lost. Jesus Christ was incarnated to reconcile the human beings who went away from God because of the sin of First Adam. Human beings committed sin and became sinners. Therefore human beings should bear its punishment, because of the divine righteousness of God. For that purpose Jesus the perfect man who lived without sin bore the sins of human beings and sacrificed Himself for the propitiation of human beings. Through this act of the perfect man who was born through virgin birth - made the reconciliation of the human beings possible (Hebrew 2:16 -17,14).

2. To become a mediator between human beings and God

It was necessary for a mediator who represents both man and God to bring the fallen humanity back to God. And only Jesus Christ,

the perfect God and perfect man is capable for that. God is one and there is only one mediator between God and man – this verse in 1 Timothy 2:5 is very significant. In order to become a perfect mediator between God and man Jesus Christ has to become a perfect man.

3. To become the redeemer in relationship.

According to the Old Testament law, in order to reconcile the lost persons or property the one who is willing to redeem it should be from the close relationship (i.e., from the same family) Ruth 4:1-8. That's why Jesus Christ incarnated as the perfect human being in order to become the first born of the entire human race.

4. In order to mediate for us as the Most High Priest.

High priest is the one who mediates for the people to God. Jesus who experienced all the situation of the human race can perfectly mediate for us (Hebrew 2:18; 4:15-16). Jesus experienced all the temptations that human beings face and overcame all the temptation from devil. Therefore He is the most High priest who perfectly mediates for us.

These are the major reasons for the incarnation of the Son of God as the perfect man.

Practical Lesson

As a perfect man Jesus Christ experienced all situations and problems of our lives. Let this knowledge help us to approach Jesus Christ in all situations of our lives. Also Jesus who is the perfect man gives us good morals to follow. Let us follow his morals perfectly in our lives.

Questions

1. Explain the importance of the name of Son of Man?
2. Prove that Jesus is perfect man?
3. What are the major laws of redeeming?
4. Explain why Son, the second person of Trinity become human?
5. How Jesus was perfect God and perfect man?

⁸ As some think Jesus was not a partial God and partial man. Also he was not assuming each role for a particular time period. Rather Jesus Christ was both perfect God and perfect man at the same time.

CHAPTER 9

Divinity of Jesus - Counter Arguments

- Reading Portion*** : Jude 4; Galatians 1:6-12; Isaiah 34:16
- Memory Verse*** : Jude 20 & 21.
- Purpose*** : To know the opposing arguments against the divinity of Jesus Christ and to understand what is true.
- Introduction*** : In the last chapters we saw the major attributes of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ from the perspective of perfect God and perfect man. In this chapter we study about the major arguments against the perfect divinity of Jesus Christ and the answers for it. In order to substantiate those arguments, its promoters use verses from Bible itself. But in reality they misunderstood the word of God and misinterpreted the scripture. Let us examine some of the major opposing arguments.

1. Jesus the First Born of all creations (Col. 1:15)

This strong teaching of apostle Paul is interpreted as – Jesus Christ is the first creation of God (like all other creation). Therefore they argue that father and son are not equal. It was the basic thought of Arius' religion during fourth century. They reject the eternity of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ was a creation from God then they argue that surely there was a period when Jesus Christ was absent.

But this verse does not have this meaning rather it means that Jesus Christ was present before all the creation. John says

everything was created through Him and nothing was created without Him (John 1:13). First born of all creation means He existed prior to all creatures. Therefore Jesus Christ is not a creation rather He was the creator who existed before the existence of everything.

2. Jesus the Son of God (Psalms 2:7)

“You are my son, today I have become your Father.” This verse is misinterpreted by some and taught that Father God created the Son, Jesus Christ. But its original meaning is recorded in the Bible itself. Apostle Paul gave the actual meaning of the verse in Acts 13: 32, 33. Apostle Paul quotes this verse in the synagogue at Antioch. He says that “What God promised to our forefathers, he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.” This action of raising Jesus from the dead is allegorically portrayed as “today I have become your Father.”

We studied about the eternity of Jesus Christ in the former chapters. As Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, first and last (Rev.22:13) there was not a period where Jesus Christ was absent. Also Jesus Christ was not a person created by God.

3. Jesus the beginning of God's creation (Rev. 3:19)

By misinterpreting this verse, some argue that Jesus Christ was the starting point or beginning of the creation process. The Greek word used to denote ‘beginning’ in this portion is ‘Arche’. It means reason, cause, etc. Since Jesus is the root cause of all creation here Jesus is pictured as the beginning of God's creation. Therefore Jesus was not created by God rather He is the ultimate reason for the creation of all things.

4. Jesus the wisdom of God (Proverbs 8:22)

“The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old”. By quoting this verse only some argue that Jesus is the creation of God. But the real interpretation of this verse reveals that here it was not mentioned about Jesus Christ rather it is mentioning about wisdom. If we analyze the first verse of this chapter we can see that wisdom is metaphorically recorded like a woman. In the very beginning of the world itself God created wisdom. Wisdom was there when he laid the foundation of the earth and extended the skies. That is what this verse means.

When we study the entire scripture we realize that Jesus is the perfection or fulfillment of the divine wisdom. But all wisdom is not Jesus. Though Jesus is light but all light is not Jesus. Though the word says that God is love not all love is God. Jesus is the incomparable God. Though Jesus is the perfection of all the divine knowledge – 'knowledge' is not God.

From the above said statements it is clear that Jesus was not a person created by God rather He is the eternal God. Also we should understand how to defend these opposing arguments.

Practical Lesson

The word of God is written by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we should not interpret the word partially or with intellectual capacity. Rather we should interpret it with the help of God. Along with that we should reject the teachings and doctrines that are entirely depending upon one verse or word. Also we should decline the teachings from the human reasoning. May the Lord help us to oppose and expel those teachings from our churches.

Questions

1. "You are my son, today I have become your father." What is the actual interpretation of this verse?
2. "Jesus is the first born of all creation." What is the meaning of this statement?
3. "Jesus the beginning of God's creation" Does this statement proves that Jesus is a creation of God?

CHAPTER 10

Heretical Teaching Against Christology

- Reading Portion*** : John 1:1-18; Hebrews 4:14-5:10
- Memory Verse*** : John 1:14
- Purpose*** : To understand about certain teachings that raised against the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.
- Introduction*** : Christology is the branch of theology that deals with the person and work of Jesus Christ. We learned that Jesus Christ is both perfect God and perfect man. But still it remained as the topic of heated debates that how the two extremes of divinity and humanity merged together in one person. Some theologians gave much priority to Divinity while some done interpretation by giving much priority to humanity. Both of these became heresies. In this chapter we learn about the heretical teachings against the divine and human nature of Christ.

1. Docetism

This is a heretical doctrine that rose during first century and it was based on Greek dualism, According to this the body of Jesus Christ was not a real human body. Rather it appeared like a human body [The meaning of Greek term 'Docain' means feel, appear etc. Docetisim came from this root word]. Therefore they claim that the torturing Jesus suffered and his atoning death was not real. This heresy not only questions the incarnation of Jesus

Christ but also it doubts the atoning death and the reality of resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. Ebionism

This is a heresy that denies the divinity of Jesus Christ. According to this Jesus Christ was a son of Joseph and Mary. He was a human being like all others. But Father God raised him to the position of His Son because of His good conduct and strict obedience to the Jewish laws. This heresy is related with the theory of adoptionism.

3. Arianism

We learned about Arianism in the third chapter. They misinterpreted the verse 'Jesus the first born of all creation' and considered Jesus merely as a creation of God. Therefore they taught that Jesus Christ is not a perfect God. They also deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. This teaching is called Arianism.

4. Appollinarianism

Appolinarius is the founder of this heresy. He was the bishop of Laodicea. He was a friend of Athenus who denied the teachings of Arius in the synod of Nicaea. He was a good scholar too. His teachings gave much priority to the divinity of Jesus Christ and totally rejected the human nature of Jesus Christ. His thoughts gave much priority to the salvation of human race [Soteriology]. Therefore he stated that a person who is born like all other human beings cannot save the human race.

Major Teachings

Jesus Christ the perfect God can only save the human race. Therefore the humanity of Jesus Christ is not perfect. Because human body have the temptation of sin and it is physical. So the heavenly God cannot relate with this material world.

Jesus Christ didn't have the soul of human. Rather He had a soul unique from humans.

5. Nestorianism

Nestorius was the patriarch of Constantinople. He was a prominent theologian who studied under Theodore of Antioch. He totally rejected the perfect human nature of Jesus Christ.

Major Teachings

He rejected the addressing of Mary as 'mother of God' and stated that Mary was just a 'carrier of Jesus'. He also taught that

Jesus the perfect God cannot take birth in flesh. He rejected the divine and human union in Jesus Christ.

6. Eutychianism

Eutichus was the head of a monastery which have 300 'monks'. This heresy is also known as 'monophysitism'. His teachings rejected the real humanity of Jesus Christ.

Major Teachings

- Jesus Christ has only one nature- that is divinity.
- The humanity of Jesus Christ was united with His divinity [Like a drop of honey merges with an ocean.]
- Before the union of Divine and human nature, Jesus had both these natures independently.

Above said heretical teachings were defended in the Synods of church in various time periods. These synods confirmed them as pure heretical teachings.

- Docetism was condemned by Ignatius, the early church father who lived in A.D. 115.
- Ebionism, theory of adoption etc were given warning in the local Antiochian Synod.
- Arianism was rejected in the Synod of Nicaea on AD 325 and Arius was expelled from the country.
- Ephesus Synod of AD 431 proclaimed Nestorianism as Heretic.
- Eutychianism was rejected in the council of Chalcedon at A.D. 451.

Practical Lesson

Heresies are always a challenge to the Church. Even if there is little variation added in the real doctrine it will later become strong Heresies. Let us understand the real Christian doctrines and reject the heretical teachings completely.

Questions

1. What are the major teachings of Docetism?
2. What is Ebionism?
3. How church dealt with Arianism?
4. Who was Appollinarius? What were his major teachings?
5. Explain about Nestorianism?
6. What is Monophysitism? Explain?

A. Personal pronouns are used to denote Holy Spirit.

1. He (John 14:17; 16:18), 2. Comforter (John 14:16, 16:7).

B. Holy Spirit expresses and accepts the characters of a person

1. Holy Spirit has Intellectual Capacity: - 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 states that "The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:13 records Holy Spirit as the Spirit that teaches and advices.
2. Holy Spirit has Willpower: - 1 Corinthians 12:11 states that Holy Spirit gives gifts as He determines. Acts 16:6-11 records that Holy Spirit leads devotees as He wishes.
3. Holy Spirit have Emotions : - Ephesians 4:30 states that "Holy Spirit grieves"

Romans 15:32 state about the "Love of Spirit."

C. Holy Spirit does the acts of personhood

Holy Spirit teaches / advices – John 14:26

Holy Spirit leads in truth – John 16:13

Holy Spirit does creation – Genesis 1:12; Job 33:4

Holy Spirit helps / mediates – Romans 8:26

Holy Spirit does miracles – Acts 8:39

Holy Spirit gives consciousness (about Sin, righteousness and Judgment) – Job 16:7-8

Holy Spirit calls for a separate mission – Acts 13:2

Holy Spirit gives commands – Acts 8:29.

D. Scripture distinguishes between the power and personality of Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow You - Luke 1:35

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power – Acts 10:38

My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, butt in demonstration of the spirit and of power. – 1 Corinthians 2:4,5

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit– Luke 4:14; Romans 15:13.

CHAPTER 11

Holy Spirit

- Reading Portion*** : Romans 8: 9-17; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 1:8
- Memory Verse*** : John 16:7-8
- Purpose*** : To know that Holy Spirit is not just a power and to understand that Holy Spirit is a person with complete personality.
- Introduction*** : In this contemporary era of Grace, Lord Yahweh completes His work through Holy Spirit, the third person of Trinity. Therefore this era is known as the era of Holy Spirit. But lot of people rejects the person of Holy Spirit by considering Holy Spirit as just a power.

This group is now developing with different kinds of Heresies. Therefore in this context it is very relevant that we should understand clearly about Holy Spirit. We experience the presence of Holy Spirit in our day today lives. Therefore we should also understand what scripture says about Holy Spirit. Through this chapter let us learn more about the various aspects of Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit is the third person of Trinity. Holy Spirit reveals His character through His name. The designations of Holy Spirit are - Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2), Spirit of Jesus Christ (Romans 8: 9) These designations reveals the relationship of Holy spirit with the other two persons in Trinity.

Person of Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit is not just a power rather it is a divine person. Important facts that reveal the person of Holy Spirit are

Divine Nature of Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit is God. Some major scripture portions that reveal the divinity of Holy Spirit are the following ones

1. **Different Names of Holy Spirit proves His divinity**
 - a. Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 2:11)
 - b. Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
 - c. Spirit of Son-ship (Romans 8:15)
 - d. Other Comforter who is having a personality like Jesus Christ (John 14:16).

These names not only denote that Holy Spirit is connected with the other two persons of Trinity but also these divine names prove His divinity.

2. **The attributes of Holy Spirit reveals the divinity of Holy Spirit.**
 - a. Omnipresent Holy Spirit (Psalm 139: 7-8)
 - b. Omniscient Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
 - c. Omnipotent Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4 – Holy Spirit does the creation that only God can do).
 - d. Holiness (Luke 11:13- Only God have complete Holiness. Like that the name Holy Spirit itself reveals His complete Holiness).
 - e. Truth (1 John 5:6; Job 14:6, 16). Jesus said “I am the truth”.

All these are the incommunicable and communicable attributes of God. These scripture portions prove without doubt that Holy Spirit is God.

3. **Acts of Holy Spirit reveals His divinity.**
 - a. Creation (Gen 1:2; Psalms 104:30) – These verses proves that Spirit of God was active in the process of creation.
 - b. Born-Again (John 3:5-6) - Through the process of being ‘born again’ Holy Spirit can give eternity to believers.
 - c. Gives consciousness about sin (John 16:8). Only god can bring true consciousness about Sin. Since Holy Spirit does this act Holy Spirit is God.
 - d. Sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13):- God chose and Holy Spirit sanctified. It also proves the divinity of Holy Spirit.

4. Holy Spirit is equally related with other persons of Trinity.

- a. In Acts 28:26-27 Holy Spirit is compared with Yahweh in Isaiah 6:9-10. When Paul quotes the verses in Isaiah he states like it is said by Holy Spirit.
- b. In Acts 5:3-4 Holy Spirit is related with God. Because Apostle Peter states that lying to Holy Spirit is like lying to God.
- c. In Mathew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14 Holy Spirit is related with Father and Son. Here Holy Spirit is considered as equal with Father and Son - two persons of Trinity

From the above said statements it is clear that Holy Spirit is not just a power rather Holy Spirit is the person of God or His personality.

Practical Lesson

Let us submit ourselves to the works of Holy Spirit through whom God is completing his will and works in this contemporary era. Let us fulfill the commands of Holy Spirit that dwells in us and lead a successful life according to His control. At the same time let us understand and refuse the heretical teachings that reject and misinterpret the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

Questions

1. Explain about the person and power of Holy Spirit?
1. What is the role of Holy Spirit in the era of Grace?
3. How can we prove the divinity of Holy Spirit in the light of scriptures? Elaborate?

CHAPTER 12

Angels

- Reading Portion* : Hebrews 1
- Memory Verse* : 1 Hebrews 1:13-14
- Purpose* : To know about angels who are the creation of God and to understand about their different types of services.
- Introduction* : "There are many understanding about the angels of God. Majority of them are assumptions or myths. Holy Bible which gives information about the creatures of both visible and invisible worlds also has clearly recorded about angels. Through this chapter let us learn about angels and their peculiarities.

Angels are God's Creation

The very significant factor that we must understand about angels is that they are God's creation. [Nehemiah 9:6; Psalms 148:2, 5; Colossians 1:15-16] -these scriptures prove that angels are God's creation.

Scripture also reveals that these angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:14) and they have physical bodies [Luke 24:39] also. Therefore we cannot see them without a special grace or talent from God (Numb. 22:31; 2 Kings. 6:17; Luke 2:9-14). But scripture also records that they were revealed to many persons with physical bodies at different time periods [Mathew 28:5; Hebrews 13:2].

Different Names of Angels

Angels are mentioned by different names in Holy Bible. Major names are Sons of God [Job 1:6; 2:1]⁶, Holy Ones (Psalms 89:5, 7), Spirits (Hebrew 1:4), thrones, authorities, power [Col 1:16] etc.

Different Kinds of Angels

Based according to the scripture we believe that there are different kinds of angels.

a. Cherubs

Genesis 3:24 record that God entrusted the mission of safeguarding the way to Eden upon cherubs. Lord God flew by mounting on the cherubs [Psalm 18:10; Ezekiel 10: 1-22]. Mercy Seat was in between two cherubs who spread their wings and stood by looking face to face in the arch of Lord (Exodus 25:22; 18-21).

b. Seraph

They are recorded in Isaiah 6:2-7 as the angels that perfectly worshipped the Lord continuously without a break.

c. Living Creatures

We can see the living creatures that worship the Lord by standing around the throne of God in Revelation 4:6-8 and in Ezekiel 1:5-14.

Holy Scripture specifically recorded two names of angels. They were Michael (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7-8; Dan. 10:13, 21) and Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21. Luke 1:19; 26-27).

Beginning of Angels

We studied that angels were created by God. But there is no clear evidence from the scripture about when exactly did God created angels. But based on certain verses let us assume that they were created before the seventh day. Genesis 2:1 Exodus 20:11 etc. state that "God created heaven, earth and every living beings in it." But more clearly we can assume that angels were created in the initial stages of creation process. Because Genesis 1:1 states that God created heaven and earth and in 1:2 says that earth was formless and empty. But there was no mentioning about heaven or sky. If we re-read this assumption with job 38:6-7 ["when God laid the foundation of earth Sons of God shouted in joy] we can understand that angels were also there when God laid the foundation of heaven and earth.

Forms of Angels

There are many assumptions about the form of angels. Some consider angels are living beings that have the physique of human babies with wings while some consider them as women with wings. But both of these forms have no biblical basis. But Bible records various incidents where angels appeared in different forms. For example

Bible records Cherubs, Seraphs etc. have wings [Exodus 25:20; Isaiah 6:2; Ezekiel 10:20-21]. But the angels that appeared in the house of Abraham were completely like human beings (Genesis. 18:2,22). That's why Abraham didn't know that his guests were the angels of God (Hebrews 13:2). Gabriel, the angel of God that appeared before Daniel may have the form of a man (Daniel. 8:15,16; 9:21; Luke 1:26-31). From this we can understand that the form or appearances of angels are different.

Responsibilities of Angels

Scripture clearly portrays that angels are creation of God with different responsibilities. From the scriptures we can understand that angels have diverse abilities and responsibilities. Some of the major responsibilities of the angels are;

a. Worship

In the worship of angels the glory of God is revealed in fullness (Isaiah 6:3; Rev. 5:12). This is not demanded by Lord rather we the creation of God also rise to this heavenly realm of worship through Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:20-23; Rev. 5:6-14).

b. Mediator of Godly revelation/ thoughts.

Luke 1:30-33; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2

c. Serve the people of God

Ps 34:7, Heb 1:14; Mathew 4:11; Mark 1:13; Acts 12:7-10.

d. Partnership in Judgment

Gen 19:1-13; Revelation 15, 16.

Practical Lesson

Angels were created by God to serve us - the people of God. So let's lead our Christian life with much courage. Let us also worship God with complete perfection by understanding the model of angel's worship.

Questions

1. Who are angels?
2. How was the beginning of angels?
3. Explain about different kinds of angels?
4. Explain the form of angels?
5. What are the responsibilities of angels? Explain with examples?

⁶Here Paul condemns the Colossian heresy that angels were also to be worshipped. Here the terms of power, authority, thrones etc were used to mention angels.

CHAPTER 13

Fall Of Angels

- Reading Portion*** : Isaiah 14:1-27; Ezekiel 28:11-19
- Memory Verse*** : Isaiah 14:12-14
- Purpose*** : To know about a group of angels who rebelled against God and boasted in themselves.
- Introduction*** : The responsibility of angels was to perfectly fulfill the duties that God entrusted upon them. But the angels that were specifically created by God for worshipping Him boasted upon their uniqueness and desired for a hegemonic position above God. Therefore they received their punishment and fell from the great position given by God. Let us learn about all these factors through this chapter.

Lucifer

The meaning of Lucifer is morning star or rising star. Isaiah translated this word as “morning star, son of the dawn” in 14:12. Three angels that mentioned in the Bible are Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer. Michael is considered as the Lord of heavenly hosts. Gabriel is the messenger of God. Bible states these facts in relation with their works. Let us assume that Lucifer is the leader of the choir that praise and worships the Lord. He was handsome and decorated with all kinds of jewels. He was innocent from the day of his creation till wickedness was found in him. His place was in the holy mountain and his travel was in the fiery chariots. Thus the cherub Lucifer was a precious angel.

Sin of Lucifer

Lucifer was the leader of heavenly worship and he was unique in all realms. As a result his heart was filled with pride. He started to think that he is equal with God. He wanted to raise his throne from the Holy Mountain and to place it above stars. There were number of angels who joined with Lucifer in the rebellious strife against God. Scripture reveals in Ezekiel 28:16 that his self was filled with pride and he committed sin against God. Because He was not satisfied with the place and hegemonic position he had and forgot his responsibility. He also wished to become superior to God. This is the biggest sin he ever made.

Fall of Lucifer

God considered Lucifer as unholy and expelled him from the holy mountain. He was also expelled from the fiery chariots. Scripture also reveals that he was slain and cast down to earth (Isaiah 14:12; 28:7). In the rebellion against God Lucifer and his followers failed and they were casted away from the presence of the Lord.

We are not clear that when did this happened? According to various theologians this happened very early, in the beginning, i.e., after the creation of heaven and earth. Isaiah 45:18 states that the heaven and earth that God created was not formless and empty. If so, theologians consider that, later the same earth became empty because of the presence of Lucifer and his followers.

Lucifer and his followers were thus expelled from the presence of the Lord. They received eternal punishment and they were fallen to the ground or earth. They then became Satan and devils of Satan. Those angels who were destined for eternal perishing thus began to work against God from the very day of their fall. Lucifer and his followers are working against God through the diverse form of Satan, devils of Satan, different kinds of evil spirits etc. The very aim of Satan is to control the human race and earth through different strategies. Because he wanted to become the sovereign lord of all.

Practical Lesson

Sovereign God knows even the thoughts and actions against Him and His works. Let us remove those actions of sinful flesh from our own lives. Let us become satisfied in everything that God has given to us. Let us perfectly do the divine ministries that God entrusted upon us. At the same time let us fight against Satan by knowing his immoral and atheistic strategies. May God strengthen us to work out these factors in our own lives.

Questions

1. Who is Lucifer? What were his characteristics prior to his fall?
2. Where was the place of Lucifer?
3. What was the cause or sin that became the reason for the fall of Lucifer?
4. What happened to Lucifer who done Sin against Lord? Explain?
5. When did the fall of Lucifer happen according to theologians?
6. Where is Lucifer and his followers now? What are their activities?
7. Explain the history of Lucifer, the son of darkness who once was the bright morning star?

CHAPTER 14

Demons

- Reading Portion* : Mark 5:1-20
- Memory Verse* : Mathew 12:43-45
- Purpose* : To understand about what scripture says about demons.
- Introduction* : We studied about the fallen angels who rebelled against God. Bible states that the fallen angels are demons. But Bible doesn't explain elaborately about Satan or demons. Because Bible is the Holy Scripture through which God revealed Himself to the world. Therefore the primary aim of Bible is to reveal the past, present and future activities of God in relation with world. But there are certain scripture portions that mentions about satan and demons. Let us learn about them through this chapter.

Does Demons exist?

We get different answers for this question. When some argues that there are demons some others especially materialists and a majority of psychologists argues that there are no demons. They consider this 'demonic situation' as double personality disorder. This double personality arrives when the human consciousness is broadly divided into two. But scripture says that there are demons and they can attack human beings. At the same time it is also true that there are people with double personality disorder and they are not influenced by any demonic activity. Some demon possessed person behaves like psychic. But all psychological problems are not demonic.

Beginning of Demons

There are different opinions about the beginning of demons. Many believe that they were the fallen angels who rebelled against God. Since demons are naturally stated as “impure or unholy spirits” they are also considered as spirits of some specific creation. But some others consider the giant demons are the ones who died during flood and later become demons. Out of these mythological thoughts the thought that stands in close relation with Holy Bible is the first one.

Since Genesis 1:31 records that “God saw everything He created is good” we can assume that until that time angels didn’t become demons. But Genesis 3 state that Satan tempted Eve by appearing in the form of serpent or snake. Therefore we can assume that demons were created in between these two events. Peter (2 Peter 2:4) and Jude (Jude 6) records about these demons as the angels that were expelled from the presence of the lord and ‘kept for judgment’. Based on these verses let us assume that Lucifer and his followers were the angels who rebelled against God. As a result later they became Satan and his group. Demons can be understood as the ones who belong to this group.

Activities of Demons

Different kind of activities that demons doing can be understood from the Bible itself. Bible denotes Satan as the leader of demons and they are known in different names [Satan (Mathew 4:1; 13:39, Revelation 12:9) snake/ serpent (Gen 3:1; 2 Cori 11:3; Rev. 12:9), Beelzebub (Mathew 12:24; 10:25; Luke 11:15), Lord of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), Ruler of the kingdom of air (Eph 2:2) Evil one (Mathew 13:19; 1 John 2:13)] etc. are the different designations of Satan

Different activities / works of demons are enlisted below

- Satan is the beginner of sin. Today also he attracts people to sin against Lord (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8)
- satan tries to oppose and destroy the activities of God. As he made Eve to sin (Genesis 3:1-6) satan also tried to tempt Jesus and was defeated by Him (Mathew 4:1-11). Today also through different methods – lies (John 8:44), cheating (Rev. 12:9), Murder (John 8:44), etc. satan continues his destroying activities. He blinded the eyes of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4; Gala. 4:8).

- Demons who belong to the group of satan can inhabit in the body of human beings and animals (Luke 8:27, 32),
- More than one demon can inhabit in the same body of a person. There were 6,000 demons in the physical body of the human who was affected by legion (Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30).
- If a demon left from a person the same can re-inhabit in that body or it can bring seven more wicked demons together and can inhabit the same body (Mathew 12:43-45)
- Though all demons are wicked there are more wicked and less wicked in themselves (Mathew 12:45).

Practical Lesson

Though demons and their leader Satan have power, our God is omnipotent Lord. He gave authority over demons to us. Therefore we don't have to fear demons.

Questions

1. Is demonic activity is real. Explain?
2. What are the different assumptions about the beginning of demons?
3. How can we assume the beginning of demons on the basis of Bible?
4. What is the relation between demons and satan? Elaborate?
5. What are the natures and characters of demons?
6. Why Bible doesn't have much explanation about satan?

CHAPTER 15

Human Being

Reading Portion : Genesis 1-3

Memory Verse : Genesis 2:7

Purpose : To know clearly about the creator and fall of human beings. Also to understand about the factors of human beings and God's will about humans.

Introduction : Human beings have many unique qualities and talents than other living beings. He conquered everything that he can't reach once. He is at the supreme level of his growth and development. But no one can give a clear answer to the question – “how humans were created?”⁷ But Holy Bible gives clear information about the beginning of human beings, changes happened in him, structure of human being etc. Let us learn about it in this chapter.

Creation of Human Beings

Holy Scripture records that the Lord God created the heaven and earth in the beginning. After that he created all living beings through His word. And on the sixth day He created man with dust on the ground [Gen 2:7, Psalm 90:3]. After creating man from dust, God breathed the birth of life into his nostrils and he became alive. Bible also records that God created human in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27).

Creation of Women

God searched a partner for human being in every other living being. But He couldn't find anyone. Therefore God gave a deep sleep to Adam and He created women from Adam's rib. Thus scripture

states that Eve was made from Adam. But Genesis 1:27; 5:1-2 also states that God created man and woman in his own image and likeness.

Three factors of human being

Holy Bible states that human beings are created with three factors - Body, Soul and Spirit (1 Thess. 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). Bible teaches that Body is created with the dust of the ground. Thus when man dies he returns to the dust in the earth (Psalms 90:3). After creating Adam God breathed the spirit of life into Adam. This is the spirit. When man dies this spirit goes back to God (Ecc.12:7). Also Scripture states that, God formed the spirit in human beings who were created after Adam (Zech. 12:1). When this spirit and body unites soul is created.

Entry of Sin

God created man in His own image and likeness. They were successfully doing the responsibilities that God entrusted upon them. At that time satan appeared in the form of a snake in front of woman. Satan tempted women through different ways in order to disobey the command of Lord. Finally Eve ate the fruit which was forbidden by God and gave it to Adam by thinking that they also will be like God. Thus the human beings fell into the temptation by satan. They breached the command of God and committed sin. Thus the spirit in human beings that was continually engaged with the Lord died. Through this way sin entered into the world (Rom.5:12).

Deliverance from Sin

As mentioned above only the spirit in man can have a relation with God.⁸ This spirit which is in the state of death will be alive only when one accepts Lord Jesus Christ. This is called born again nature. Spirit in human beings becomes 'born again' only when one accepts Jesus as his personal savior and submits himself completely to God. This spirit can continually engage with the Holy Spirit.

But many people consider the creation of God, fall of human beings etc. as mere stories and radically reject it. When we reject the factor of Adam's sin we are also rejecting the salvation through Last Adam (1 Cori, 15:45-49). Each and every human being should receive either eternal punishment or eternal salvation. Scripture reveals that one day every human being should stand before the judgment throne of God with his three factors of Body, Soul and Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:10). Holy Bible then records about the creation, fall, redemption of human beings with much clarity than any other religious books and theories.

God's Will about Human Creation

God's will behind the creation of human beings is to have a close fellowship with God and to do stewardship to other creation. Mission of human being was to take care about every created thing as a representative of God. But when he committed sin all these relations had changed. But as we become born again through Jesus Christ we are getting back all the relations and blessings once broke in Eden. Those who become a 'new creation' through Jesus Christ will have an in-depth fellowship with God. They will also do stewardship to other human and living beings by considering himself as a representative of God. Those who are in Christ don't have a ruling or exploitative attitude towards others.

Practical Lesson

As we become a new creation through Jesus Christ let us fulfill the real divine purpose about our lives. Let us serve others and build an esteemed relationship with God. Let us keep away the dominative and exploitative attitude away from us. Let us give the fruits of the spirit unconditionally, because we all have to stand before Christ on His judgment day.

Questions

1. Explain how God created Adam and Eve?
2. What are the factors in human beings? Explain about each?
3. What is sin? How man became sinful?
4. How can we get salvation from sin?
5. What was the divine will or will of God behind the creation of Human beings?
6. In this context of crucial environmental problems what is the role of us?
7. Write an essay within two pages

What Scripture says about the creation of human beings, fall of human beings, salvation, and eternal life?

⁷ There are lots of theories like evolution theory that says about the beginning of human beings. But because of its incomplete nature and hypothetical assumptions even the scientific world itself rejects its accountability.

⁸ We can divide the people of this world into two broad categories. (a) A group of people whose spirit was died. Soul is dominating in their lives. (b) A group whose spirit is in born again nature. Holy Spirit is dominating in their lives. Here soul will be subjected to spirit.

CHAPTER 16

Doctrines And False Teachings

Reading Portion : Galatians 1:6-10; 1 Timothy 4:1-3

Memory Verse : Galatians 1:9

Purpose : To understand that the doctrines according to the word of God are the true doctrines. Also to distinguish true doctrines from false doctrines (that are not from scripture) known as heresies.

Introduction : There are thousands of Christian denominations existing in this world today. All these churches have many teachings that are contradicting to each other. They give different interpretations to the same scripture and develop diverse doctrines from the same verses in Bible. As a result many are confused without knowing the true doctrine as per the word of God. Since this is a very important subject let us study about what is true doctrine? and what is false doctrine?

What are doctrines?

Doctrines are the reliable and true teachings. They are the fundamental teachings that express the credibility of a community. Christian doctrines are the original and clear interpretation of the fundamental teachings in Holy Scriptures especially from the New Testament. According to this, true doctrines are based on Bible. Christian doctrines are dynamic and constructive doctrines. Also it leads us to eternity- the ultimate destination of Christian faith.

Importance of Doctrines

Church is like a locked up garden as in song of Solomon 4:12. Therefore the doctrines of church have a great significance and it is carefully placed in a structure. Since the scripture says to “watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Timothy 4:16) it is clear that doctrines have much significance. The particular term “sound doctrine” in (Titus 2:1; 1 Timothy 1:10) reveals the moral importance of Christian doctrines.

We will not get salvation by obeying any doctrine. Rather, it is possible only by obeying doctrines that are based on the Holy Scripture. Christian churches especially the Pentecostal churches have doctrines based on the word of God. These doctrines not only help us to lead an exemplary and blessed life in this world but also it helps us to attain the eternal salvation that God has prepared for us. Every member of the church is obliged to obey these doctrines. But certain doctrines that permeated into some of the churches must be scrutinized in the light of scriptures and also we should expel them if it is necessary. Thus doctrines are very relevant for the existence of church, growth of believers and for attaining the glorious eternal life.

Mandates of Doctrines

As the church has certain criteria's Christian doctrines also have certain mandates. Christian doctrines should not be made suddenly because of a special ‘revelation’ or because of a special experience of a person. Rather it should be formed through certain criteria's. These Christian doctrines can be broadly classified into two. Central doctrines (core doctrines which are very important and fundamental) and Peripheral doctrines (teachings which are less significant). Major criteria's set for the Christian doctrines are the following ones;

a. Basis of the Scripture¹

Doctrines should be based on the divine revelation of the word of God. Doctrines based on the special experiences and those formed from the traditional cultural heritages are not based on bible and they are not very much significant. Doctrines cannot be developed from a particular verse or from a word. Doctrines that do not merge with the ultimate aim of the word of God are also not based on scriptures. Hypothetical assumptions or thoughts that based on any verse are also not bible based doctrines. Doctrines are the teachings that word of God explains with perfection and clarity. Scripture should become the fundamental mandate for Christian doctrines.

b. Resemblance with the teachings of Jesus Christ

The teachings of Christian church should be in resemblance or likeness with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Teachings that reject the glory and teachings of our savior Jesus Christ and those that seek altered ways other than the mediation of Jesus Christ are false doctrines.

c. Recognition of Apostles

The fundamental doctrines of Christian church should be the teachings that apostles of early church followed and recognized. Doctrines that are not approved by apostles are against the word of God. Indulgence receipt, penance, worship of Mary, Praying for the dead people etc. are the antagonistic practices which were not approved by Apostles and early church

d. Model of Early Church

Doctrines that develop against the teachings and practices of early church are against the word of God too. The teaching of early church is the evident factor in the epistles as well as in the gospels. The doctrines that added up from tradition, culture, and imagination are also false doctrines. New Testament proves that Child baptism, idolatry etc. were not in the early church.

False Doctrines

Doctrines that develop without following the above mentioned criteria's are false doctrines. They are heresies and they stand against the word of God. Apostle Paul evidently stated about these in Galatians 1:8-9. Those who come with these kind of false doctrines are 'eternally condemned'. True faith is based on the real biblical doctrines and are very necessary for salvation. Pentecostal churches are the churches that give significance to the doctrines based on the Bible.

But in this era heresies and false doctrines based on assumptions and misinterpretation of scriptures are intruding in the Pentecostal church too. So the role of every believer is to be vigilant against these kinds of heresies.

Practical Lesson

Let's be aware about the heresies, false teachings and stand against them. Let's study about the doctrines and teachings of every denomination that we see today and ignore those who teach heresies. Let's hold on to the fundamental biblical doctrines.

Questions

1. What are doctrines?
2. What is the importance of doctrines?
3. What is the fundamental mandate for doctrines?
4. What are the major criteria's for doctrines? Explain
5. By analyzing the doctrines of various Christian denominations in your locality explain that whether they are right or wrong?

¹ Holy Scripture is the canon that contains the two testaments (39+27). The apocryphal books in the catholic bible are not inspired word of God. These are the later additions to the original scripture to establish their own doctrines.

CHAPTER 17

False Teachings (Continued) Baptism: Counter Arguments

- Reading Portion*** : John 3:22-23; Acts 19:1-5
- Memory Verse*** : Colossians 2:12
- Purpose*** : To know about the counter arguments against baptism and to study the explanations about it based on the scriptures
- Introduction*** : Lots of people are misinterpreting the inspired word of God by stating that Baptism is not true. But if we understand the scripture from its context through a thorough exegetical study we can understand that these arguments have no basis and they are the interpretations based on certain assumptions. Through this chapter let us learn about the various arguments against the holy baptism and its divine realities.

Scripture Based Baptism

Those who read Holy Bible without any pre-conceived notions or prejudices can understand that the complete or immersed baptism is true baptism based on scriptures. Some of the scriptures that prove the immersed baptism is the scripture based baptism are;

- The greatest role model of baptism is the baptism of Jesus Christ. Word of God states that Jesus went to Jordan to be baptized by John. There is no doubt that Jesus received the complete or immersed baptism before the beginning of His mission (Mathew 3:12-16; Mark 1:9-10)

- ‘Baptize those who believe’ (Acts 8:37) was one of the core apostolic teachings.
- Jesus Christ also taught baptism with great significance that “whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Let us now look into the false teachings that rose against the immersed baptism revealed in the scriptures.

1. Mark 16:16

In the light of this scripture some teach that Jesus Christ who taught “whoever believes and baptized will be saved” also taught that ‘only those who do not believe will be condemned.’ Therefore some argues that those who believe have no condemnation or judgment. So they teach that believing is enough and baptism is supplementary. But anyone who reads the bible can understand that this teaching have no basis in scripture. In this verse Jesus Christ is broadly dividing human beings into two categories. 1. Those that believe and baptizes. 2. Those who does not believe. But scriptures never mentioned anything about those who believe and do not baptize. Therefore we can understand that this false teaching is based on assumptions and it has no scripture basis.

2. Families That Baptized

Scripture states that some families are baptized (Acts 10:48; 16:32-34). Therefore some argues that “if the entire family is baptized then the kids in that family were also baptized”. But in these verses there is no visible evidence that kids were also baptized. Baptism is the divine commandment of God. By doing that Jesus Christ became the role model for us to do baptism. Apostles also strongly taught about this in the early church. Therefore those who are trying to establish that baptism is wrong based on their own assumptions are working against the word of God.

3. The Thief On the Cross

Some questions that ‘does the thief on the cross went to paradise (heaven) after receiving baptism?’ If we examine the scriptures we can see that not only this thief but also the holy ones in Old Testament like Enoch, Elijah, Abraham, and David etc. went to heaven without receiving baptism. What is its reason? Baptism is not an Old Testament teaching. Rather it is the core teaching of the New Testament church that began in the day of Pentecost. The transformation of the thief on the cross and his entry into heaven is a ‘unique incident’. Here God is expressing his mercy towards the transformed sinner. Also this incident

reveals the message that God will not forsake those who trust in him. Therefore it is not true to prove that baptism is not necessary based on this single incident and by neglecting all other scripture portions about baptism.

4. Do Not Hinder The Little Children

Some Christian's tries to prove child baptism based on 'Do not hinder the little children'. It was the commandment of Jesus in Luke 18:15-17. But the context of this verse states that it has no relation with baptism. Rather the context behind this verse is, the disciples of Jesus blocked the little children who came towards Jesus Christ for prayer. Jesus said that in order to bless the kids send them to me.

5. Children of Christians

Some argue that the traditional Christians and their children have certain unique characteristics than others. Therefore they consider that giving child baptism is very necessary for their kids. They give importance to traditional practices and customs. But we should give importance to the word of God which is very much significant than the traditions. God's will is that everyone should receive the born again nature.

6. Major Teachin of Paul was Not Baptism

This argument is based on 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. Those who have this perspective think that baptism was not an important concern for Paul. But if we study the context of this portion we can understand the real meaning of it more clearly. Because the believers of the Corinthian church believed that the person who baptizes more people is the greater evangelist. That's why Paul is writing these verses to condemn the meaninglessness of this perspective.

Therefore Paul states that 'he is not the greatest and his aim is not to become the most greatest by baptizing many.' Rather Paul states that his aim is to evangelize the world.

Doctrines are not to be based on any assumptions or traditions. Also doctrines should not be developed from any particular verse. Rather doctrines should stand in relation with the entire scripture. Since the doctrine of baptism is clearly evident in the scriptures and as it is followed by the early church it is the true doctrine. Therefore certain assumptions or hypothesis based on the misinterpretation of certain verses or the customs that follow tradition without any scripture basis are truly against the word of God.

Practical Lesson

Let us follow God and His divine commandment of Baptism since it is the doctrine that is evidently portrayed in the scriptures. Along with that let us understand the heretical doctrines and reject them.

Questions

1. How can we prove that the complete or immersed baptism is the true and scripture based baptism?
2. What is the heretical teaching based on Mark 16:16? What is the real meaning of it?
3. Why the thief on the cross entered heaven without receiving baptism?
4. Does the child baptism is true since Jesus said 'Do not hinder the little children'?
5. Do you think that baptism is not necessary since Paul states that 'I did not come to baptize'? Explain?
6. Elaborate within two pages

What are the arguments raised by those teach that complete or immersed baptism is not necessary? Explain it based on the scriptures?

CHAPTER 18

Gifts Of Holy Spirit And False Teachings

- Reading Portion* : 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14
- Memory Verse* : 1 Corinthians 14:26
- Purpose* : To know about different gifts that we receive through the Holy Spirit and to understand different false teachings against it.
- Introduction* : There are different teachings about the gifts of Holy Spirit. These gifts played a significant role in the growth of the early church in the apostolic age. But many believe that these gifts ended in the apostolic age itself. On the contrary many people believe that gifts of the Holy Spirit are existing even today and many do various ministries of the gifts of Holy Spirit. Some also encourages these ministries of Holy Spirit. In this context we should understand clearly about the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through this chapter let us know more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

What Are The Gifts of Holy Spirit

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are the divine talents or abilities that God gave because of His grace through Holy Spirit. Though the New Testament writers mentioned much about the gifts of the Holy Spirit no one has ever written about it like Apostle Paul. Because Paul wrote it from the perspective of church as the body of Christ. Paul wrote about various functions of the Holy Spirit much clearly (1 Corinthians 12-14). Scripture states that everyone should desire for the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:1). Here Paul also mentions

about how the gifts of the Holy Spirit should be made practical in a church.

Purpose Of The Gifts Of Holy Spirit

God gives the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the growth and spiritual nourishment of the church (Ephesians 4:11-12). These gifts are given not for the individual benefit rather they are given for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:3). In the verses of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 gifts of Holy Spirit are given for developing unity in the midst of various diversities. It also states that each of the gifts given to every believer of the New Testament church is precious. Scripture also states that Holy Spirit gives the gifts to each as He wishes. Word of God (1 Corinthians 12:4-10) also states that not everyone have the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

How Many Gifts Are There?

There is no common conclusion about the number of the gifts of Holy Spirit. When some scholars state that there are 27 gifts some others consider that there are 14 and some other views that there is only 9 gifts of Holy Spirit. The thought of nine gifts are based on 1 Corinthians 12. But along with these nine gifts five more services (Prophet, Evangelist, Apostle, Shepherd and Counselor) are united to form the fourteen gifts. But the arguments of 27 gifts are based on the scriptures that talks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Let us look into various gifts of Holy Spirit that we see in 1 Corinthians 12.

1. Knowledge (8) – Divine knowledge
2. Wisdom (8) – Divine knowledge that helps in the right time at the praxis field.
3. Faith (9) - though all are believers some have precious faith .
4. Healing (9, 28) – healing of diseased.
5. Miraculous powers (10) – miracle works
6. Prophecy (10) – talk as the representative of God about the past, present and future aspects
7. Discerning (10) –Distinguishing between various spirits
8. Different kinds of tongues (10) – Talk in different languages
9. Interpretation of tongues (10) – Interpret various languages
10. Gift to help others (28) – Gift to help others
11. Administration (28) – Pastoral Service- protecting

Among these if we consider the gifts of knowledge, wisdom and gifts of different tongues, interpretation of tongues as two gifts we can conclude that there are nine fundamental gifts of Holy Spirit. If we consider all the small and large gifts in the light of scriptures as the gifts of Holy Spirit then we can understand that there are lots of gifts of Holy Spirit (Example. Rom. 12:6-8).

Does The Gifts Of Holy Spirit Ended?

Some teach that the gifts of Holy Spirit are ended. They teach this by misinterpreting the verses of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. They teach that the gifts of tongues, interpretation, prophecy, healing etc. have ended. But they keep silence about the gift of helping, service etc. Based on the scripture "when the perfection comes, the imperfect disappears" they teach that as the perfect Bible was written completely the imperfections were ended. What is its actual fact or reality? When we read the following scriptures in 1 Corinthians 13 it is written that as the perfect comes we will see it face to face and fully. Therefore these verses completely talks about the second coming of Jesus Christ (1 John. 3:2,3). So that the gifts God gave for the growth and spiritual nourishment of church will end at the rapture during the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Here Paul states that prophecy, tongues, knowledge etc. are imperfect and they will end. Since word of God is perfect then every other imperfect expression should end. But it is clear that knowledge is still evident in this earth. Therefore the 'perfect' factor here is not mentioning about the 'word of God'. Also it is clear that this perfect factor is not visible even today. So the scripture itself speaks that the gifts of Spirit are not moved away even today. Since many saw the false prophecies and false tongues they states that the gifts of the spirit have ended. But what we should understand that false prophecies existed even from the first century when the gifts of Holy Spirit were widely exercised (1 John 4:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Therefore the presences of false prophets are not the proof for the end of the gifts of Holy Spirit. Rather the presence of the fake proves that genuine or original factor is evident even today.

Practical Lesson

Let us receive the gifts that God gave for the spiritual nourishment of Church and practice it. Let us understand the groups and people that misinterpret the word of God and stand against it. May God strengthen us to do that.

Questions

1. What are the gifts of Holy Spirit?
2. Who is the New Testament writer that wrote evidently about the gifts of Holy Spirit?
3. Why the gifts of Holy Spirit do are give?
How many gifts of Holy Spirit are there? Which are they?
4. What is the basis of the argument that 'gifts of Holy Spirit are dead'?
5. Write an essay within two pages

Examine the heretical teachings that 'gifts of Holy spirit are ended' in the light of scriptures?

CHAPTER 19

Salvation And False Teachings

- Reading Portion* : Hebrews 6:4-8
- Memory Verse* : Hebrews 12:15-17
- Purpose* : To know about the divine activity of salvation. Also we have to understand that we will lose the salvation through if we don't have faith in God and if we lead a sinful life.
- Introduction* : We know that salvation is the divine plan of God to reconcile humans who had fallen from the presence of Lord because of sin. Some teach that salvation is received by grace through faith. Therefore it will not be lost. But some others consider salvation may be lost by faithlessness or by purposefully leading a sinful life. From this context let us study about what is salvation? Will we lose salvation?

What is Salvation?

Salvation is the process of delivering human beings completely from the punishment caused by sin. In other words salvation is the subtotal of the divine activity of giving eternal life and glory to the human beings who were totally condemned to the problems, trials and punishment of sin [Ephesians 1:3-8, 2:4-10; Pet 1:3-5]. Salvation is the subtotal of divine grace, divine holiness and divine fellowship.

How are we saved?

Paul writes about the process of salvation in Eph. 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God". From this Pauline statement two things are visible. 1. God is the one who gives the grace. 2. Believer is the one who receives salvation. When one receives the grace from God by faith he will be saved. So one who have no faith in God will not be saved. Also we should understand that no good work can become the foundation for salvation.

Three periods of Salvation Experience

Salvation is a process. Scripture teaches that the salvation which is fully expressed from eternity to eternity have three different phases. They are;

1. Past Experience

Salvation is experienced in the past life of those who believed in Jesus and His salvific actions. Scripture reveals that believer is saved from the punishment and death of sin once and for all time (Luke 7:50; Eph 2:5, 8; Titus 3:5; 2 Tim 9-10).

2. Present Experience

Salvation is a present experience under the guidance of Holy Spirit. This present experience with Christ helps a believer to overcome the temptations and challenges raised by sin. This is the present experience (Romans 6:1-23; 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 2:19-20; 5:1-26; Philippians 1:19).

3. Future Experience

This is the fulfillment of the process of salvation that the holy believers experiences with Jesus Christ along with a sanctified body. This is the future stage of a person who was once delivered from the punishment of sin and the believer who continually wins over the temptation of sin, will be perfectly united with Christ (Romans 8:29, 13:11, 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:5).

These three time periods are the three phase or dimensions of a same process.

Salvation and Sin

Before the salvation process everyone was sinner. The sinner will be redeemed from the bondage of sin when he receives the divine gift of salvation through faith. Salvation is the process of leaving the sinful life and becoming holy. This can be done by accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord and savior and through the work of Holy Spirit sinner will receive justification and sanctification.

Sin and Punishment

The wages of sin is death and those who commit sin must receive punishment. This also reveals the righteousness of God. But Jesus Christ bore this punishment of divine righteousness and became the propitiation of every one's sins. Therefore now there is no condemnation for those who believe in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1) [John broadly divided sin into two categories- sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death (1 John 5:5-17). Here the writer does not mention about the particular sins that leads to death. But in the light of the word of God- worship of other gods, immoral life, grieving of Holy Spirit are the major sins that may lead to death]. But the other sins that do not lead to death committed by a believer should be confessed by him in his everyday life. But if we judge ourselves (1 Cori. 11:31,32), we would not come under judgment. But the word of God also states that if we do not judge ourselves God will judge us.

Will we lose salvation?

This is a question of many debates and discussions. Some believe that salvation will never be lost or the one who truly saved cannot leave Jesus Christ. On the other hand some argue that salvation may be lost. Therefore let us take a look into what scripture says about this topic. Hebrews 6:4, 12:15-17 gives right answer to this question. Scripture states about the saved believers as "those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age." But "if they fall away it is impossible to bring them back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace." From this verse we can understand the possibility of a saved one's return. If anyone fall away it will be hard to renew them to the old stage. Therefore this verse clearly states there is a chance for the losing of salvation. Also there are deadly sins and sins that do not end in death. Deadly sins will depart us away from God. God gave the authority to man to select good or evil. Saved community has this freedom. But if we commit sin purposefully or if we choose to sin we will move away from God. Though no change happens to the divine grace and salvation if we denunciate our faith we will be separated away from salvation.

Practical Lesson

Let us thank the Lord for the 'salvation' that we received by faith as a gift from God. At the same time do not think that if we do sin we will not lose salvation. Let us understand the doctrines that

scripture teach perfectly. Let us keep ourselves in holy and do not denunciate the salvation by doing sin.

Questions

1. What is salvation? How are we saved?
2. What are the three periods of salvation experience?
3. How sin and punishment is related?
4. Where is the scripture that explains 'salvation will be loosed'?
5. Write an essay within two pages 'Will we lose salvation or not'?
Examine this in the light of scriptures?

CHAPTER 20

Eternal Hell

Reading Portion : Revelation 20:11-15; Luke 16:19-31; Mark 9:42-49

Memory Verse : Mark 9:45-47

Purpose : To know that eternal hell is a teaching of the word of God. And to understand that the teachings that denies hell have no basis and they are satanic.

Introduction : There are lot of people who says that there is no heaven and hell. Also many says that both these are two experiences in this world itself. But holy scripture clearly speak about hell. If we lead an unholy life by considering that there is no heaven and hell we are cheating ourselves. Through this chapter let us teach about what the word of God teaches about hell. ces about that support the existence of God.

Hell

Hell is the place for Satan and his devils (Mathew 25:43). Those who are expelled through judgment will be sent to this place. The root word for hell is 'Gehinna' in Greek and 'Gehinnon'² in Hebrew. Gospels pictures hell as a place with complete darkness and never ending fire (Mark 9:43; Mathew 8:12). Major concern over here is the rejection or expulsion from the presence of the Lord. Usually hell, netherworld, Sheol etc .were considered as hell. Sheol is the temporary place where ungodly people stay during the time between death and resurrection

for judgment etc. (Rev. 20:13-14). It is significant that the word of God never says about Satan as the lord of hell.

In every New Testament scripture portions where hell is mentioned, it is related with terrific judgment. Except James 3:6 every other portions are the statements of Jesus Christ about it. [Mathew 5:22; 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5]

Peculiarities of Hell

From the scriptures we can understand certain peculiarities of hell. They are described here-

a. Hell is eternal

Certain scripture portions about eternal hell are Mathew 25:41- eternal fire, Mathew 25:46 –eternal torturing, Mathew 3:12- never ending fire. From this we can understand that those who teach that hell is not real have no basis in scripture.

b. Hell is Pre-Destined

From Mathew 25:41 it is evident that hell is pre-destined for Satan and his devils. Not only Satan and his devils but also all those who become the followers of Satan have to go there.

c. Never Ending Fire

Mark 9:43, 48 states that hell has never ending fire. Mathew 5:22; 12:42, 50; 18:9 It states that this fire is prepared for the judgment.

Atrocity Of Hell

All these above mentioned statements express the terrific nature of hell. Torturing in hell is eternal and it is continuous through day and night (Revelation 20:10). The expression of never ending fire and never dying worms expresses the terrific nature of hell as a lake of fire and burning sulphur (Rev. 14:10). No sinner can ever escape from this place.

Who Deserves Hell?

Basically hell is designed for Satan and his devils (Mathew 25:41; Rev. 20:10). But Jesus said those who do not give reverence to his brother (Mathew 5:22), those who are subjected to sin (Mathew 5:29-30, Mark 9:45-47; Mathew 18:9; Mark 9:43), Pharisees, Scribes (Mathew 23:15, 33) etc. will go to hell. From this we can understand that those who abandon the commandments of Lord and those who do not practice it will get eternal hell. Those who do evil and whose name is not recorded in the book of life (Rev 20:15) will go to hell.

Along with them those whose name was not written in the book of life will be thrown into hell. Also Revelation 20:15 states that the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars will be thrown into hell. Also beast, false prophet (Rev. 19:20; 20:10) death, Sheol (Rev.20:14) etc. will be put into hell. Thus Satan who stands against God, his devils, those who follow him and those who do not obey it completely are the candidates deserved for hell.

Practical Lesson

God called us to eternal life. At the same time let us also know that eternal hell is also a reality. Therefore let us obey the divine commandments of Lord and lead a holy and faithful life. Let us move away from all the traps that Satan set for us.

Questions

1. What is hell?
2. What is sheol? What are the characteristics of Sheol?
3. Explain that hell is eternal?
4. What are the features of hell?
5. Explain with reference that who all are deserved to go to hell?
6. Elaborate the terrific nature of hell?

² Valley of Hinnom is the place where kids sacrificed to the Canaanite gods of melech and Bal (2 kings 16:3; 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6)

CHAPTER 21

Heresies

Reading Portion : 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

Memory Verse : 1 John 4:1-2

Purpose : To understand the heretical and cultic groups that spread heresies by studying their common traits.

Introduction : Today heresies are spreading worldwide in an uncontrollable way. Its growth and popularity may wonder us. They give new interpretations to the word of God. In order to get much publicity these heretics use new strategies. In such a context where these groups are growing day by day true believers are in a stage of chaos without knowing what is true and what is false. Therefore through this chapter let us understand the common nature or traits of these heretical groups.

Heretical Teachings

Heresies are the work of Satan, to lead the true followers into the false way. It covers up the real truths. History³ proves that if we add a letter to the doctrines or word of God it will surely turn into heresy. From New Testament epistles⁴ it is clear that from the very early stages -heresies were penetrated into the Christian church. If we examine the church history we can see heresies troubled the early church very much. Heresies are the activities of Satan to lead the church into perverted doctrines and unholy practices. Heresies had never formed or spread by the title of 'heresy'. Rather they began

and spread in the same way of true doctrines. Therefore we have to be vigilant against heresies. We should not blindly believe anything and everything we hear. Rather we should examine every aspect and only follow the teachings based on Bible. Also we should reject and condemn the teachings against the word of God.

Characteristics of Heresies

In all heresies we can see some common features and characters. They are;

a. New Interpretation

The very beginning and existence of cults are through mis-interpretation. Many such cults begin by rejecting the scripture based doctrines of traditional Christians or Pentecostal churches. They are 'unique and new' interpretation. Most of the times these interpretations were based on a particular word or verse. These interpretations stand against the ultimate aim of scriptures.

b. Bible is not the only basis for interpretation

Even though heretic teachers say that their teachings and advices are based on Bible they may have other sources for other doctrines. They may be 'New type' of doctrine or teaching formed by integrating the thoughts and beliefs of other religions or other philosophies with Christian faith and doctrines. Along with these they express and teach everything that comes in their mind as the divine revelation. They use different kinds of methods to attract people to their beliefs.

c. Rejects the fundamental doctrines

Cults denunciate the basic or fundamental Christian doctrines. They either reject or misinterpret the fundamental doctrines of Trinity, Heaven, Hell, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Grace, Holiness, Salvation etc. They simplify the doctrines that every Christian believes should strictly follow. They exploit the illiterate nature of the people by interpreting the unimportant doctrines with great significance.

d. Continually Changing Theology

Cults do not have any strong or fundamental theological aims. Based on the context and attitude of the leader they give much variation to their theology. Their teaching about God also does not have any clarity. They try to integrate different faiths of different religions and ends up in the failure of their efforts.

e. Dual Nature

Cultic groups are usually doubled faceted. They lack the transparent nature. So that no one could ever understand them. They

have a pious and attracting face which public sees. At the same time they have an unethical and sinful private face.

f. Another Christ

Even though the majority of the cults accept Jesus Christ most of them do not believe in the salvation through Jesus Christ or the divinity of Jesus Christ. Cultic groups never mentions about Jesus Christ as the second person of trinity and as the perfect God and perfect Man.

g. Attractive Leadership

The major factor behind the growth of heretical doctrines was its attractive leadership. They reveal themselves as the representatives of God or sometimes they address people as they themselves are God. Some do 'special kind of miracles' and make the people believe that they are God's own people. As a result their crowd considers the words of leader as word from God.

h. False Prophecy

Majority of the cults were formed from false prophecies. Yuyomis, Jehovah's Witness, Sabbaticals etc were prophesying about the date at the second coming of Jesus Christ. But when that prophecy failed they changed the interpretation and became cults.

Thus we understood about the common traits or nature of heretical groups. Many churches that once proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ later turned to cultic groups.

Practical Lesson

By understanding the heretical groups around us let us move away from them. Let us keep ourselves from falling into their traps.

Questions

1. What are heresies?
2. What is the interpretative method of cults?
3. What are the sources of the teachings of cults?
4. What is the role of powerful leadership in cults?
5. Write an essay within two pages
6. Elaborate the major characters of cults?

³ Arianism was the major heresy of 4th century. They interpreted that Jesus has no same equality with God (Homoiousis). This was against the doctrine that both Father and Son are same (Homousios). Here the addition of one Greek letter 'i' (iota) was the problem.

⁴ From Galatians 1:7, Jude 4; 1 John 4:1; Colossians 2:8; it is clear that many people were penetrated into the church with so many heretical teachings.

CHAPTER 22

Mormon

- Reading Portion*** : Romans 1:18-23; 3:20-26
- Memory Verse*** : Romans 1:21
- Purpose*** : To study about the church of Mormon which has severe heretical doctrines and to understand their major false teachings.
- Introduction*** : The heretical group of Mormons which have so much influence in the western countries has started their activities in Kerala also. This group started to function before certain centuries in America. Though they may seem like Christian church their teachings are against Bible and its basic beliefs. Through this chapter let us learn about them and their heretical teachings.

Mormon Church

This church is known as 'The church of the later apostles of Jesus Christ'. This is a religious assembly that integrates many other groups and divisions having similar teachings. Though this group has the designation of Jesus Christ they do not have any relationship with Jesus Christ or Christian teachings.

Mormon teachings began in New York when the sparks of revival ignited the city on 1820's. Joseph Smith was the 3rd son of a migrated family which came to New York during the early stages of industrial revolution. Joseph Smith cannot accept the rebellious nature of the churches in New York. Thus he started this new church. Certain

revelation that claimed to be revealed to Joseph Smith is the foundation of Mormon Church. Smith claimed that the churches which existed at that time were moving to wrong direction and God elected him to reform these churches as the real church of God. The book of Mormon published in 1830's was the interpretation of pictographic documents that he received from a mountain under the guidance of an angel. According to this book after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ he visited the eastern areas and established some churches. From these revelations and authority received by Joseph Smith, he established the Mormon Church on 6th April 1830. In 1838 he changed the name Mormon Church into the 'The church of the later apostles of Jesus Christ.' Later this church started the Old Testament's Levitical and priestly practices and expanded into different parts of the world.

Major Teachings

This cult follows controversial teachings. Major one are listed below

a. Polytheism

Polytheistic faith is the major characteristic of Mormonism. They teach that those who live according to the laws of Mormonism will later become god. They teach that Father God was once a human being and later he became God.

b. Origin of Spirit

Mormon Church believes that God had wives and human spirits were the spiritual offspring's that God made in them. As they get physical human body in this earth they take birth here. That's why the Mormon believers marry many women to give birth to the spirits that were born through God.

c. Polygamy

The practice of polygamy in Mormon Church received severe criticism. Smith and later leaders had lots of wives. Mormon Church also teaches that Jesus had so many wives and Martha of Bethany, Mary, Mary the Magdalene were the wives of Jesus. As we studied above through this practice they believe that they are giving chances to the spirits in heaven to take birth in earth.

d. Birth of Jesus

This cultic group teaches that Father God took Mary the mother of Jesus as His wife and Jesus was born through that relationship.

e. Salvation

The Mormon Church that teaches 'Baptism is the very fundamental aspect for salvation' also permits 'the baptism for the dead by other ones'. Mormon Church also teaches as all the human beings are the children of God ultimately everyone will be saved at the end.

f. Word of God

The basic torah of Mormonism is the 'Book of Mormon'. They give much importance to this book than Holy Bible.

g. Creation

Mormons believe in materialism. Therefore they do not believe the scripture 'God created everything out of nothing.'

Mormon Church uses many strong strategies to broaden their territories. From the above said factors we can understand that Mormon Church is a satanic group that possesses troublesome heretical teachings.

Practical Lesson

Let's be vigilant against the attacks of this heretical group. Let us reject the teachings and doctrines that against ethical mandates and the word of God

Questions

1. What is the real name of the Mormon Church?
2. Who is the founder of Mormon Church?
3. Elaborate about the beginnings of Mormon Church?
4. How the book of Mormon formed?
5. How do the Mormons justify polygamy?
6. What is the teaching of Mormon Church about the birth of Jesus Christ?
7. What is the teaching of Mormon Church about salvation?

CHAPTER 23

Jehovah's Witness

- Reading Portion*** : John 1:1-18; Revelation 20:10-15
- Memory Verse*** : 2 Peter 2:1-2
- Purpose*** : To study about the major teachings of a heretical group called Jehovah's Witness and to analyze it on the basis of word of God.
- Introduction*** : 'Jehovah's Witness' is a name that is known world widely. By using many strategies they are spreading even in Kerala. Their doctrines are heretic in nature. Through diverse strategies they create doubts about the fundamental doctrines in the true believers and attract them to their religion. Since many believers don't have a clear knowledge about the fundamental doctrines of this cultic group they cannot defend them properly. Therefore in this chapter we are going to look at the fundamental doctrines of this cult and scrutinize them in the light of scriptures.

Beginning Of Yahweh Witness Cult

Yahweh witness is also known as Watch Tower Society and Russal religion. C. T. Russal (Charles Taze Russal, 1852-1916) is the founder of this heretic group. Ruther Ford (1869-1942) led this group after the death of C.T. Russal. Together they formed the doctrines of Jehovah Witness. Russal was the member of Presbyterian Church during his childhood. At the age of 15 he left that church and joined the congregation church. Russal was against

the teaching of eternal hell. Later in 1869 he turned to be an 'atheist'. During this time Russal was attracted to the theories of Arius. He was also fascinated by the arithmetic calculations⁵ of Seventh Day Adventists about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Based on Daniel 4:14, 23 (Nebuchadnezzar eating the grass of the field) he made a calculation of 2520 years and taught that Jesus Christ will return on A.D. 1914. He believed that Jesus Christ will return on the 2520th year after Israel's exile in B.C. 606. But the calculations of Russal didn't happen and Jesus Christ didn't return on 1914. On 1913 Russal's wife divorced him. During a journey in 1916 Russal passed away. After his death Rutherford led this group. Later this group extended into some other countries and became a denomination. Since they followed certain superstitious believes they gave no significance to the governments of this world. They are against patriotism and they accept the reign of Jehovah only. They received the name 'Jehovah Witness' in 1931.

Major Heretical Teachings

1. Rejection Of Trinity

This cultic group do not believes in the doctrine of Trinity. They believe that Jehovah is the only true God. They consider that the doctrine of trinity rises from the sagas of Ancient Babylon and Egypt. They expel the scripture portions that prove the Trinity of God.

2. Rejects The Divinity of Jesus Christ

They believe that Jesus is the chief angel called Michael and he is a creation of God. These teachings are based on the heretical theories of Arius. They consider Jesus as a second level god. They also reject the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

3. Holy Spirit

Jehovah Witness group condemns the person and divinity of Holy Spirit. They also teach that Holy Spirit is just mere power only. Their writings don't mention much about Holy Spirit.

4. Salvation

Jehovah Witness group do not believes in the Christian doctrine of 'salvation through Jesus Christ'. Rather they teach that a person gets two chances for salvation. One is during his life in this physical world and the other is during the millennial reign.

5. Sin And Judgement

They teach that as a man commits sin his existence will be perishing and there is no place like hell. Because they consider that

the good Lord cannot sustain the eternal hell.

6. Ecclessia/Church

Jehovah Witness group do not recognize other churches and their ministers. They teach that both Catholics and Protestants are under the yoke of Satan. They consider that the church now in this earth is the church of Anti-Christ. They believe that the specially elected 1,44,000 saints were already elected from them by God. Those whom were elected after that are considered as other sheep and they belong to a lower class.

7. Second Coming

According to the doctrines of Jehovah Witness Jesus already came in 1914. Those who had a special revelation of spirit and wisdom only saw it. They believe that Jesus never came through a human body and He will never come through it. But Rutherford the successor of Russal taught that Jesus Christ came in between the months of April – May in 1918. In those days Jesus resurrected the saints until that day and took them with Him. He also taught that the holy remnant in earth will also be transformed at their death and will join with Christ.

In order to establish their own heresies Jehovah Witness group published their own translation of Bible called New World Translation. Though they claim that their translation is the accurate, Greek scholars commented that they made this translation in the hideous way to establish their own heretical doctrines.

Through the publications of books, tracts, magazines, personal contacts, spreading superstitious believes etc. are the major strategies of their work. They try to implant their teachings on Christian believers by forcing them to doubt their faith and fundamental doctrines. There is no doubt that if we encounter them without much knowledge they will surely defeat us.

Practical Lesson

As the heretical groups like Jehovah Witness are making strong influences today, let us study the fundamental doctrines based on Bible and live a victorious Christian life. Let us also encounter these heresies by studying our doctrines.

Questions

1. How did Jehovah Witness group begin their work?
2. What were the calculations of Russal about the second coming of Jesus Christ?

3. What is the perspective of Jehovah Witness about Trinity?
4. What are the teachings of Jehovah Witness about Jesus Christ? What is its relationship with the religion of Arius?
5. Write an essay within two pages
6. Examine the major teachings of Jehovah Witness in the light of Scriptures?

⁵ Seventh Day Adventists taught that during 1840's Jesus Christ will return. This heretical teaching was based on Daniel 8:1. They thought that Jesus Christ will return on the 2300th year after the commandment given to the rebuilding of the temple of God in B.C. 457.

CHAPTER 24

Seventh Day Adventists

- Reading Portion** : Colossians 2:14-16; 2Corinthians 3:6-11; Mathew 12:1-14
- Memory Verse** : Romans 14:5\
- Purpose** : To understand the doctrines of Seventh Day Adventists and to examine them in the light of scriptures.
- Introduction** : Seventh Day Adventists have a considerable presence in Kerala. They gave many contributions to the society in the fields of Education, charity, service etc. They separated the seventh day of the week for worship i.e., Saturday. Majority believes that other than this observance of Seventh day of the week they do not have any doctrinal heresies. But they possess severe heretical doctrines and teachings. In this chapter let us learn about this Seventh Day Adventists and their major teachings

Beginning Of Seventh Day Adventists

America experienced a great revival in the early stages of 19th century. Many thought that the return of Jesus Christ will happen soon. Many made calculations about the second coming of Jesus Christ and announced the date of His second coming. William Miller, a minister of the Baptist Church proclaimed that Jesus Christ will return on 1844 October 22 based on 2300 evenings and mornings in Daniel 8.⁷ Thousands of people believed it and eagerly waited for this along

with Miller. But his prophecies turned to be false. This group later became the seventh day Adventists.

Ellen G. White was the disciple of Miller. She led this congregation later and introduced new revelations and interpretations. Since she proclaimed that her revelations are under the guidance of Holy Spirit she had a large number of followers. Seventh Day Adventists viewed her prophecies and recorded it by considering it as divine and God's revelation. Based on her prophecy they teach that the greatest commandment in the word of God is the 4th commandment. Thus William Miller and Ellen G. White laid the foundations doctrines of Seventh Day Adventists. Their major teachings are

1. Observances Of Sabbath

Their major teaching is that since the Ten Commandments given by Lord didn't changed, Christian church should also observe the Sabbath like Jews. They believe that the Ten Commandments are to the people of God living in any time period. But Christian Church changed this commandment into Sunday, the first day of the week. They believe that this practice took from the pagan worship practices. They firmly believe that like faith Sabbath observance is also really necessary for salvation.

Why Do Christian Church Separated Sunday To Worship God?

- a. Christian church separated Sunday to worship Lord not as a substitute for the day of Sabbath. Rather Jesus Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week and as we are redeemed into the New Testament creation through Him we separate Sunday for that.
- b. Ten Commandments are a necessary factor of Old Testament. But the word of God reveals that the New Testament believers are under the New Testament of Grace (Galatians 3:23; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11; Hebrews 8:9,13)
- c. Paul stated in Colossians 2:16-17 that Sabbath is not necessary for the New Testament Church. Also there is no mentioning about the observance of Sabbath to the epistles to people from other faith.
- d. Decision regarding with the first council about the observance of Torah was "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: to abstain from the blood sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. . ." (Acts

15:28.29). Here the council is not mentioning about the observance of Sabbath. Apostle Paul talks about the collection of offering for God's people on the first day of the week when everyone gathers together (1 Cori. 16:2).

- e. Except the observance of Sabbath all the other commandments are explained in the New Testament in relation with the practical life. But the observance of Sabbath is neither mentioned in any of the scripture portions (Romans 14:1-7; Galatians 4:10-11; Colossians 2:16-17). If the observance of Sabbath was an unavoidable aspect for attaining salvation it will surely be recorded in the scriptures.
- f. Jesus Christ nailed the "written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us" (Colossians 2:14). Sabbath is also included in this.

2. There Is No Eternal Hell

Like the followers of Jehovah Witness Seventh Day Adventists also do not believe in eternal hell. As per their faith hell is designed for a short term period (about 100 years).

3. Jesus Is Michael

Though the Seventh Day Adventists are the believers of Trinity they consider Jesus as Michael the chief angel.

4. Millenial Rule Will Be In Heaven

When the word of God teaches that Jesus Christ will rule in earth as the king of kings for 100 years, Seventh Day Adventists believe that this millennial rule will be in heaven. Also they consider that earth is the place where Satan is bounded up for 1000 years.

5. There Is No Spirit

Like Jehovah Witness they teach that human beings do not have a spirit that sustains after his death.

Practical Lesson

Jesus Christ was resurrected in the first day of the week. Let us worship Lord perfectly by knowing this importance of the first day of the week and condemn the teachings that against the word of God.

Questions

1. Explain the beginning and growth of Seventh Day Adventists?
2. Why the Christian church does not observe Sabbath? Explain?

3. Where will be the millennial rule according to Bible?
4. Does the Ten Commandments lost its old position? Explain?
5. What is the role of Ellen G. White in the denomination of Seventh Day Adventists?
6. Write an essay within two pages
7. What are the major teachings of Seventh Day Adventists? Examine them in the light of scriptures?

⁷ He mentioned many dates about the second coming of Jesus Christ. At first he prophesied that Jesus will come on 1843 March 21. But when it didn't happen he again prophesied that Jesus will come on 1844 March 21. When this too didn't fulfill he again stated that Jesus will come on October 22 of the same year. But this too didn't fulfill.

CHAPTER 25

New Age

- Reading Portion*** : Romans 1: 18-25
- Memory Verse*** : Romans 8:38-39
- Purpose*** : To study about the denomination called New Age which is widely spreading in all the nuke and corner of the world.
- Introduction*** : New age is a denomination that got lot of acceptance from the people. Even though this group is started in India today its philosophies are not known by this designation. But these theories are widely spreading all over India under the banner of many other names. Many are unaware about the fact that this denomination has its roots in India. In this chapter let us learn about New Age.

What Is New Age?

New Age is a denomination that assimilates the doctrines of every religion into one without considering its differences. They work on the fundamental thought that all religion is one. This has a strong connection with the tradition of 'Theosophy' that existing from many centuries back. Though they don't have any physical studies or knowledge their foundations are on the divine knowledge that is revealed through divine revelations. Theosophical Society was the later development of Theosophy. It reveals the teachings of New Age.

Theosophical Society

Theosophical Society was an organization started by Madam Blavatsky⁸ and Henry Steel Olcott in New York on 1875. The organization of New Age is broadly related with theosophy which is the foundation of the Theosophical Society. After the death of Blavatsky, Olcott led this organization. After his time, from 1907 to 1933 Missis Anne Besant who gave many contributions through Indian Independence strike led this organization. This organization has ample presence in more than 60 countries. Its teachings are the integration of science, religion and philosophy. Majority of its teachings are adopted from eastern philosophical and religious teachings which are unaware to the western world. Major aims of this society are universal brotherhood without any discrimination of caste, color, religion; studies about the fusion of religions; search of powers that are hidden in nature and human beings. Adyar in Chennai was the headquarters of Theosophical Society in India. After 1930 this organization got the attention of the world and based on their thoughts many independent organizations were developed. The basic doctrines of this organization have lots of influence in the society even today.

Major Teachings

The very basic doctrine of New Age organization was an amalgamation of the thoughts and philosophies of various other religions. Their advices are based on the core principle that all religions are one. Therefore they try to compromise with the pagan practices of people of other faith by sacrificing the holiness and sanctity of Christ and Christian church. But this New Age cult doesn't have any particular agenda or aim based on any fundamental doctrine. They interpret the teachings of all religions in different way and try to integrate them together. These teachings are considered as the special revelation revealed to Madam Blavatsky by the rabbis of ancient eras. Their major teachings are the following ones;

(a) God

The basic doctrine of New Age about God is the integration of Pantheistic thought ('all things are god' and God is all'). New age even considers humans as God and teaches all religion as the different ways to the same God. They believe in Satan as they believe in God. They try to relate with Satan through witchcraft, meditation, talking with the spirits of the dead.

(b) Jesus Christ

New Age teaches that there are different ways to attain salvation. This is against the Christian doctrine of salvation through Jesus only. They have concepts about 'cosmic Christ'⁹ based on modern theology. During the time of Jesus' baptism Cosmic Christ was incarnated upon Him. They also teach that gods like Rama, Krishna had the same power as in Jesus Christ. Thus they consider that all that in this world (including other gods) are the forms and patterns of this cosmic Christ. In 1925 they prophesied that Krishnamurthy the adopted son of Annie Besant will become the awaiting messiah. This prophecy was based on the above mentioned stream of thought.

(c) Revelation

According to the teachings of New Age every religion possesses divine revelation. But those revelations were known in different names in different religions. Therefore New Age teaches that they were the different revelations and different designations of the same God.

(d) Sin

New Age teaches that since man is also god the Christian teaching of Sin and eternal punishment is a false teaching. Since there is no sin they teach that salvation through Jesus Christ is utter foolishness. They also teach that humans will have re-birth according to the works that they had done in their life. Therefore real salvation is the salvation from these kinds of birth.

Along with this they believe in the saints and gurus who passed away from this world. They think that by making a relationship with them they can attain spiritual knowledge. They also believe in Astrology, future telling, healing with the support of other forbidden powers.

Thus New Age has the integrated teachings of different religions which have no logical foundation. These kinds of thoughts and teachings are prevailing in our own community also.

Practical Lesson

Let us understand that God is one and we get salvation only through His son Jesus Christ. Let us also understand that Jesus is the ultimate perfection of the divine revelation. With these fundamental knowledge let us condemn these kinds of teachings that have no basis even in logic.

Questions

1. What is New Age?

2. What is the relationship of New Age with Theosophical Society?
3. Explain about the beginning of Theosophical Society?
4. Briefly describe about the doctrines of New Age?
5. Examine the teachings of New Age in the light of scriptures?

⁸Blavatsky was born in Russia. She visited many countries like Tibet, India, and Egypt etc in search of the meaning of spirituality. She studied about different religions. Olcott was also accompanied her in this journey

⁹Cosmic Christ is a thought formulated by Teilhard de Chardin was a geologist. He gave much contributions to theological studies also. This thought supports the evolution theory. It also denies the salvation through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 26

Episcopal Churches

- Reading Portion*** : 1 Timothy 1:3-11; 2 Timothy 4:2-5
- Memory Verse*** : 1 Peter 2:9
- Purpose*** : To study about the beginning of Episcopal churches and the churches that today follows Episcopal order. And to understand that their practices are against the word of God.
- Introduction*** : We see lots of Christian churches around us. But these churches have differences in faith, beliefs, customs and practices. Many churches are following an administration and structure which is not mentioned in the Bible. Since the church was institutionalized it became the slave of many amoral practices. Episcopacy is one such a structure that stands against the New Testament doctrine. Let us learn about it in this chapter.

Episcopacy

Episcopal churches are the churches that divide the entire ecclesial body into priests and lay man (believers). Their basic doctrine is that the collective body of priests rules the ecclesia and does the ministries and laymen are the subjects that live in obedience to their rules, regulations and faith practices. They teach that priests are the mediators between God and men. They believe that laymen do not have this priesthood. They consider that the various ministries of church like holy mass, child baptism, marriage etc. are valid only if the priests does it. Like priestly order in the Old Testament, they have a priestly

order from higher to lower level. Bishops in the highest order give ordination to priests, and priests give ordination to deacons. All Episcopal churches claim that they receive this hierarchical order through the ordination of Apostles of Jesus Christ. This is called episcopacy.

Beginning Of Episcopacy

Books of New Testament prove that there was no episcopacy in the early church. What New Testament originally taught was all those who are redeemed through Jesus Christ is the 'Royal Priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9) and all the members in ecclesia experienced the fellowship of God without any discrimination. Word of God reveals that each church had elders to serve them and five types of ministers to carry out the fivefold ministries (Ephesians 4:11). These ministers never had a special position or hegemonic dress or special authority. Early church also never had an administration based on hierarchical order.

But from the early stages of second century these context slowly began to change and by the fourth century Christian church changed into a separate way. By the beginning of the second century the spiritual condition of the church started to depreciate and church started to adopt many worldly practices. In such a context of moral apathy elders began to administrate the church. Slowly they started to teach that, only they have the authority to administrate the church. They also taught that others can receive certain hegemonic positions in the church only through their ordination. This was the primary steps towards episcopacy. Elders who had special talents of administration became the elder of the higher order and controlled the elders under them. Elders of the rich churches having large number of believers began to control the elders of poor churches and their believers. Thus they brought many small churches under their authority. Thus the divisions of authoritarian priesthood and layman rise in the church.

Some political factors also turned to be the reasons of the development of Episcopacy. A major factor is the conversion of Constantinople into Christianity on A.D. 312. According to his decision administration like government and priesthood that resembles pagan faiths were started to exercise in the church. This made the episcopacy into a stronghold. Along with that the Bishop in the Capital Church of Rome got much authority through the influence of Emperor Constantinople. Bishops and Cardinals of all other churches were brought under his authority. Thus the Bishop in Rome turned to be the Bishop who have control over other churches and received the

hegemonic title of 'Pope'. Through this way Episcopacy was started to practice in the church.

Episcopal Churches

Episcopal churches are broadly divided into three. They are Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant.

1. Catholic Church

Roman Catholic¹⁰ Church is a church that formed through the influence of the Church of Rome and the authority of its Bishop over other mainline churches around the world. After seeing the hierarchical structure and power of Roman Catholic Church, many other churches also subjected themselves to the Church in Rome. During 5th century A.D. bishop of Rome established his power over all the churches around the world. Based on Mathew 16:18 -19 they believe that God builded the church through Peter.¹¹ They also interpret that he was the first bishop of Rome. Therefore they teach that this authority and power in peter was hierarchically transmitted to the bishops of Rome. They also consider themselves as the divine successors of Apostle Peter, the first Pope. Therefore they believe and teach that they have authority over the churches around the Globe. They call the Bishop of Rome as 'Pope' by considering him as the father of all churches. This church has lots of heresies, non-biblical customs and practices.

2. Orthodox Church

The church that began in the first century widely extended into all parts of the Roman Empire suddenly. Western portions of the Roman Empire used the Latin language and Eastern areas used Greek language widely. During the middle ages of second century church grown as two strong divisions based on these two linguistic groups. During 5th century when the pope was raised into sovereign control of Christian churches, Latin churches subjugated to it. But the Greek churches opposed it and thus the church was divided into two. Among them the Greek speaking church in the east was later designated as orthodox churches. Though they strongly reject the papacy and his sovereignty, their Episcopal customs and practices are same. Today orthodox churches strongly exist in different countries.¹²

3. Protestant Church

Protestant Churches was developed through the reformation in 16th century. A group of believers who opposed the false teachings and practices of Roman Catholic Church held on to the biblical truth of 'Justification by Faith' and paved the way for the revival. They

gave significance to the 'Salvation and redemption by faith' which was a doctrine expelled by the Catholic Church. Even though they made many reformations many revival churches were influenced by the hierarchy of episcopacy. Many churches in the Protestant denomination follow the Episcopal patterns. For example the protestant churches like Lutheran Church (Church known in the name of the reformation leader Martin Luther), Church of England, and Methodist Church etc.¹³ are Episcopal Churches.

Practical Lesson

Let us understand the biblical truth that 'all redeemed believers are the Royal Priesthood of Jesus Christ.' Let us fulfill our tasks and mission by understanding the precious nature of that royal position. Let us reject the structures and patterns that stand against the word of God.

Questions

1. What is Episcopacy?
2. What was the model followed by the early church?
3. What is the beginning of episcopacy? Explain?
4. What are the major Episcopal churches?
5. What are the major Episcopal churches in Kerala?
6. Which model does the Pentecostal churches follows?

¹⁰ The word Catholic means the state of being everywhere.

¹¹ Here by saying "on this rock" Jesus never mentioned it about peter. Rather Jesus Christ said it about Himself. Also we can see that during the first five centuries Peter never had this special significance in the Church.

¹² The churches in Greece, Syria, Russia, Egypt, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Japan etc have orthodox churches.

¹³ In India many churches like Marthoma, Evangelical, CSI, CNI, etc are protestant ecclesial churches. They are the churches that separated from orthodox churches.

CHAPTER 27

Episcopal Churches (Continued)

Reading Portion : Colossians 2:16-3:4

Memory Verse : Hebrews 4:15-16

Purpose : To understand the heretical doctrines and practices that the Episcopal churches are doing and to examine them in the light of scriptures.

Introduction : In the last chapter we learned what is episcopacy and the beginning of episcopacy and mainline Episcopal churches. In this chapter let us learn about the doctrines, customs and practices of Episcopal churches which go against the word of God.

A. Sacraments

New Testament church has two sacraments which were established through Jesus Christ. They are Baptism and Eucharist. Also word of God states that salvation is the gift of God and we should receive it by faith in God. But the Episcopal Church especially the Catholic Church has seven sacraments. They also teach that salvation is possible only through the observation of these sacraments. Those seven sacraments are;

1. Child Baptism

Word of God speaks about Baptism through faith. But the sacrament of child baptism was adopted from the pagan practices. In this baptism kid was baptized by sprinkling water on him/her. At the same time another person believes in God and baptism on behalf of or for the kid.

2. Penance

Since the very priesthood is a practice against the word of God, confessing sins to the priest is a foolish act. Word of God reveals that a priest who is like all other human beings don't have any special authority to redeem from sins or to mediate for sins. Only God can redeem us from sins and Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men.

3. Holy Mass

Jesus Christ took bread 'gave thanks and broke it'. Then He gave it to His disciples. But in the Catholic Church each believer will get separate small bread and priest drinks the vine. We the church has to follow the model shown by Jesus Christ.

4. Spraying of Oil

Spraying of oil instead of Holy Spirit is also a sacrament that is not found in the scriptures.

5. Marriage

Marriage is an institution set by Lord for the total well-being of the family and church. Word of God teaches that it does not have any relation with the salvation of an individual. But the Catholic Church added this along with the sacraments needed for salvation.

6. Priesthood

Word of God states that everyone in the New Testament Church is Royal Priesthood. Therefore it is not confined to or reserved to a particular group.

7. Anointing of the sick

Word of God permits to pray for the sick by rubbing oil on them. But anointing of the sick which is the last sacrament of the Catholic Church has no relation with this.

B. Worship Of Mary

Praying to Mary and worshiping her is a false practice that is widely seen in the Episcopal churches like Catholic and Orthodox. This practice has relation with the heresy called Eutychianism in the 5th century. They consider Mary as the 'mother of God' and pray to her.

C. Prayer To the Mediators

Word of God clearly states that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men. But the Catholic and Episcopal churches proclaim some persons as saints. They consider these saints as mediators and pray to them. They also bow to the remnants of these so called saint's dead bodies and prays to them. This is purely against the word of God.

D. Praying For The Dead

Episcopal churches like catholic and orthodox believes that the dead ones are in Purgatory- an intermediate state after physical death (Basburqana). They also teach that by conducting prayers and doing certain rites they uplift the dead from this state to heaven. They do many customs for this. But what the word of God says is God will judge each and every one according to the activities or works he done while he was in this world.

E. Idolatary

Idolatry was a practice strongly banned in both Old Testament and New Testament. But majority of the Episcopal churches dedicated many idols in the churches and bow to them as well as worshiped them. This practice is totally against the word of God.

F. The Change Of The Substance Of Bread And Wine

Catholic Church teaches that the substance of the bread and the wine offered in the sacrifice of the sacrament of the Eucharist during the mass, become, in reality the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is a teaching against the word of God. Because the bread and the wine in Eucharist only represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ and no change will happen to the substance of it.

Other than the belief in Trinity, Episcopal Churches goes in a way against the word of God in all realms. But there are certain other churches which follows the episcopacy without any of these heretical teachings. Even though certain churches like C.S.I., C.N.I., Marthoma etc. follows an Episcopal pattern they do not have false customs and heretical doctrines.

Practical Lesson

Let us ignore the doctrines and customs that are not based in Bible. Let us pray for our dear brothers and sisters who are bonded in this way. Let us reveal the truths of scripture to them.

Questions

1. How many sacraments are there according to the word of God?
2. How many sacraments are there for the Catholic Church? Explain?
3. Is Mary the 'mother of God'? Why? Explain?
4. Can we pray to Mediators? Why?
5. Is it possible to sanctify the dead and uplift them to heaven?
6. What happens to the bread and vine in the Eucharist?
7. Write an essay within two pages.

Examine the doctrines and teachings that stand against the word of God in Episcopal Churches?

CHAPTER 28

Brethren Denomination

- Memory Verse* : Hebrews 6:4-6
- Purpose* : To understand about the brethren church and its teachings that has strong roots in Kerala as well as in different parts of World.
- Introduction* : Did you noticed about the Brethren church which conducts so many evangelistic activities in Kerala. This denomination follows their own unique way of administration and worship pattern. Fundamental doctrines of this denomination seem almost similar to the Pentecost churches. But there are strong differences in certain teachings of them. In this chapter let us learn about this denomination and their major teachings.

Beginning

The very basis of reformative ideas was all believers who were redeemed through Jesus Christ belong to the royal priesthood. Therefore they had the thought to go back to the spiritual life and practices of early church. This is because the early church had independent studies of word of God, powerful prayer life and guidance of Holy Spirit. Therefore a particular group followed the Eucharist method of early church. This group later gathered together on 1825 in Dublin at Ireland and followed these methods. Dr. Edward Cronin, Edward Wilson, F. Hutchinson, John V. Parnell etc. led this group. Since they were the believers of different denominations at that time

they gathered secretly. But later they came in public as a new reforming denomination. This was the beginning of brethren denomination.

This church expanded to many parts of the world within a very short span of time and they send missionaries to different parts of the world. They didn't make a particular name for their denomination. But after seeing their mutual understanding and love other people called them as brethrens (Brothers). This word later turned to be the name of this denomination.

In Kerala

On 1833 Antony Norris Groves, a Brethren missionary came to India. As a result of his work many churches were started in different places of in India. He also trained local people as evangelists. Thus Brethren Church in Kerala was begun through John Christian Arulappan, a local Brethren evangelist from Tamil Nadu. This work in Kerala was started in 1899. Along with them the contributions of foreign missionaries like Rev. J. Nelson, V. Nagal, and Noyal etc. strengthened the missionary activities of Brethren church. At that time many people were attracted to this church and many of them started new mission works in different places. In 1928 the great poet K. V. Simon and the separated Malankara denomination under him merged with this Brethren church. Thus the Brethren church in Kerala became a strong denomination. They gave valuable contributions through meaningful Christian devotional songs.

Major Teachings

Brethren church has clear fundamental doctrines and theological teachings evolved from the deeper study of the word of God. Pentecostal charismatic theology was formed when the charismatic studies of the gifts of Holy Spirit integrated with the fundamental doctrines of Brethren denomination. Certain teachings that different from the Pentecostal doctrines are the following ones.

1. Administration

Brethren church doesn't have a centralized administration system or council or an elected leader. This makes them unique from other denominations. Each local church is an independent body. This independent local church is guided by the elders in that church. Other than the appointed elders no one else have any control over that particular local church.

2. Salvation

According to the brethren teaching salvation is eternal. One who is saved once is saved for all time. Even though one commits sin

after this he won't lose salvation. But he will lose the gladness of salvation and the fellowship with God. In short Brethren church teaches that salvation is secure.

3. Holy Spirit

Brethren's teach that each believer receives Holy Spirit at the time of his salvation. Also they teach that there is no visible evidence for the receiving of Holy Spirit. According to Brethren teaching Baptism in Holy Spirit is not a personal experience of the believer. Rather it was an activity that God done through Jesus Christ for the formation of Christian Church on the day of Pentecost.

We have to examine the above said teachings in the light of scriptures. Word of God reveals that the salvation that God gives is eternal. But Hebrews 6:4 states that if one commits sin salvation will be loosed. We studied about salvation in the 18th chapter itself! A person was lead to Christ through the work of Holy Spirit. The works of same Holy Spirit is inevitable and important for the continuing life of a believer. The word of God as well as the Pentecostal doctrines clearly emphasis that there are strong evidences for the receiving of Holy Spirit. Scripture also reveals that the Baptism in Holy Spirit as well as the gifts of Holy Spirit is not only meant for the foundation of the church but also it is meant for the spiritual nourishment of believer and growth of church.¹⁴ It is also noteworthy that many churches that were once stood against Holy Spirit and gifts of Holy Spirit are now turned to be the key promoters of it.

Practical Lesson

God wishes and expects perfection from us. If we make a slight change to the true doctrines that the word of God clearly portrays, then surely it will turn to be strong heresies that move us away from God. Therefore let us follow the doctrines that the word of God speaks without changing even the smallest letter of it. Let us stand in the presence of the Lord with perfection.

Questions

1. Explain about the beginning of Brethren denomination?
2. Who was the first Brethren missionary came to India? On which year he came to India?
3. Who were the primary missionaries that worked for the Kerala Brethren denomination?
4. What is the administration system of Brethren church?

5. What is the teaching of Brethren church about salvation?
6. How the Brethren church evaluates the baptism in Holy Spirit and gifts of Holy Spirit?
7. Examine the teachings of Brethren church about secured salvation, Holy Spirit etc in the light of scriptures?

¹⁴Pay attention to the previous chapters that give ample elaboration for these facts.

CHAPTER 29

Modernism

- Reading Portion** : 2 Timothy 3:1-9
- Memory Verse** : 2 Timothy 3:14
- Purpose** : To know about the phenomena (Modernism) that rejected traditional thoughts and beliefs by intellectually interpreting them.
- Introduction** : Do the progress in science and technology influence our faith especially our faith in God? Galileo found that the shape of earth is oval or round. But the Catholic Church poisoned him because of this discovery he made. Church taught that the earth's shape is flat and they interpreted word of God in the light of this false knowledge. Therefore they can't accept this new discovery of Galileo. But later science proved that the argument of Galileo was true. But this finding of science was not challenging the existence of Bible or Christian Faith. Rather this scientific finding went parallel with the verses in Bible.

Sudden changes and growth happened in all the fields of human life through the advance in science and technology. Intellectual thinking and interpretation also raised in Christian faith and practices. These interpretations based on intellect and reasoning is called Modernism. Modernism is neither a new religion nor a new denomination.

Context

As a result of the enlightenment on 17th and 18th centuries a new reformation happened in all fields especially in the areas of

knowledge, arts, technology, culture etc. These advancements wondered human beings and made him to be proud about himself. As a result he started to question the old way of thinking and religious practices. Also man gave primary place for reasoning and intellect. Man also established himself as the center of all things. Through industrial revolution he established machineries in the fields of agriculture, industry etc. As a result the life of human beings become easier and he developed a great hope about his future. These advancements of the reformation period became stronger in 19th and 20th centuries. It made considerable change in almost all the walks of life.

These changes traumatized not only socio-economic-political systems but also it shaken the belief of humans about God. It had a negative impact upon the fundamental doctrines and thoughts of Christian Faith. The modern men started to believe that everything is under intellectual power. Through reasoning, observations and experiments humans can find out the truths behind everything. As a result humans started to understand God and word of God through intelligence and reasoning. Also many interpretations based on reasoning raised and it questioned the traditional faith and opposed the fundamental doctrines.

Major Teachings

Modernism taught that divine revelation, credibility of Bible, miracles, Adam's sin and judgment, redemption through Jesus Christ etc. are not trust worthy and reasonable. They state that these teachings are superstitious thoughts that have no practical significance. They need a gospel of social revolution that bring changes to the society and ethically build up the world.

They accept the evolution theory of Charles Darwin. According to this theory the universe and everything in it including the human beings were not created by God. Rather everything is formed through the continuing evolution process monitored by the forces of nature.

They say that the Christian doctrine of 'Adam's Sin and fall' is an imagination. This is because they believe that man never had a fallen state. According to evolution theory man is higher than all other living beings and he always aims the highest. Therefore men never need a savior. They also teach that the Christian doctrine of salvation is also not relevant to human beings.

Modernists argue that miracles in Holy Bible especially the miracles of Jesus recorded in the gospels are stories. They also teach

that the resurrection as well as His ascension to heaven was false stories created by the disciples of Jesus. Modernists completely reject the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, God's incarnation as human being etc. Also modernism rejects the redemption through Jesus Christ. They ridicule Christianity by tagging it as 'religion of slaughterhouse'. Modernists also reject the second coming of Jesus Christ, believer's hope of second coming, resurrection of believers, millennial rule etc. Because they state that none of this can be proved through intelligence or human reasoning.

Higher Criticism that questioned the infallibility of the word of God was formed through the influence of Modernism. During the beginning stages of this critical study it meaningfully searched about Bible, old manuscripts of Bible, languages, different translations, period of writing etc. But later on the investigation of Holy Bible by considering the scripture just as a book questioned the inerrancy of the word of God. Based on these studies they argued that the process of creation as well as the great flood in Moses' time period had no support of history. Therefore they stated that Bible is not trustworthy. They also argue that miracles about Jesus Christ, virgin birth, resurrection etc are later additions and they all are myths that recorded from oral tradition without any evidence.

Modernists believe that the greatest power in the word is conscience. According to them there is nothing greater than this power. They consider that trusting in God and prayer etc are vain and meaningless activities.

Above mentioned thoughts are the major modernist thoughts. They reject the truths that Bible states with much clarity. Since they reject the infallibility of scriptures they can even prove that there is no God. Modernism is thus a religion based on mere intelligence and reasoning. What we should understand is that human reasoning and intelligence are limited by many boundaries. This limited human reasoning is not perfect to understand God who is the creator of everything even the human brain. Word of God as well as the history proves that the miracles which Jesus done was not false stories.

Practical Lesson

Word of God states that word of God will never pass away even the world and everything in it may change. The relevance of Bible is not lost even when men rushes to the peak of development. Faith is important than reasoning. Therefore let us hold on to the faith in God

and reject the interpretations that are based on intelligence and reasoning.

Questions

1. What is modernism?
2. Explain the context that lead to the formation of modernism?
3. What are the Christian faiths that rejected by modernism?

CHAPTER 30

Cults In Pentecost

- Reading Portion*** : 2 Peter 2:1-10
- Memory Verse*** : 2 Corinthians 11:3-4
- Purpose*** : To know about the new generation groups that appears in the form of Pentecost churches. To know about their heretic doctrines that creates chaos in true believers and leads them to hell. To reject their heretical practices and to defend them.
- Introduction*** : The Pentecostal reformation that started in the beginnings of 20th century expanded into different parts of the world within a short span of time. During its early beginnings many Pentecostal missionaries came to Kerala and established mainline Pentecostal churches in different parts of Kerala. By the end of 20th century large number of independent churches was also launched in Kerala. Doctrines of these new generation cults concentrated on wealth and prosperity. These cultic teachings are against the fundamental doctrines of classical Pentecostal churches. Let us study about these cults in Pentecost which have no relation with the Pentecost teachings and doctrines.

New Generation Groups

Majority of the new generation Pentecostal groups are the good example of postmodern spirituality which is totally unique from the

life and doctrines of classical Pentecostals. Major characteristics of post modernism are self-centeredness, questioning of universality, reverse swing etc. We can see all these characteristics of post modernism in new generation cults. This heretical group tried to create divisions even in the classical Pentecostalism and tried to gain more popularity through different means.

1. They give priority upon a particular person. Their attitude is I create my own doctrine.
2. Their theology rejects the classical and universal Christian doctrines. They follow new interpretations that focus on prosperity.
3. Old tradition rejected prosperity and hold on to the faith in God. But these cults rejected these old experiences. They believed God by sticking-on with prosperity. Apostles and church fathers gave importance to evangelism. They did miracles to confirm the credibility of Gospel they preached. But these new generation cults perform miracles to gather people and for publicity. Majority of its minister don't give importance to gospel and evangelism.

They state that God didn't reveal everything to the elders in Pentecostal community. Therefore they proclaim that Pentecostals should free themselves from Pentecostal traditions.

New generation cults try to trap people through various practices which have no base in Bible. It includes breaking the curse, holy laughing, holy vomiting, holy cough, holy dance, fire wings etc. They do certain activities like throwing away Satan, beating, bonding, trapping serpent, climbing the walls etc. They cheat people by doing this in the label of spirituality. Prominent persons in this cult are turning to be the specialists of particular phenomena's. Common people are attracted towards it when these phenomena's are accompanied by miracles and wonders. Teachings and preaching's based on materialism moves people away from eternity. Their teachings of 'gospel of grace', 'Liberal view on Eucharist' are spoiling the church like a field without fence. What we should note here that, people who have theological knowledge and wisdom are never following the baseless practices of these new generational cults. Its leaders who promise wealth and prosperity to their followers will be rich in a very short span of time. Cultic leaders who prophecy deliverance to their followers is going to hospital to cure their own diseases. All these are controversial in essence. They do all these practices by misinterpreting John 14:12; "He will do greater things than these".

Major Teachings

As mentioned in the beginning new generation cults don't have any centralized teachings or doctrines. But we can see some common traits in them. Each group has their own unique teachings and they make interpretations according to their contexts. Certain facts about them are;

- a. **Teachings Based on Materialism:** Their teachings and messages are encouraging- the luxurious life, material riches and financial upliftment. This leads the common people into a state of mirage or illusion. They give priority to home, vehicles, promotion in jobs, foreign trips, new properties etc. Preaching's and teachings that give priority to these material possessions than Gospel of salvation, eternity etc. are against the word of God. These teachings are totally against the status of Christianity.
- b. **Misinterpretations:** Leaders of these groups never had any kind of fundamental theological training. Therefore they interpret a particular word or a verse and develop a doctrine which is totally against the fundamental principles of Christian faith and core aims of word of God. Their interpretations prove their profane phenomena's and practices.
- c. **New-Generation Methods:** Methods of postmodern society and use of different Medias give wider publicity to these groups. Leaders of these cults turn to be in heroic roles through the various new-generation technologies and superstitious imitations of western practices (in service as well as in appearances). They create a mystical world with the help of new generation western music (Rock, Pop, Fusion etc) with the help of disco lights and smoke. Through these techniques they attract new generation into it.
- d. **Gospel of Grace:** This is a 'new finding' that attracts many people in this contemporary time. Here they are misinterpreting the grace of God. They teach that Jesus Christ done all things. He became a ransom for all the sins we done in the past, doing in the present and will do in future. So what we need now is grace. They teach that there is no problem in doing sin at this present time. At the peak they teach that to attain more grace one should commit more sin. Romans 5: 20-6:2 are more relevant here. The strategy of Satan who cheats the true believers by misinterpreting the word of God are revealing through this.

Strategy of Satan is to astray the sincerity and pure devotion of Church, the bride, from her bride groom - Jesus Christ (1corinthians 11:3-4). To accomplish this task Satan will do anything. Satan is doing this task through the new generation cult that have the external appearance of Pentecostals.

Practical Lesson

Let us examine the new generation cults that rising up in and around our surroundings in the light of scriptures. Let us take bold steps against teachings and phenomena's that stand against the word of God. Let us identify the wolves that wear the skin of Pentecost.

Questions

1. What are 'new generation churches'?
2. Which are the major phenomena's that widely practiced by the new generation churches? Examine them in the light of scriptures?
3. What are the major teachings of new generation cults?
4. Elaborate about the new generation cults in Pentecost, their leaders and teachings?

CHAPTER 31

God's Church of Visible Salvation Or P.R.D.S- Prathyaksha Raksha Dhaiva Sabha

Memory Verse : 1 Peter 2:4-5

Purpose : To know about Poykayil Yohannan. He was a Christian minister once but later he turned to be a heretic. Also to understand about P.R.D.S. -the cult that he established.

Introduction : P.R.D.S. is an organization which is well known to Keralites. P.R.D.S. is working with an aim to socially reform the lowest strata of people in the society. This organization takes strength by integrating their racial thoughts with the theological concepts. This organization follows both Christian and Hindu customs and practices. Let us learn about this cult through this chapter.

Prathyaksha Raksha Dhaiva Sabha (God's Church Of Visible Salvation)

The P.R.D.S. has its head office located at Eraviperoor, Pathanamthitta. Major aim of this group is the spiritual and corporeal reformation of the depressed Aadhi-Dravida community. Poykayil Yohannan was the founder of this organization. Once he was a Christian minister. Later he rejected Christian faith and renamed as

Poykayil Sree Kumara Devan. P.R.D.S followers considered this Yohannan as an incarnation of God and hoped that he will return in future. This organization works for the social reformation and freedom of the oppressed class in the society.

Poykayil Yohannan

Kumaran was born on 1879 as the third son of Poykayil Mannikalil Kandan and Lechi. When he was five years old kumaran received child baptism because of the influence of the land lords (Shankaramangalm Family) of his parents. Thus Yohannan started to study Bible and began to preach. Later he became a pastor. He attracted so many audiences through his powerful messages and meaningful poems. Majority of his audience were the oppressed dalits. In the beginning years Yohannan was serving the Lord in association with the Marthoma church. He was a preacher of Maramon convention on the very beginning years of 20th century. But after few years Yohannan and his followers left Marthoma church and joined Brethren church. Due to some reasons they left Brethren church and later joined in the redeemed church. The reason for this shift from one church to another was the racial discrimination existing in every church. The caste system prevailing in every church gave many painful experiences to Yohannan. Also the racial thoughts, racial love towards his community etc. forced him to view bible from a different perspective. Yohannan thus came to a belief that his community don't have any relation with Bible. He viewed Bible as just a book related with the history of Jews. He also stated that the salvation said in Bible is just an illusion. Therefore he burnt his Bible in fire at a meeting in Mukkali near Vakathanam on 1906. Those who gathered in that meeting also threw their Bibles into fire. From this incident onwards the teachings and preaching's of John was against Bible. This group later formed as Prathyaksha Raksha Dhaiva Sabha. Yohannan died on 29th June 1939. After his death his followers designated him as "Kumaragurudevan".

Major Teachings

Followers of P.R.D.S. believe that Poykayil appachan (Kumara gurudevan) was a man born to redeem them from slavery and caste system. Yohannan preached that Hindu traditions or Christian church or Bible can never redeem his community from slavery. Therefore he proclaimed that God of liberation is incarnated through him. Through this he was proclaiming that he was god. P.R.D.S. group believes that Poykayil appachan, the divine incarnation for them, have the power

to remove their sins and iniquities. They states that miraculous light rays were covered him when a meeting was going on in a place called Kulathoor. At that time he preached salvation to his followers. Those who heard this message confessed their sins to him. After hearing the confession Poykayil Yohannan removed their sins and gave salvation to these people.

Salvation (Raksha)

Like their name they believe in salvation which is visible to them in their life time. They teach that the salvation (Heaven) that which is not experiencing during the human life time is deceiving. Since God takes incarnation in every era they believe that spirit will never go to heaven after death. Church is the medium for visible salvation. They claim three major things in their doctrine of salvation.

1. Church in which invisible God became Visible.
2. Church that gave salvation now.
3. Church that believes only in visible salvation.

Second Coming

Poykayil Yohannan said that at the right time he will ascend from west. For also commanded that for his reign followers should build a building with three floors and four faces. Believers of PRDS have this hop that he will sit in a gold throne and rule. They also believe that he will redeem the things that are lost from them at the end time.

P.R.D.S. was thus formed through the misunderstanding of Christian faith and racial love of Poykayil Yohannan towards his community. Racial discrimination from other churches, dissatisfaction, sudden liberative methods for the oppressed etc. were the other factors led to the formation of this group. Christian faith made many valuable social reformations wherever it went. But it is painful to acknowledge that Christian church can't completely eradicate the racial discrimination and caste segregation from the society. Anyone can clearly understand that the doctrines of P.R.D.S. are made from the Christian doctrines. These doctrines of P.R.D.S. are meaningless and baseless in nature.

Practical Lesson

Thus many activities based on race, caste and colors are continually increasing even in the spiritual world. In this context let us stand firm for the truth in Bible that "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you all are one

in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Without any differences and discrimination let us become the partakers in the fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Who is the founder of P.R.D.S.? Where is the head office of P.R.D.S.?
2. Explain about the life of Poykayil Yohannan?
3. Why did Poykayil Yohannan burnt the Bible?
4. What are the major claims of Poykayil Yohannan about himself?
5. What is the opinion of P.R.D.S. about salvation?
6. Critically examine P.R.D.S. and its doctrines in the light of scriptures?

CHAPTER 32

Ecumenism

Reading Portion : John 17:3-21

Memory Verse : John 17:23

Purpose : To know about the largest Christian united organization which formed in the 20th century and to understand its merits and demerits.

Introduction : How many Christian churches are there? Did you ever thought if these different churches united together what will be the situation? If a merging happens which doctrines will they follow? Which will they reject? Through this chapter let us learn about the ecumenical organization that tried to bring all Christian denominations under one banner.

Ecumenical Movement

Ecumenical Movement is a systematic movement based on Ecumenism. Its sole aim is to bring together different churches which are divided before many centuries because of many reasons. The English word Ecumenism is formed from the Greek word Oikomene (This Greek word Oikomene comes from two root words called Oikos and Mene.) It means to live united. Ecumenical Movement was established in accordance with the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ in John 17:21 "All of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us . . ." It began to unite and co-operate different churches that follows different teachings, customs and practices. But many churches viewed this with a skeptic perspective. Pentecostal churches which followed the true doctrines

of Holy Bible never accepted this merging of churches. Though the Catholic Church also strongly defended against ecumenism after the second Vatican council they diluted their strict policies.

Beginnings

As mentioned above Ecumenical Movement was established through a process of many centuries. The reformation that happened in the 18th and 19th centuries around the globe motivated the western mission organizations and churches to focus on non-Christian areas. As a result mission fields also experienced a great revival. Different mission conferences were conducted by assembling different missionaries and mission organizations together. Also the works of Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., S.C.M., Bible Society and the contributions of Life and Work, Faith and Order movements raised a sense of unity among international Christians. As a result of this thought of Solidarity an international missionary conference was conducted in Edinburg, Scotland on 14 – 23 June 1910. 1200 missionaries from different countries, delegates of different churches and mission organizations etc. attended in this conference. This conference paved the way for the birth of ecumenical movement. After this conference International Missionary Council was established in 1921 and various mission conferences were conducted in different countries. World Council of Churches is the back bone of Ecumenical movement. Primary steps for the formation of this council were conducted in a mission conference at Tambaram in Madras on 1938. As a result World Council of Churches officially started its functioning on 1948. Geneva in Switzerland is the head office of this council.

This organization was started with the aims of creating solidarity among churches and mission fields, conducting social activities, working for justice and global peace, Christian education etc. To a certain extend this movement was successful in bringing a number of churches in their framework.

Merits

One of the greatest merits of Ecumenical Movement is that it brought many churches that fighting against each other under one banner. Ecumenism paved the way for the co-operation and fellowship between different churches. Ecumenical Movement also gave much contribution to the mission fields during its beginning stages. This movement made solid interventions in the revolutions for social justice and ending persecutions. This movement made tremendous contributions to the Christian education.

De-Merits

The solidarity of different churches that follows diverse doctrines is purely external in nature. In His high priestly prayer Jesus mentioned about the spiritual solidarity or internal solidarity. The external unity of churches that follows heretic practices and the churches that follow the true word of God are meaningless. This is totally yoking together with them. Spiritual solidarity is based on Christ. This is a spiritual relation formed through the faith in Jesus Christ, born again and unconditional obedience to the divine commandments. But the major demerit of ecumenism is that anyone who has any kind of faith has freedom.

Over encouragement of new trends¹⁵ in missionary activities and Christendom made a drastic change to the core aspects of evangelism. Ecumenism follows inclusive religious thought and it accepts all religious faiths. It also conducts religious-dialogues that finally sacrifice the Christian faith and practice. All these activities of ecumenism have to be questioned. All these are a kind of syncretism. Also many new theologies that formed through ecumenism were misinterpreted the word of God heavily.

Pentecostal churches are growing up greatly among the world Christians by following the word of God and its doctrines. None of them ever joined in these kinds of ecumenical movements.

Practical Lesson

Verses of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 are relevant here. It states that "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. . . . Therefore come out of them and be separate". External unity based on human wisdom and philosophies are imperfect. Spiritual unity in Jesus Christ is the perfect unity. Let us follow the truths and doctrines of Bible completely and reject the solidarity that stands against the word of God.

Questions

1. What is Ecumenical Movement?
2. What is the etymological meaning of the word 'ecumenism'? Explain?
3. Which bible verse became the foundation of ecumenism?
4. Explain about the beginnings of ecumenical movement?
5. What is W.C.C.? When was it established? What are its major activities?

5. Write an essay within two pages about the merits and demerits of ecumenical movement?
6. How can we examine ecumenism in the light of scriptures?

¹⁵ New trends of contextualization, indigenization, adaptation etc gave new dimensions to missionary activities. But the uncontrollable use of these trends intertwined the belief's of Christianity with the customs of other religion. It ruined the infallibility of Christian faith to a certain extend.



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