



Sunday School Lessons

Level III

Grades 4 - 6

**Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo
Debre Meheret St Michael Church**

Garland, TX

The Holy Bible

Objective: Learn the general contents of the Holy Bible

Memory Verse: "... Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:21

References: The Scripture

Introduction

Today we are going to learn about the Holy Bible. It is called Holy because it was written by the inspiration of God. It is important to know the contents of the Holy Bible, because everything that we believe is based on what is in the Holy Bible and on Biblical Tradition. The stories and lessons we learn the whole year either came directly from the Holy Bible, or have a basis in the Bible.

The Lesson

The Holy Bible is a collection of many holy books. For instance the **Book of Genesis**, the **Book of Isaiah**, **Psalm**, **Gospel of Matthew**, **Book of Revelation** are all different books, which are contained in the Holy Bible. All the books of the Holy Bible are written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Bible has two major sections. These are:

1. **The Old Testament and**
2. **The New Testament**

- ❖ The Old Testament contains **books written before the Birth of Jesus Christ.**
- ❖ The New Testament contains **books written after the Birth of Jesus Christ.**
- ❖ In the Old Testament we find the following:
 - The history of creation.
 - The history of the Israelites, and God's promise.
 - The Ten commandments
 - Prophecies about the coming of Jesus Christ
 - Different stories about God's people.
- ❖ The New Testament contains the following
 - **Four Gospels** which talk about Jesus Christ from His birth to His Resurrection into heaven
 - **The Book of Acts** which talks about the works of the disciples of Jesus Christ after His resurrection
 - Different **epistles** (messages) by Jesus' disciples.
 - The **Book of Revelation**, which talks about things of the past, and also the future.

Questions

1. What is the Holy Bible?

2. What are the two major parts of the Holy Bible?

3. In which book two groups of the Holy Bible do we find the history of creation?

The Ten Commandments

Objective: Learn the commandments of God

Memory Verse: *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love." John 15:10*

References: Exodus 20

Introduction

Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai. When he led Israel out of Egypt, God told him to go to this mountain. Moses went up there and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Then He received these commandments, which the Lord God told him to pass on to the Israelites. We are going to learn these commandments. We need to know them by heart, and abide by them, because it is by keeping God's commandments that we show our love to God. He Himself said, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love."*

The Lesson

These are the commandments God gave Moses on Mount Sinai:

1. *You shall have no other gods before me.*
2. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*
3. *Remember the Sabbath day.*
4. *Honor your father and your mother.*
5. *You shall not murder.*
6. *You shall not commit adultery.*
7. *You shall not steal.*
8. *You shall not bear false witness.*
9. *You shall not cover your neighbor's possessions.*
10. *Love your neighbor as yourself*

The first three commandments are pertaining to God. By keeping the first commandments, we show our faith in God, acknowledge him as the only God, who created heaven and earth and everything in heaven & earth, and respect and worship Him.

The last seven commandments are pertaining to our relationship with others, starting with honoring our parents. By obeying our parents, and fulfilling the other commandments, not only do we please our parents and others, but also do we please God, who gave us these commandments.

All of these are important commandments that we should learn by heart, and live accordingly all the days of our lives.

Questions

1. Who received the Ten Commandments from God? _____.
2. What is the first commandment?

3. Are the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament or the New Testament?

4. Have you kept all the commandments? Which ones are hard to keep and why?

The Holy Cross

Objective: Learn the story & message of the Holy Cross

Memory Verse: *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18*

References: Synaxarium

Introduction

The Cross is a sign of love and salvation. Jesus Christ showed us His love by giving His life on it, and gave us salvation through this act of love. For this reason we have a sign of the cross almost everywhere inside our church, on the building and clothes too. Christians cherished the True Cross of Jesus Christ. Today, we are going to learn how the true Cross of Jesus Christ was lost, and found again after many years.

The Lesson

The Holy Cross is a precious treasure for Christians because Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ suffered and gave up his life on it to save us from death and a life of sin. This Holy Cross was lost for almost three hundred years because the people who crucified Jesus Christ buried it to avoid the increasing number of believers due to its miraculous power. Many people believed in Jesus Christ when they saw the Cross healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead, and doing many other miracles. For this reason, the Jews buried it under a pile of dirt, and its location was forgotten after many years.

About three hundred years later, a woman named Helena went to Jerusalem to find the Holy Cross. She was the mother of King Constantine, who gave Christians the freedom to worship openly.

Empress Helena loved the story of the Cross, and used to think a lot about the verse from the Psalm of David that says, *"Worship at the place whereon His feet have stood."* (Psalm 132:7). When she went to Jerusalem, looking for the cross, she was told that the Holy Cross had been buried for more than 200 years, because a governor of the Jews ordered people to throw all their dirt on it. The pile from the dirt had grown to become a big mountain over two hundred years.

Empress Helena found a man named Kyriakos, who knew the area where the Cross was buried and told her what to do to find it. She then gathered stacks of wood and burned it with incense after a long hour of prayer. The smoke from the wood and incense went up and then came down to point the exact location of the cross. Empress Helena ordered the soldiers to dig the area.

After they dug the area, they found three crosses, but no one knew which was the cross of Christ. So, they brought a sick person to lie on each cross. Nothing happened on the first two crosses, but the person was healed when lying on the third cross. They repeated this on other people too, and only one of them could do miracles. So, they knew that it was the True Cross of Jesus Christ.

We celebrate, every year on the 16th & 17th day of the Ethiopian month **Meskerem** (September 26 & 27), the founding of the true cross by erecting piles of wood, and burning it to remember the act and devotion of Helena to find the Holy Cross. By doing this, we get the blessing of the Cross, and remember the ultimate show of the love of Jesus Christ - giving up His life for our sake on the Holy Cross.

Questions

5. Who received the Ten Commandments from God? _____.

6. What is the first commandment?

7. Are the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament or the New Testament?

8. Have you kept all the commandments? Which ones are hard to keep and why?

Noah

Objective: Learn about the virtues of Noah

Memory Verse: *"By Faith Noah, being warned, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household." Hebrew 11:7*

References: Genesis 5 - 9

Introduction

Noah was a holy man who lived at a time when the earth was full of sinners. People during his time did so many evil, God decided to destroy the earth. But Noah was a righteous man, and God did not want to destroy Noah. Today, we are going to learn about what happened to the sinners, and how Noah was saved.

The Lesson

At the time Noah lived on earth, the people on earth rebelled against God so much that God was sorry He created mankind. But Noah was a holy man who loved God, and lived according to the Law of God. So God told Noah to build an Ark for his family and the animals on earth, so that they would be saved from the rain he would send upon the earth. God not only told Noah to build the Ark, but He also taught and instructed him how to build it: where to put the windows and the door, and how many compartments he should have ... etc.

Noah did according to what God commanded him. God then sent rain earth, and it rained for forty days and forty nights on earth. The earth was full of water, every moving living creature on earth was destroyed except Noah, his a family and the animals in the Ark. The water stayed on the earth for 150 days. After these days, the Ark rested on a mountain called Ararat.

Noah sent a Raven to check if the waters were dry, but the Raven kept going back and forth, and never came back to Noah. Then he sent a dove, but the dove came back for it could not find a resting place. After seven days, he sent the dove out the window of the Ark again, and this time the dove came back with an olive leaf in her mouth. By this, Noah knew that the water was drying up.

After this, God told Noah to come out with his family and all the animals. The first thing Noah did after he came out of the ark was, build an altar and offer a sacrifice to God. God liked the sacrifice of Noah, for he chose the best of the animals, and sacrificed to the Lord with deep faith. Because of this, God received the sacrifice and said to Himself, **"I will never again destroy the earth because of man."** Then God blessed Noah saying, **"Be fruitful and multiply..."** And then He made a **covenant** with Noah never to destroy the earth again, and gave him a sign for a covenant - **a rainbow in the cloud**. God said to Noah, **"... I will look on it (the rainbow in the cloud) to remember the everlasting covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh."**

Questions

1. Why did God want to destroy the earth with flood?

2. Why did God want to save Noah & and his family?

3. How was Noah saved with his family from the great flood?

4. How many days did it rain, and how many days did the water stay on earth?

5. What kind of birds did Noah send out of the Ark to find out if the earth was dry? Which one returned?

6. What is the first thing Noah did when he came out of the Ark? Did God like what Noah did? Why?

7. What was the covenant God made with Noah? What sign did He give Noah as a sign of the covenant?

8. What is the book of the Bible, which has the story of Noah?

Abraham & The Promise

Objective: Learn the story of Abraham

Memory Verse: *"God is not ashamed to be called their God." Hebrew 11:16*

References: Genesis 12, 13, 21, 22

Introduction

Our father Abraham was a man of faith who loved God, and cared for people. He lived for a long time without a son, but God promised him that He would give him a son, and multiply his seeds on earth through his son. Today, we are going to learn about the life of Abraham. We are going to see how Abraham obeyed God in Faith, and how Isaac, Abraham's promise child obeyed his father.

The Lesson

Abraham lived in a place called **Haran** with his father, his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot. One day God called Abraham and said to him, *"Get out of your country, from your family and your father's house, to a land I will show you."* God told Abraham that he would bless him and make him father of a great nation. Abraham did not know anyone in the land God told him to go to. But he had faith in God. So, he took his wife Sarah, and his brother Lot, and went to **Canaan**, the place where God prepared for him.

Abraham became rich with a lot of cattle in Canaan, but he did not have a child for a long time. So Sarah told Abraham that she could not give him a son. She told him to have a son from her servant, name **Hagar**. Hagar gave Abraham a son called Ishmael. But this was not the son God promised Abraham. When Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him and told him that he would give him a son from Sarah in a year. But Sarah heard and laughed, because she thought she was too old to have a child. So, God said to Abraham, *"Why did Sarah laugh ... Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* ... What do you think? Do you think there is anything God can't do? ...**NO!**

Within a year, Sarah conceived and had a child, as God promised, and Abraham named him **Isaac**. Isaac grew up and became a strong young man, obedient to his mother and father.

Once, after Isaac grew up to be a young man, God tested Abraham, asking him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham loved his son Isaac very much. God also promised that his son Isaac would inherit his house and that his descendants would inherit the land. It was a hard question. But, Abraham had a great faith in God. He knew that God fulfils his promise, no matter what. So, he obeyed and took Isaac to offer him on an altar to God.

When they reached the altar, Abraham told Isaac that he was going to sacrifice him to God. Isaac did not try to run away or fight Abraham, because he knew that his father loved him, and that he was only obeying God. So, Abraham put Isaac on the altar, but just when he was about to sacrifice him, an angel of God appeared and stopped him. Abraham looked up, and saw a lamb hanging on a tree. Then angel told Him to sacrifice the lamb instead of Abraham. God said to Abraham, *"... all nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."*

Questions

1. Where did God tell Abraham to Go?

2. Did he obey and go to the place God told him to go?

3. Who did Abraham take with Him when he left his father's house?

4. What did God promise Abraham?

5. Why did Sarah laugh when God said that He would give Abraham a son from Sarah?

6. What did God ask Abraham to sacrifice? Did Abraham obey? Why?

7. What kind of a child was Isaac? Was he obedient to his parents?

Lot

Objective: Learn about Lot

Memory Verse: *"By Faith Noah, being warned, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household." Hebrew 11:7*

References: Genesis 19

Introduction

Lot was the son of Abraham's brother. He left his country with Abraham when God called Abraham to leave his father's house. He chose to live in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah because it was fertile and convenient for his cattle. But the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were sinful and rebellious against God. In this lesson, we are going to see what happened to these sinful people, and how Lot was saved from Sodom & Gomorrah.

The Lesson

The people of **Sodom and Gomorrah** were so sinful and rebellious against God that He decided to burn the city. But before He did that, God told Abraham about His intentions to destroy these towns. Abraham pleaded with God for the city, asking God if he would spare the city if there were few holy people. God told Abraham He would. But Lot was the only man holy in the two towns.

God sent two angels to destroy Sodom & Gomorrah. But he remembered Abraham, and wanted to save the only holy man in the towns, Lot.

God sent his angels to destroy Sodom & Gomorrah, but to save Lot first. The angels came into Lot's house as two young men. When Lot saw them, he thought they were travelers and begged them to spend the night in his house. He and Abraham were used to hosting guests in their houses.

When the people of the city learned that there were strangers in Lot's house, they came and demanded Lot to give them the men. Lot pleaded with them, but they would not listen to him, and they tried to storm his gate. So, the angels struck everybody with blindness, and they told Lot, his wife, his two daughters and their husbands to leave right away before they destroyed the city. The husbands of Lot's daughters laughed at the angels. So, the angels took hold of Lot and his family by their hand, and set them out of the city.

They told Lot to go to a far away mountain and not to look back, for they could not destroy the city until he left. But Lot said that it was too far to go away, and asked the angels if he could go to a nearby city, called **Zoar**. **So, God spared Zoar, for the sake of Lot.**

After they left the city, God sent fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the city was consumed with fire. The angels told Lot and his family not to look back, but Lot's wife turned back to see the destruction of the cities and she became a pillar of salt. But Lot and his two daughters entered Zoar without harm.

Questions

1. What is the relationship between Lot & Abraham

2. What did Abraham ask of God, when he learned that God would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?

3. Why was Lot saved with his family from the fire of Sodom & Gomorrah?

4. Who was sent to destroy Sodom & Gomorrah?

5. Who told Lot to get out of the city?

6. What did the angels told Lot not to do when they got of the city?

7. What happened to Lot's wife & why?

Isaac & Rebecca

Objective: Learn about Isaac, Rebecca & the power of prayer

Memory Verse: *"Give me success this day." Genesis 24:12*

References: Genesis 24, 25

Introduction

Isaac is the son of Abraham, whom he had at an old age. He was obedient to his parents. He even obeyed Abraham when Abraham told him that God wanted him to sacrifice his 'only' son. Today, we are going to learn about how Isaac met his wife Rebecca, and the power of the prayer that brought the two together.

The Lesson

When Abraham was old, he called his oldest servant and told him to go to his father's country to find a wife for his son, Isaac. So, Abraham's servant prepared all that he needed for the road, to go and fulfill Abraham's request. Abraham's servant was faithful like Abraham himself. So, when he went to the country of Abraham's father he prayed::

"O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham"

And he asked God to choose the right person for Abraham's son, Isaac.

He was by a well when he prayed, and before he finished his prayer, a woman named **Rebecca** came to the well carrying a pitcher. After she filled her pitcher, Abraham's servant came to her and asked her to give him a drink. So, she gave him a drink, and drew more water from the well with her pitcher for his camels. After his camels drank, she told him that there is enough place at her father's house to rest.

Abraham's servant was amazed at her kindness, and at the sign God has shown him. He knew that **Rebecca was the one God has chosen for Isaac**. He went to Rebecca's house, and he told them where he came from, and why he came. He told them how he prayed to God to guide him, and to give him a sign. He told them how God gave him all the sign he asked for, when he saw Rebecca. Rebecca's parents knew Abraham's father, and they were willing to give their daughter to be a wife for Isaac. Rebecca also agreed.

So, Abraham's servant went back to Abraham with Rebecca, praising God for what He has done for him. Isaac and Rebecca got married and had two children - Esau and Jacob.

Questions

1. Who is Isaac's father?

2. What did Abraham ask his oldest servant?

3. What did Abraham's servant do when he went to the country of Abraham's father?

4. Who did Abraham's servant see as he was praying?

5. What did he ask the woman? Did she give him what he asked?

6. What did he thank God for?

7. On which book of the Bible do you find the story of Isaac & Rebecca?

Jacob & Esau

Objective: Learn about the story of the brothers Jacob & Esau & the importance of a blessing.

Memory Verse: *"I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined to me." Psalm 40:1*

References: Genesis 25, 32:24-29

Introduction

When Isaac, the promise child of Abraham was old enough to marry, Abraham sent his servant to bring a wife for his son from his native land. So, Abraham's servant prayed to God to choose the right person for Isaac, and God helped him find a beautiful and kind woman, called Rebecca. Rebecca's parents also agreed to give their daughter to Isaac to be his wife.

The Lesson

Isaac and Rebecca had no children for a long time. So, Isaac prayed to God to give him children, and God answered his prayer. Rebecca conceived, and gave birth to twins. They named **the first born, Esau**, and **the second born, Jacob**.

The boys grew up, and **Esau became a hunter**, but **Jacob lived in a tent helping his mother**. One day, Esau came back very hungry from hunting, and found Jacob cooking food at home. Esau asked Jacob to give him from the food he was making, but Jacob said, *"Sell me your birthright first"*.

Do you know what a birthright is? It is a right of the first born to get a special blessing from his father. Jacob and Esau were twins, but Esau came out first. So, he had the right for the blessing of the first-born. But when Jacob asked Esau to give him his birth right in exchange for the food he had cooked, Esau said, *"I am about to die, so what is this birth right to me"* He swore to Jacob, and sold his birthright. Then Jacob gave him bread, and the food he was cooking from the pot. Esau ate, and went his way.

Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for food. Thus, when Isaac grew old, Jacob received his father's blessing, which Esau would have gotten; but Esau did not, even though he wanted it later, for he could not tolerate a few moment of hunger, and thus sold his birthright for food.

Jacob knew the importance of a father's blessing, and also God's blessing. Because of this, he received his father's blessing. At a later time, Jacob struggled to get God's blessing, so God blessed him and changed his name to Israel.

Questions

1. What are the names of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca?

2. Who was the first born?

3. What is so special about being the first-born?

4. Who received the blessing of the first-born?

5. How did Esau feel about his birthright?

6. Do you get blessings from your parents, your grand parents? What about from the priest at church?

7. Do you do certain things to get a blessing from your parents? Can you give example?

Jacob

Objective: Learn virtues from the story of Jacob

Memory Verse: *"I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined to me." Psalm 40:1*

References: Genesis 27-32, 35

Introduction

Last time, we have seen how Jacob received his father's blessing, which Esau traded for food. Today, we are going to learn more about the life of Jacob, and the virtues in his life.

The Lesson

Esau wanted to kill his brother Jacob, because Jacob received the blessing of the first born from his father instead of him. So, Isaac and Rebecca send Jacob to his uncle, Laban. God was always with him wherever Jacob went. On his way to Laban, he spent the night at a certain place, where he had a strange dream. He saw a ladder that was set on earth and reached heaven. He saw angels going up and down on this ladder, and God at the top of the ladder in heaven. He named this place "***Bethel***", which means the house of God. God promised to give him this place for his children.

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel, and asked Laban to serve him 7 years for her. Laban agreed, but at the end of the 7 years, Laban gave him Leah saying that she was older, and that the younger doesn't marry before the older gets married. So, Jacob served Laban another 7 years for Rachel. Jacob served Laban six more years, and returned to his father's house. He made peace with his brother Esau, and had twelve sons.

God blessed Jacob again at Bethel and renewed the promise he gave to his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, saying, "***The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, I give to you, and to your descendants.***"

Later in his life, Jacob went and settled in Egypt with his family because of a great drought. He died and was buried in Egypt, and his descendants stayed in Egypt for 400 years, until God brought them back to Jerusalem under the leadership of Moses.

Questions

1. Where did Jacob go after he received his father's blessing? Why did he go there?

2. What was the dream he saw one night, when he was traveling to his uncle?

3. What did he call the place where he had a strange dream? What is the meaning of the dream?

4. How many years did Jacob serve Laban for Rachel?

5. How many more years did Jacob serve Laban after he married Rachel?

6. How many sons did Jacob had?

7. Why did Jacob move to Egypt with his family?

8. How many years did the descendants of Jacob leave in Egypt?

9. Was Jacob a patient person? Was he forgiving? Was he a faithful in his service? Explain.

Deliverance of Israel from Egypt

III

Objective: Learn the power of God's deliverance, and the role of angel's in God's deliverance

Memory Verse: *"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." Exodus 23:20*

References: Exodus 1-3, 5, 13, 14

Introduction

Joseph was the son of Jacob, whom his brothers sold to Egypt out of jealousy. In Egypt, he found favor with Pharaoh, the Egyptian King, and became the second person over Egypt under Pharaoh. Jacob and his brothers came to Egypt at a time of a great drought. His brothers did not know him at first. But he knew them, and revealed himself to them. He forgave them for what they had done to him. They then brought their father Jacob, and they all settled in Egypt for 400 years. Long after the death of Joseph, the Egyptians made the Israelites slaves; but God heard the cry of His people and delivered them out of Egypt with the leadership of Moses. Today, we are going to learn how God delivered the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh.

The Lesson

Moses grew up in the house of Pharaoh, as a child to Pharaoh's daughter. Growing up, he was very sorry for his people, the Israelites, because the Egyptians made them slaves. So, he gave up all that he had in Pharaoh's house, and went out of Egypt. He was received by an Ethiopian named **Jethro**, and married his daughter. One day, while keeping Jethro's flock, Moses saw a burning bush on a mountain known as the **Mountain of God**; but the bush was not on fire. He was amazed and went up on the mountain to see it. When he reached the fire, a voice came from the midst of the fire saying, *"Moses, Moses ... put off your shoes from your feet for the place on which you stand is holy ... I am the God of you father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Abraham."* Do you take your shoes off when you go inside the church?

God told Moses that he has heard the cry of his people, and that he would send him to free the Israelites. He told him that He would be with him. So, Moses went to Pharaoh and said to him, *"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, let my people go"*. But Pharaoh would not let them go. God brought a lot of punishment on the Egyptians, and showed them several miracles. Pharaoh finally let the people go, after God punished all of Egypt with the death of their firstborn, including the firstborn of Pharaoh. So, the Israelites gathered all their belongings and started a journey to go to the land God had promised them. But after he let them go, Pharaoh changed his mind again and sent all of his army to bring back the Israelites.

The people of Israel complained against Moses when they came to the Red Sea, because they had nowhere to go. But an angel of God came to their rescue: *"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them."* (Exodus 14:19). It was the Archangel Michael. The Archangel Michael helped the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Jerusalem.

Moses said to the people, *"See the salvation of the Lord"*, and he hit the Red Sea with his Rod. *Guess what happened.* The sea was immediately split into two, and there was a dry land for them to pass through. So, they went through the Red Sea on a dry land. After they finished crossing the sea, Pharaoh's army also came through the dry land. But Moses hit the sea again, and the water came on the dry land. So, all the soldiers of Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea with their horses and Chariots. The Israelites sang to the Lord and praised him. They sang, *"I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously."*

God told Moses that he would send his angel to keep and protect them in their journey to the promise land: *"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."* (Exodus 23:20).

We celebrate the Archangels protection and help of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Jerusalem on the 12th day of the Ethiopian month, Hedar.

Questions

1. Why did Jacob and his brother's came to Egypt?

2. How did Joseph come to Egypt?

3. How did Moses come to grow in Pharaoh's house?

4. Why did Moses leave Pharaoh's house?

5. What did he see on the mountain of God?

6. How were the Israelites rescued from the soldier's of Pharaoh when they came after them?

7. Who was the angel who protected and helped the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to the Jerusalem?

8. Why is Jerusalem called the promise land?

9. Is there an icon inside our church that shows the Archangel Michael helping the Israelites? Can you describe it?

Joseph

Objective: Learn the reward of faithfulness, and perseverance from the virtuous life of Joseph

Memory Verse: *"How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9*

References: Genesis 27-32, 35

Introduction

Joseph was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. He was his father's favorite son. In this lesson, we are going to learn about the life of Joseph and the virtues in his life.

The Lesson

- ❖ **Joseph was obedient to his parents:** Even though his brothers were jealous of him, he obeyed his father, Jacob and went to look for his brothers, and see if they were all ok. But his brothers conspired to kill him when they saw him.
- ❖ **Joseph was faithful to his master and to God:** After his brothers sold Joseph to traders, they took him to Egypt and sold him to a man called Potiphar, who was an officer of Pharaoh. God was with Joseph, and He blessed everything that Joseph did. Potiphar observed this and made Joseph overseer of all his property and his house. Potiphar's wife wanted to sin with Joseph, and asked him day and night. But Joseph answered her saying *"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he (Potiphar) kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this wickedness, and sin against God."*

One day, Joseph was in the house working and there was no one in the house. So, Potiphar's wife came to him, and caught him by his garment; but he left his garment in her hand and ran outside. No matter how many times she tempted him, he would never sin against God.
- ❖ **Joseph was faithful and trustworthy wherever he was:** Potiphar's wife accused Joseph falsely, and he went into prison. But as usual, he was faithful in prison, and God blessed everything that he did. So the prison guard trusted him enough to give him charge of all prisoners.
- ❖ **Joseph was humble:** Joseph had a special gift of interpreting dreams. But he never boasted about it, because he knew that it was a gift from God. When two prisoners who were with him were troubled about the interpretation of their dreams, Joseph said, *"Do not interpretations belong to God?"* When Pharaoh called him to interpret his dreams, Joseph said, *"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer."* He knew that it was God who gives knowledge and wisdom.
- ❖ **Joseph was forgiving:** His brother's who sold Joseph into slavery came to Egypt in search of food. Pharaoh made Joseph a lord over Egypt when they came. But Joseph did not seek revenge against them. Instead he forgave them all, and said that it was God's will that he might be able to save their souls and the souls of many in times of hardship.

For all these virtues, God rewarded Joseph greatly. He blessed everything Joseph did. Even though he had to suffer for being honest and faithful, God was always with him, and brought him out all hardships.

Questions

1. Write three virtues of Joseph.

2. How did Joseph feel about his gift of interpreting dreams?

3. What was Joseph's response when Potiphar's wife spoke to him again and again to sin with her?

4. Do you have friends who ask you to do something you don't want to do? How do you respond?

5. How did God reward Joseph for being loyal, faithful, obedient and humble?

Entry of Virgin Mary into the Temple

Objective: Learn the story of the Virgin's entry into the temple.

Memory Verse: "*She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework*"

Psalms 15:14

References: Miracles of Mary & Synaxarium

Introduction

The Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ. She was the daughter of Joachim and Anna, who were God loving and righteous people. They lived a long time without a child, but God gave them a beautiful child after many years of prayer. They raised her until she was three years old, and then they brought her to the temple of God. Today, we are going to learn about the events of her **Presentation into the Temple**.

The Lesson

Anna gave birth to the Virgin Mary at a place called **Lebanon**. She was beautiful, and Anna and Joachim praised God's precious gift. But they made an oath that they would give the child to Him, to grow up and serve in the Temple, if God gave them a child. So, when she was three years old, they took her to the Temple. *Do you all know what a temple is? ...*

When they brought her to the Temple, **the high priest, Zachariah** and the congregation were gathered outside. Zachariah saw an angel of God coming down with bread and a cup, and he approached to receive it, but the angel went back up when Zachariah approached. So, Zachariah told the congregation to clear away from the child Mary. And when Mary was left alone, the angel came down to her and fed her the bread, and gave her a drink from the cup. Everyone was amazed, and Zachariah knew that God had chosen the Virgin Mary to grow in His Temple.

So, the Virgin Mary entered the temple and lived there for 12 years, until she was 15 years old. Angels of God brought her food and drink all the days of her lives in the temple. When she became 15, she was engaged to Joseph the carpenter, so that he could protect her and take care of her.

Questions

1. Where was the Virgin Mary born?

2. How old was the Virgin Mary when she entered the temple?

3. How long did she live in the temple.

4. Who gave the Virgin Mary food when she was living in the temple?

5. Why was the Virgin Mary engaged to Joseph?

6. For next week, ask one of the priests the name of the angel who gave her food and drink when the Virgin Mary first came to the temple.

Moses

III

Objective: Learn about the life of Moses, and the virtues in his life

Memory Verse: *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." John 15:13*

References: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy

Introduction

Moses is the one who led Israel out of Egypt from slavery, to a land of freedom. He was born at a time when there was a decree to kill all the male born of the Israelites in Egypt. But his mother hid him for three months, and then set him by a river bank where the daughter of Pharaoh found him. She took him to be her child, and he grew up in the Pharaoh's house. But he knew that he was a Hebrew, because his mother raised him as her maid, and taught him all about his people. So, he always felt the suffering of his people as slaves. One day, He saw a Hebrew and an Egyptian fighting, and he killed the Egyptian. This news was heard in Egypt, so Moses fled from the house of Pharaoh, and lived in another country called the land of the Medians. There, he married and had two sons. It was here that God appeared to him while he was tending the flock of his father in law, Jethro, and spoke to him from the midst of a burning bush on the **Mountain of God**. Next we are going to learn about the life of Moses from this moment, the moment when God appeared to him on the this mountain.

The Lesson

- Moses was a good hearted person, who gave up all the riches he had because he felt the suffering of his people. He was not happy to live in the king's palace while his people suffered. Because of this, God commissioned him to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.
- Moses was very humble when God told him that He would send him to Pharaoh to save the Israelites. Moses said, *"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"* (Ex. 3:20) But God said to him that He would be with him, He would give him the words he would speak, and that He would deliver the people by His power.
- So Moses went to Pharaoh and told him that God said, *"Let my people go."* As a first sign that this was from God, Moses threw his staff on the floor and it became a snake. But Pharaoh said that it was no big deal, and he brought two of his own magicians who did the same thing. But Moses' snake swallowed those of the magicians. But Pharaoh still would not let the people go. Because of this, God brought 10 great plagues against the Egyptians. Pharaoh finally let the people go after God punished Egypt with death of their firstborn.
- Moses always reminded the people of the power of God, because they always doubted Him, and angered the Lord. When they came to the Red sea, Pharaoh's army also came after them. So, the people cried against Moses saying you have brought us here to kill us, but Moses said, *"See the salvation of the Lord"*, and he struck the sea with his staff. It was split into two and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea through dry land. God showed the Israelites a great deal of miracles through Moses during their journey to the promise land. He gave them manna from heaven, water from a rock, and series of victories in their battles to the promise land.
- Moses was a man of prayer and fasting. He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights to receive the 10 commandments on two tablets of stone from God.
- Moses cared for the people of Israel more than his own well - being. Once upon a time, the Israelites were so rebellious, God told Moses that He would destroy them and appoint him over other nations. But Moses said he didn't want to be appointed over other nations, and pleaded with God to spare the people. He even asked God to erase him from the book of life instead of destroying the Israelites. God heard his plea and hearkened from his anger.
- Moses believed in the intercession of saints. When he pleaded with God to save Israel, he asked God to remember the covenant He had made with his forefathers, Abraham and Isaac - and save the people for their sake. God hearkened to Moses' request and spared the people again.
- God wants others to respect the holy. God struck the people once when they murmured against Moses. He stopped only when Moses pleaded with Him. He also struck Moses' brother Aaron, and his sister, with leprosy when they criticized Moses.
- Moses died just before he entered the promise land, at the age of 120. But God showed him the land from afar. The Israelites mourned the death of Moses for a month. Moses appointed Joshua to lead Israel into the promise land before he died.
- Moses told the Israelites about the coming of Jesus Christ before his death.
- He wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, which include the story of creation, the laws, and the history of their exodus from Egypt.

Questions

1. Why did Moses' mother put Moses by a river bank when he was three years old? Where did he grow up?

2. How did Moses learn about the Hebrew faith and tradition?

3. What did Moses say to the Israelites when they cried against him at the Red Sea?

4. How many days and nights did Moses fast before receiving the Ten Commandments?

5. How did God reveal Himself to Moses first?

6. What did Moses say, when God told him that He would send him to free the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt?

7. Why did God hearken his heart after he decided to destroy the Israelites because of their repeated sins against Him?

8. Who replaced Moses when he died to lead Israel into the promise land?

Joshua

III

Objective: Learn about the life of Joshua.

Memory Verse: *"Be strong and courageous that you may observe to do according to the law which Moses, My servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may prosper wherever you go." Joshua 1:7*

References: Numbers & Joshua

Introduction

Joshua is the one who led Israel to the promise land after the death of Moses. God promised him saying, *"I will be with you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, I will be with you."* He commanded him to keep the laws of Moses in the words written above on the memory verse. Joshua accepted the responsibility and led Israel into the promise land and divided the land God had promised to give them among the Israelites. Next we are going to learn about the life of this holy person.

The Lesson

- Joshua was one of the 12 men Moses sent to spy Canaan. After spying Canaan, 10 of the spies reported that the land produced honey and milk but the people were strong and giants. They said they would not be able to fight against these men. So, the Israelites cried against Moses. But **Joshua** and **Caleb** told the people that they would inherit the land because God was with them. Because of this, only Joshua and Caleb among those who were 20 years or older entered the promise land.
- The Israelites crossed over a river through dry land under the leadership of Joshua, as they have crossed the Red Sea. Joshua ordered 12 men to carry the Ark of the Covenant and stand in the Jordan River. When the men stood in the River carrying the Ark, the water parted to the left and the right, and the Israelites crossed the Jordan River on dry land as they have crossed the Red Sea. Joshua set 12 stones in the Jordan River for a memorial to the children of Israel.
- Joshua received the same commandment as Moses about honoring a holy place. When he was near Jericho, the Archangel Michael appeared to him and said, *"As commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."* So Joshua fell to the ground and asked, *"What does my Lord say to his servant?"* Then the Archangel said to him, *"Take your shoes off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy."* (Joshua 5:14-15). The Archangel helped him enter the promise land, as he had helped them in their journey during the leadership of Moses.
- Joshua did one of the greatest miracles recorded in the Bible. Once during a battle, it was getting late before the Israelites completed their mission. So Joshua order the sun to stand still, and the sun did not set until they finished their mission for the day. It is written about this event that there has been no day like this, when the Lord heeded the voice of a man. God sent hailstones from heaven against the enemies of the Israelites on this day.
- Joshua credited all his success in leading Israel to the promise land to God. He told the Israelites that the Lord God is the One who fought for Israel. He passed on the people the commandment he himself received from God saying, *"be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses."* He warned them that God would punish them if they turn away from Him and worship other gods. The people promised that they would worship the Lord. So, Joshua made a covenant with he people and made them a statute and an ordinance. The people served and worshiped God all the days of Joshua.
- Joshua died at the age of 110, after He divided the land God had given them among the tribes of Israel.

Questions

1. What did the 12 spies Moses sent to Canaan to report to the people? Did they all had the same opinion?

2. What is the River the Israelites crossed through dry land like they crossed the Red sea, during the leadership of Joshua?

3. What is the commandment Joshua received which Moses also received before him?

4. Who is the Archangel that appeared to Joshua when he was near Jericho?

5. What is the miracle of Joshua, which the Bible said the following about: *There has been no day like this, that the Lord heeded the voice of man?*

6. What did Joshua tell the Israelites after he divided the land among them?

7. How old was Joshua when he died?

Archangel Gabriel

Objective: Learn about the Angel Gabriel's role from the beginning of creation throughout the human history.

Memory Verse: *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"*

Psalm 23:4

References: Synaxarium, Daniel 3, Luke 1 & 2

Introduction

There are seven archangels. Angels have different functions. They are messengers of God. They also pray for us, and help us at times of difficulty. Today we are going to learn about one of the seven archangels, St. Gabriel.

The Lesson

St. Gabriel is the second ranking archangel of the seven archangels. The meaning of his name is, *God is my strength*. As it is explained in the introduction, angels have different functions. Below, we are going to see the works of the Archangel Gabriel:

- Archangel Gabriel stands at the throne of God in worship.
- He is known as the angel of annunciation: He is the one who announced the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary. He also announced the birth of John the Baptist to the priest Zechariah. He also announced the birth of Jesus Christ to shepherds, on the night of Jesus Birth.
- Before the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and have a child, He came to the high priest Zachariah and told him that God would give him a child. But Zachariah did not believe him for his wife Elizabeth was past the age of child bearing. Because of his unbelief, the Archangel Gabriele made Zachariah dumb until his child, John the Baptist, was born.
- Archangel Gabriel kept watch over the Virgin Mary throughout her life. After Jesus Christ was born, Herod heard of the new-born king, and wanted to kill Him. So, Archangel Gabriel told Joseph to take her with her Son to Egypt, and told them to come back when Herod died.
- On the first day of creation, Satan claimed that he created all the other angels. Some of the angels believed him, and there was a great division among the angels. The Archangel Gabriel calmed most of the hosts of angels by declaring to stand where they are until they found their creator. It was because of this faithful act, that God chose him to announce His birth from the Virgin Mary.
- We learned to praise the Virgin Mary from the Archangel Gabriel. When he first came to her, he said, *"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women."* Because we learned to praise the Virgin from Him, we start the prayer of her praise by saying, *"O our lady the Virgin Mary, we greet you in the salutations of the angel Gabriel..."*
- The archangel Gabriel saved three young men who were thrown into a fiery fire for refusing to worship idols. (*Daniel 3*). He also saved a woman and her child from many hardships during the Era of Martyrdom.

Questions

1. Why is the Archangel Gabriel known as the angel of annunciation?

2. Why did He make the high priest Zachariah dumb?

3. What did the Archangel tell Joseph to do after Jesus Christ was born? Why?

4. Why did God choose the Archangel Gabriel to announce the birth of Jesus Christ to Virgin Mary?

5. Describe the two kinds of icons we have inside the church? Ask your parents or the priest for the story of the icons.

Nativity of Christ

Objective: Learn the reason for Christmas, and the events of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: "*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel.*" *Isaiah 7:14*

References: Matthew 1 & 2; Luke 2

Introduction

Do you remember the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary? ... The archangel praised her, and said to her that she would conceive and bear a child, who is a King. Hundreds and thousands of years before this, many prophets also spoke about the birth of a King from a Virgin. The verse we see in the memory verse above is one of the prophecies by a prophet named Isaiah. Today, we are going to learn about the fulfillment of this prophecy, and the reason we celebrate Christmas.

The Lesson

On a cold winter night, in the first century, in a place called **Bethlehem**, a Savior for the whole world was born from a **Virgin called Mary**, in a manger. Nine months before this day, the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and bear a child, and call His name Jesus. She was 15 at the time, and engaged to an elderly righteous man called Joseph.

When the time was near for the Virgin Mary to give birth, there was a **decree** for everyone to register at the place of his or her origin. So, the Virgin Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to register. When they reached Bethlehem, it was time for the Virgin Mary to deliver, but they couldn't find a place to stay in. They were finally able to get a manger. *Do you know what a manger is? ... It is a place where livestock are kept.*

The Virgin Mary gave birth to a beautiful baby, as the angel told her on that night in the manger, and she named Him Jesus. On the same night, angels appeared to **shepherds** and announced the birth of a savior to them saying, "*there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you. You will find a Baby wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger.*" And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and singing: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward His people!*"

Bethlehem was the city that was called the **city of David**. So, the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in the manger as the angel had told them. And they returned glorifying and praising God for what they had heard and seen.

Three kings from a far away place also learned of the birth of the Savior, and were led to Bethlehem by a shining star. They brought Him gifts of **gold, myrh and frankincense**. These were precious and expensive items at the time presented to kings and queens.

So, this is the reason we celebrate Christmas: the birth of Jesus Christ, a Savior to the whole world - a day in which we received the gift of salvation.

Questions

1. In what city was Jesus Christ born?

2. Where exactly was He born, because they couldn't find a place to stay?

3. Why did the Virgin Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?

4. Who brought the news of the birth of a savior to shepherds?

5. What did the shepherds hear the angels sing?

6. Do you give presents to your friends on their birthdays? What about to Jesus Christ?

The First Visit in the Temple

Objective: Learn about the Presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple.

Memory Verse: *"My eyes have seen Your salvation" Luke 2:30*

References: Luke 2, Interpretation of the Gospels, Leviticus 12

Introduction

According to the Law of God in the Old Testament, the purification for a woman after giving birth is 40 days - if she has a boy, and 80 days - if she has a girl. At the end of the purification period, they go and present an offering at the Temple. Jesus Christ is the Lord of this Law, but he also fulfilled this Law by going to the Temple after the purification period according to this law. Today, we are going to learn whom they met, and what happened when He was presented in the temple.

The Lesson

There was an old man in the temple of Jerusalem, named Simeon, who had been waiting for the salvation of God. About 200 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, a king named Ptolemy Soter brought 70 Jewish elders to Jerusalem to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek.

Simeon was one of the seventy elders, and he was assigned to translate the **Book of the Prophet Isaiah**. On Isaiah 7:14, there was a prophecy about the birth of Jesus Christ from a Virgin: *"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel."* He was afraid to translate *"a virgin shall conceive"* because he thought no one would believe Him. So He translated it as *"a woman shall conceive..."*. He fell asleep after he did this, and when he woke up, he found it translated as *"a virgin shall conceive..."*. He erased it and changed it, but he found it corrected again. This happened three times, but when he tried to erase it the fourth time, an angel appeared to him and told him that he would not die before seeing the Lord Jesus Christ born of a Virgin.

This was the promise that he was waiting to see in the temple of the Lord. He lived about 250 years after translating the Book of the prophet Isaiah into Greek. What he had been waiting for was fulfilled 40 days after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the Virgin Mary and Joseph brought Him to the temple. Simeon took the Baby Jesus in his hands and said: *"Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel."*

There was also a widow, who served the Lord in the temple with prayers and fasting day and night. She also thanked the Lord like Simeon, for the coming of the salvation of the world.

Questions

1. Why did the king Ptolemy Soter bring 70 Jewish elders to Jerusalem?

2. What book was Simeon assigned to translate?

3. What was the prophecy he was afraid to translate correctly? What happened when he tried to change the translation?

4. Where did Simeon see the fulfillment of the prophecy on the book of the prophet Isaiah?

5. Who else was in the temple when the Virgin Mary and Joseph brought our Lord, the Baby Jesus into the Temple? What was she doing in the temple?

6. When did the Virgin Mary and Joseph bring Jesus Christ to the Temple?

Epiphany

Objective: Learn about the baptism of Jesus Christ, and the importance of Baptism

Memory Verse: *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5*

References: Luke 2, Interpretation of the Gospels, Leveticus 12

Introduction

During the last couple of lessons, we learned about the events of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His presentation (first visit) in the temple. Joseph took the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus to Egypt, and returned after three and half years. *Do you know why Joseph took the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ to Egypt?* ... Jesus Christ grew up in Galilee after He returned from Egypt. When He was 30 years old, he went to the Jordan River to be baptized from John the Baptist. Today, we are going to learn about the events of the baptism, and it's importance.

The Lesson

There was a man called **John** who was teaching about the coming of the **kingdom of God**, and **repentance**. When people asked him if He were the **Messiah**, he told them that he was the one sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. When Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized, he said to the people, *"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is He, of whom I said after me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me."* John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan River, and when Jesus came out of the water:

1. The Heaven was opened;
2. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus Christ like a dove;
3. And a voice from heaven said, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"*. This was the voice of God the father.

Jesus revealed that He was the Son of God at His baptism. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River to set an example for us. He thought us to be humble by going to John to be baptized, and also set an example for us so that we also should be baptized.

Following Jesus Christ's example, we are also baptized. *Why is baptism necessary?*

- We all need to be baptized so that we can enter the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ said, *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* Therefore we need to be baptized to enter into God's kingdom. We become the children of God through baptism, because baptism is a being born from the Holy Spirit.
- Boys are baptized 40 days after birth, and girls 80 days after birth.
- When we are baptized we get a Godfather or Godmother of our parent's choice. The Godfather or the Godmother promises to teach the child about Jesus Christ.
- We are also given a Baptismal name when we are baptized. *Do you remember your baptismal names?*

Questions

1. What did John the Baptist tell the people about Himself?

2. What was he teaching the people about?

3. How old was Jesus Christ when He was baptized? Where was He baptized?

4. Why was Jesus Christ baptized?

5. Why do we get baptized?

6. At what age do we get baptized? Do you remember your baptismal names?

John the Baptist

Objective: Learn the story of John the Baptist, and the virtues in his life

Memory Verse: *"Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist" Matthew 11:11*

References: Matthew 3; Mark 6

Introduction

John the Baptist is the prophet who baptized Jesus Christ. That is why he is known as **John the Baptist**. He was teaching the people to return from their sins, and prepare themselves for the coming of the **Kingdom of God**. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. He leapt with joy in his mother's womb, when Elizabeth - his mother, heard the greetings of the Virgin Mary. Today, we are going to learn about the life of this prophet.

The Lesson

John the Baptist was born of the priest **Zachariah and Elizabeth** - a relative of the Virgin Mary - 6 months before the birth of Jesus Christ. He grew up feeding on locusts and honey in the wilderness because his father and mother died when he was only a child. His clothes were made of camel's hair, and had a leather belt around his waist.

John the Baptist was the prophet God sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus Christ. Many people followed him confessing their sins, and being baptized. He told these people that he was not the Christ, but he was the one who prepares the way by preaching repentance and the coming of **Kingdom of God**.

When Jesus Christ started teaching after His baptism, John directed his followers to follow Jesus Christ. He testified about Jesus Christ saying, *"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."*

John the Baptist was truthful, and was not afraid to tell anyone of his/her sins. There was a king named Herod, who took the wife of his brother. John criticized the king for doing this, and he was sent to prison. Once, Herodias, the daughter of Herod's wife sang for Herod at his birthday. Herod was so happy with her singing, he promised to give her anything she asked. Her mother advised her to ask for the head of John. Herodias told Herod that she wanted the head of John on a plate.

Thus Herod beheaded John the Baptist. John became a martyr on the 2nd day of the Ethiopian Month, Meskerem (September 12).

Questions

1. Who are the mother and father of John the Baptist?

2. Why did John the Baptist grow in the wilderness?

3. What did he grow up feeding on?

4. How did John the Baptist know Jesus Christ when he saw Him?

5. Why did he criticize king Herod?

6. Was John the Baptist afraid of telling the truth? Do always tell the truth?

The First Disciples

Objective: Know the disciples, and how Jesus chose them.

Memory Verse: *"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29*

References: Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 5; John 1

Introduction

We are going to learn about the calling of the disciples of Jesus Christ in the next few lessons, starting today. Today, we will see the calling of the first disciples.

The Lesson

John the Baptist has been teaching about the coming of someone greater than Him. He told the people that the one, who comes after him, is greater than him. When He first saw Jesus Christ, He said, *"Behold the Lamb of God..."* He told the people that He was the one he had been telling them about.

On the next day, he saw Jesus Christ again, and he said *"Behold, the Lamb of God."* Two of John's disciples who heard John speak, followed Jesus Christ. Jesus asked them what they needed. They said, *"Master, where do you live?"* Jesus said to them to come and see, and they followed Him, and stayed with him. The two disciples of John the Baptist who followed Jesus were **Andrew and John**. Andrew then called his brother Simon, whom Jesus later called Peter and told him that they found the Messiah.

Later that day, **Andrew and Simon Peter** were fishing, but caught no fish. Jesus came and told them to throw their net in the water. They told Him that they couldn't catch any all day, but obeyed and threw in their net. They caught so many fishes that they couldn't pull their nets out. So, they called to their companions, **James and John**.

Jesus said to them that He would make them fishers of men from now on, and they followed him.

So, the names of the first four disciples whom Jesus called were the brothers **Andrew and Peter**, and other brothers, **James and John**. Andrew and John were also followers of John the Baptist.

The following day, Jesus told Philip to follow Him, and he did. Philip in turn called Nathanael. He said to him, *"We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote - Jesus of Nazareth."* So, Nathanael also became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Who were the followers of John the Baptist who followed Jesus Christ?

2. How many fishermen did Jesus call to be his disciples in this lesson?

3. Who told Nathanael about Jesus Christ?

4. What did John the Baptist say, when he saw Jesus Christ?

5. Name all the disciples of Jesus Christ from this lesson.

6. Who wrote about Jesus Christ before he came?

The Calling of Matthew into Discipleship & the Twelve Disciples

Objective: Learn that Jesus came to call sinners into righteousness.

Memory Verse: *"I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Matthew 9:13*

References: Matthew 9; Mark 2,3; Luke 5,6

Introduction

Last week we have seen how Jesus called 6 of his disciples. *Do you remember their names? ...* They were the brothers **Andrew and Peter**, other brothers - **John and James**, and **Philip and Nathanael**. The first four were fishermen. Today, we are going to learn about the calling of another disciple.

The Lesson

Matthew, one of Jesus Christ's 12 disciples was a tax collector. Tax collectors during that time were known for corruption and bribery. They overcharge the people taxes, so that they could make profits. They also received bribes from people.

One day, Jesus Christ was passing by where Matthew was sitting to collect taxes. He said to him, *"Follow me."* Matthew immediately got up and followed him. On the same day, Jesus was dining with other tax collectors. When the Jews saw this, they asked the disciples why Jesus dines with sinners.

When Jesus heard this, he said to them, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick ... I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

From this day on, Matthew became a disciple of Jesus Christ, leaving his job as a tax collector, and his sins. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, he wrote about the birth of Jesus Christ, about His baptism, His miracles, and His life on earth in the first Gospel of the New Testament.

Jesus picked 12 total disciples. These were the brothers **Andrew & Simon Peter**, the brothers **John & James**, **Philip**, **Nathanael**, the brothers **James and Thadaeus**, **Matthew**, another **Simon**, **Thomas**, and **Judas of Iscariot**. Judas of Iscariot was later replaced by **Matthias**, because he denied Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. What is the name of the tax collector who became Jesus Christ's disciple?

2. Did He hesitate to follow Jesus Christ when he told him to follow Him?

3. Did Jesus Christ reject sinners?

4. Are we supposed to hate sinners? What about sin?

5. Write the names of the 12 disciples?

6. Which of the 12 chosen disciples deny Jesus Christ?

St. Stephen

Objective: Learn about the life of St. Stephen

Memory Verse: " *Lord, do not charge them with this sin.*" Acts 7:60

References: Acts 6 & 7

Introduction

In this lesson, we are going to see how the one of the first century disciples, St. Stephen was chosen, about his dedication, and his love even for those who persecuted Him because of his faith and testimony in Jesus Christ.

The Lesson

- After the apostles started preaching the Gospel, the followers grew in number. They told the people to choose seven men with good reputation, and full of the Holy Spirit, to appoint them to administer the growing followers.
- The people then chose seven men. The apostles laid their hands on them, prayed over them, and appointed them deacons. One of the seven chosen was Stephen - who was the archdeacon.
- Stephen did great wonders and miracles. Some men stirred up the people against him, and accused him in front of the Jewish elders. They accused him of blasphemy - speaking bad or wrong things about holy places and against God. They also brought false witnesses against him.
- The high priest asked Stephen if the accusations against him were true. Stephen's face was shining like an angel. He spoke to the council about:
 - How God called Abraham and made a covenant with Him,
 - How His grandson, Jacob, with his twelve sons went down to Egypt,
 - How God delivered them through Moses
 - And How the Israelites rebelled against God and killed the prophets
- He told them that they were stubbornly resisting the Holy Spirit, and they have killed Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets spoke - ignoring the law and the prophecy, which they received from the prophets and angels.
- When those in court heard this, they were very upset and were aroused to kill him. But Stephen looked up and saw Jesus on the right hand of the Father. He said: "***Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!***"
- They took St. Stephen out of the city, and stoned him to death.
- When they stoned him, St. Stephen said, "***Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.***" And he prayed for them saying: "***Lord, do not charge them with this sin.***"

Questions

1. How many deacons were chosen to serve the growing Christian family of the first century?

2. What was St. Stephen accused of?

3. What did St. Stephen's face look like when he was sitting in front of his accusers in the court?

4. What did he tell the court, when asked about the accusations against him?

5. What did St Stephen see, when he looked up?

6. What were the last words of St. Stephen as he was stoned to death?

Fast of Lent

Objective: Learn about the spirituality of fasting.

Memory Verse: "*After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.*" *Matthew 4:2*

References: Genesis 1 & 2, Daniel 10, Matthew 4

Introduction

Fasting is abstaining from food for certain hours of the day, and from any kind of dairy product for the duration of the fasting period. We have seven fasting periods in a year. One of these fasts is the Fast of Lent. We are going to learn about fasting in general and the Fast of Lent in our lesson today.

The Lesson

- Fasting is abstaining from certain kind of food. God ordered this kind of fasting first after He created Adam and Eve. He allowed Adam and Eve to eat from all plants and fruits that grow on earth, except one, which was called the Tree of Knowledge.
- Fasting is also abstaining from meat and any dairy product. When God created Adam and Eve, He told them to eat only from every plant that grows on earth. So, they did not eat meat or dairy products in the beginning.
- God's prophets fasted by abstaining from food for a long time, and also abstaining from meat and any dairy product. For instance, **Moses** fasted for 40 days and nights without any food before he received the 10 commandments (*Exodus 34:28*). A prophet, called **Elijah**, also fasted for 40 days and nights (*1 Kings 19:8*). A prophet called **Daniel and King David** fasted from meat and dairy product (*Daniel 10:3*).
- Jesus Christ Himself also fasted for 40 days and nights (*Matthew 4*). He fasted to set an example for us. The fast of Lent is observed according to this fasting of Jesus Christ for 40 days and 40 nights. The fast of Lent is also called the **Great Lent**, because it is the fast of Jesus Christ.
- We add one week to the 40 days of fast before the 40 days as a preparatory fast, and we fast an additional one week after the 40 days to make special observation of the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross. So, we fast a total of 55 days during the Great Lent.
- We need to observe the fast of the Great Lent because:
 - i. **Fasting is the first commandment of God.**
 - ii. **Prayer accompanied by fasting is more effective. That is why God's people fasted often.**
 - iii. **Jesus Christ fasted to set an example for us so that we also fast.**
 - iv. **Fasting is the Spiritual weapon by which we can defeat our adversary, Satan.**

Questions

1. What is fasting?

2. What was the first commandment of fasting?

3. Who are the two prophets who fasted for 40 days and nights?

4. How many days is the fast of the great lent?

5. Why do we fast one week before, and another week after the 40 day fasting?

6. When we fast, what do we fast from?

7. Do you fast? If not, why not?

Esther - Part I

Objective: Learn about the power of fasting and prayer, and that God has a purpose for everything.

Memory Verse: *“Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her” Esther 2:15*

References: Book of Esther, 1 & 2

Introduction

Today's lesson is the first part of a story about a young woman called **Esther**. In this lesson, we are going to see how she became a queen, and in the next lesson, we will learn how God saved his people through her. Pay attention to the names King Ahasueres, Esther and Mordecai in the story.

The Lesson

Once upon a time there was a king whose name was **king Ahasueres**. He had a beautiful wife whose name was **Queen Vashti**. King Ahasueres had a big party for all the people working in his kingdom. During the party king Ahasueres served food and drinks in golden plates and cups in his wonderful palace. After all the people ate and drank and were very happy in the kings party, King Ahasueres asked his wife queen Vashti to dress in her royal dress and shiny jewels and to come to show her beauty to all the visitors in his party. But queen Vashti refused to do what the king requested. The king became very angry and decided that she would not be queen anymore. He decided to choose another wife to be queen instead of Queen Vashti.

So, it was announced that all the beautiful girls should come and prepare themselves to appear in front of the king. The king then would choose the most beautiful girl to be a queen. So, many young women came for the choice to be a queen. One of these young women was **Esther**. She was very pretty. Esther had no father or mother. Her uncle, called **Mordecai** raised her.

When Esther's uncle, **Mordecai**, heard of the king's announcement, he brought her for the king's selection. After 12 months of beauty preparation, each young woman came in front of the king, so that he could choose the one he liked the most. When Esther's turn came, she stood in front of the king and the king liked her the most. The king loved Esther more than all the other women and he placed the royal crown on her head. Then, the king made a great feast for Esther. The king was very happy to find the beautiful and lovely Esther, so he made her his wife, and the new queen.

Questions

1. Why did the King Ahasueres decide to choose a new queen?

2. How long did the young women prepare before coming to the king to be chosen a queen?

3. Who did the King choose to be a queen?

4. What did King do, after he chose a new wife and a queen?

5. Who raised Esther?

6. Why was Esther raised by her uncle?

7. In which book of the Bible do we find the story of Esther? The Old or the New Testament?

Esther - Part II

Objective: Learn about the power of fasting and prayer, and that God has a purpose for everything.

Memory Verse: “*Be of good courage*” (Psalm 31:24)

References: Book of Esther, 3 - 7

Introduction

Do you remember how Esther became a queen? Today, we are going to see, how Esther cared more for her people than her title as a queen, and what she did to save her people. Pay attention to Mordecai and Haman also in this story.

The Lesson

King Ahasueros made **Esther** a queen, because of her beauty. She was a Jewish, who were the people of God. One of the ministers of the king, called **Haman**, hated the people of God and he arranged a plan so that all the people of God in the kingdom of king Ahasueros would be killed. He convinced the king with his idea and got him to sign a decree to kill all of God's people. *What is a decree?*

The king did not know that Esther was one of God's people. When **Mordecai**, Esther's uncle, heard of Haman's intentions, he sent to queen Esther to talk to the king and ask to change his mind. Esther then asked all of God's people to fast for three days before she talked to the king. So, they all fasted for three days. Esther herself also fasted for three days.

The king would not allow any one to meet him except the one that he calls for or the one that he extends his golden staff to. Esther was worried because she wanted to talk to the king but he did not call her. So she fasted and prayed, and courageously decided to go on her own to talk to the king. She dressed very nicely and went to the king's palace and waited to see if the king would extend his golden staff to her.

The king was happy to see Esther and he did extend his golden staff to her. Esther went in and talked to the king and invited him and his wicked minister, Haman, to a party for two days in a row. The king was very happy at the party that Esther prepared for him and asked her what she needed. He promised to give her anything she asked for up to half of his kingdom. Esther asked him to get rid of the wicked minister Haman who planned to have killed all the people of God, her people. He learned of Haman's plan from Esther, and ordered that no one should touch or hurt the people of God.

He sentenced Haman to death for his wicked plan

Questions

1. Who made the plan to hurt the people of God?

2. What did Mordecai tell queen Esther to do?

3. Why was Esther worried to talk to the king?

4. What did she do before talking to the king?

5. What did the people of God do when a decree was made to kill them all?

6. What do you learn from Esther?

7. What happened to Haman, who tried to have the people of God killed?

Bartimaeus

Objective: Learn the benefit of persistent prayer

Memory Verse: *"Your faith has made you whole."* (Mark 10:52)

References: Mark 10:46 - 52

Introduction

Today's story is about the unceasing plea of a blind man, so that he could see. In the previous two lessons, we have seen how God saved the people, accepting the prayer, and fasting of Esther and her people. In this story, we are going to see that Jesus Christ hears a person's prayers, even if no one else does.

The Lesson

Once upon a time when Jesus was passing by a city called **Jericho** with his disciples, many people followed Him. A blind man, named **Bartimaeus** was sitting on the main road when he heard the crowd coming. He asked what the crowd was about, and he was told that Jesus was passing by. When Bartimaeus heard this, he was very happy because he heard about the miracles of Jesus. So, he cried out with a loud voice, *"Jesus the Son of David, have mercy on me."*

Many people told Bartimaeus to be quiet. But he cried out more, *"Son of David, have mercy on me."* Even though the crowd was loud, Jesus heard **the cry of Bartimaeus**. So, He stood still, and commanded for Bartimaeus to be called. When Bartimaeus heard Jesus wanted to see him, he was overjoyed, and went to Jesus, throwing away his garment.

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, *"What would you want Me to do for you?"* Before this day, the blind man, Bartimaeus, used to beg for food and money. But on this day, he answered, *"Lord, that I might have my sight."* So Jesus said to him: *"Go your way, your faith has made you whole."* The blind man immediately received his sight, and followed Jesus.

Questions

1. What city was Jesus Christ passing by when He heard **the cry of Bartimaeus**?

2. Why was Bartimaeus crying to Jesus Christ?

3. Did the people try to help Bartimaeus? What did they do when they heard his cry?

4. What did Jesus ask Bartimaeus?

5. How did Jesus heal Bartimaeus?

6. In which book of the Bible do we find the story of Bartimaeus?

Jesus on Mount of Olives

Objective: Learn about the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, and the reward of helping the needy

Memory Verse: *"Whatever you have done to the least of these, that you have done unto me"* Matthew 25:40

References: Matthew 25:31-46

Introduction

Jesus Christ gave different teachings on a place called **Mount of Olives**. Today, we are going to learn about one of these lessons, which talks about the second coming of Jesus Christ for judgment, and how he judges the righteous and the sinners.

The Lesson

Jesus Christ gathered His disciples, and told them what would happen on the last day when He comes for judgment. He told them that, He comes in glory, sitting on a throne with all of the holy angles with Him. Then all the people of the earth are going to gather, and he will separate the good to the right, and the bad people to the left.

Then He says to the people on the right, *"Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me ... Whatever you have done to one of the least of these, you have done it unto me."*

Then He says to the people on the left, *"Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food. I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in. I was naked and you did cloth me. I was sick, and you did not visit me. I was in prison, and you did not come to me ... Whatever you have done to one of the least of these, you have done it unto me."*

So, Jesus told the apostles that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the good people, into eternal life.

When we help the needy, Jesus considers it as if it was done unto Him. So, we should have compassion on those who do not have food, cloth, or other basic needs, and we should help them in some way. If we do this, Jesus is going to say to us, *"Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."*

Questions

1. Where did Jesus teach about His second coming for judgment?

2. How is Jesus going to come, when He comes for judgment?

3. Who are going to stand on His right, and on His left when Jesus Christ comes for judgment?

4. What is Jesus Christ going to say to those standing on His right? What about to those standing on His left?

Nicodemus

Objective: Learn about Nicodemus, and the Mystery of Baptism

Memory Verse: *"Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God."* John 3:5

References: John 3:1-15

Introduction

Today's lesson is about a man named Nicodemus, who loved to learn from Jesus Christ. We are also going to learn about Baptism, a mystery Jesus revealed to Nicodemus.

The Lesson

There was a man called **Nicodemus**, who used to come to Jesus Christ to learn from Him. He was very educated himself, but he knew that he could learn a lot from Jesus Christ. So, he used to come in the night to learn from Him. He was coming in the night, because he was a Jew scholar himself, and was afraid to be seen by the others. Once, in one of those nights, Jesus Christ taught Nicodemus about **Baptism**.

Jesus said, *"Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* Nicodemus was surprised because, how could that happen? So he asked Jesus, *"How? ... Can a man enter his mother's womb and be born again?"*

Jesus explained to him what *"born again"* means. He said, *unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*

According to this teaching of Jesus Christ, children are baptized in the church with water and the Holy Spirit. The mother sits with the child in front of the Baptismal, and the priest and deacons stand around the baptismal and pray. Then they choose a godfather for a boy, or a godmother for a girl. Then they give the child a new name, which is called a baptismal name. *Do you know your baptismal name?*

Then the godfather or the godmother promises to teach the child about God, and the child will be baptized in the water. Then the priest anoints (rubs) the child with a holy oil called **Myron**. After this the child is born of water and the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is important to enter the kingdom of God, as we can learn from what Jesus Christ taught Nicodemus. We also learn from Nicodemus that it is important to seek the knowledge of God, because he reveals to us new things, like He did to Nicodemus. Even though Nicodemus was educated himself, he did not pride in his knowledge. Instead he went to Jesus to know more about God.

Questions

1. Why was Nicodemus going to Jesus Christ?

2. What did Jesus Christ teach Nicodemus about?

3. What is Baptism?

4. What is the name given to a child who is baptized?

5. Are you eager to learn about God, as Nicodemus?

Hosanna

Objective: Learn about the glorious entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, and how children received Him.

Memory Verse: *"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, you have perfected praise." Matthew 21:16*

References: Matthew 21:1-11

Introduction

Many people have heard of the miracles He had been performing, and were eager to see him when He came to Jerusalem. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, and how children received Him. *is celebrated in our church on the Sunday before the Holy Week and Easter. This holiday is known as Palm Sunday in the west, referring to the branches people waved and laid on the floor to receive Jesus christ.*

The Lesson

Once upon a time, when Jesus came to Jerusalem just before a Jews holiday, called "**Passover**", many came out to receive Him. The people who were in Jerusalem heard about how Jesus Christ raised a man called Lazarus from the dead. Because of this, many people came to see Him.

Before He came into Jerusalem, He sent two disciples saying, *"Go to the village... and you shall find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man asks you ... you shall say to them the Lord has need of them."* The two disciples went and got the donkey and the Colt, and when the owner asked them where they are taking them, they told him that the Lord needs them. So, the man let them take both, when he heard this.

Jesus entered Jerusalem sitting on the colt, a young donkey. When He came, the people met Him with branches of **palm trees**, and laid down their clothes and the branches they had for him on the ground.

There were also many children among the people. The children sang, *"Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord."*

The disciples, the men Jesus chose to be with Him, did not understand all these things at first. But later, they understood that the prophets wrote all these about Him long time ago. The prophet, King David wrote about the children's song to receive Jesus Christ long before this day. He wrote, *"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, You have ordained strength (praise)." Psalm 8:2.* Sucklings are babies that are still breastfed.

But the chief priests of the Jews were jealous, and they said to Jesus, *"Do you hear what they say?"* And Jesus answered, *"Have you never read: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, you have perfected praise?"* He was reminding them the prophesy of King David.

Questions

1. Who was the person whom Jesus Christ raised from the dead?

2. Why did many people come out to see Jesus Christ when he came to Jerusalem?

3. How did people receive Him?

4. Who is the king who prophesied about children receiving Jesus Christ with a praise?

5. What did the children sing when they received Jesus Christ?

The Crucifixion

Objective: Learn about the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ for our sake

Memory Verse: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son."/John 3:16/*

References: Matthew 26 & 27

Introduction

After Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Jewish leaders conspired to kill him. They were jealous of Him because many people followed Him, and He always spoke of the truth. But, Jesus Christ accepted humility and death so that He may give us glory and life. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about the events around the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The Lesson

The Jews conspired to kill Jesus Christ on the **Wednesday** before the date of His crucifixion. One of His twelve disciples, **Judas of Iscariot** also betrayed him for money. He agreed to lead the chief priests to Jesus Christ for 30 pieces of silver. On the following night, on Thursday, Jesus gave the disciples the first communion, His body and His blood, and went into a garden to pray.

On this night, Judas came with the chief priests and soldiers to show them Jesus Christ. He told them that the one he kisses is Jesus Christ. When he came to where Jesus and the disciples were, he went to Jesus and kissed him. The soldiers came and seized Jesus Christ, and took him to **Caiaphas - the high priest**. They brought many false witnesses against Him, but Jesus never spoke anything in His defense. The high priest then asked Him if He was **Christ, the Son of God**. Jesus Christ replied that He is. So, the high priest said that there is no more need for witnesses, for "He has spoken blasphemy."

In the morning, they took our Lord Jesus Christ to the governor, **Pontius Pilate**. The governor asked them what Jesus had done, and they said that He claims to be **the Son of God** and also king of the Jews. Pontius Pilate used to free a prisoner for them during the Passover. There was a notorious prisoner named **Barabbas**. Pontius Pilate asked the people whom they want Him to free for them. The people cried out: "Barabbas". So he asked them what they want Him to do with Jesus Christ. They all shouted, "**Crucify Him, Crucify Him.**" He told them that he did not find any fault with Jesus, but they cried out more to crucify Him.

When Pilate knew that they were determined to kill Jesus, he **washed his hands** in front of them and said, "***I am innocent of the blood of this innocent person.***" And he gave them Jesus Christ to do as they wished with Him. The Jews then mocked Jesus Christ, hit Him on his face, spit on Him and slapped Him. They put **crown of thorn** on His head, and **nailed His feet and His hands** on the cross. They also made Him carry the heavy cross on which they crucified Him.

, Jesus Christ accepted all these for our sake. He taught the disciples that **there is no greater love than laying one's life for the sake of another**. He also showed them in deed what He taught them in words, by giving up His life for us.

Questions

1. Why did the chief priests wanted to kill Jesus Christ?

2. Which one of the twelve disciples betrayed and gave up Jesus Christ to the chief priests?

What did he receive in exchange for leading them to Jesus Christ?

3. What did the chief priest accuse Jesus Christ of?

4. Did Pontius Pilate find any fault with Jesus Christ?

5. When he offered them, according to the custom at Passover, to free Jesus Christ or the criminal Barabbas, who did the people want to be freed?

6. On which day of the week was Jesus Christ crucified?

Christ Is Risen!

Objective: Learn about the resurrection of Jesus Christ

Memory Verse: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but He is risen." Luke 24:5-6*

References: Mathew 28:1 - 8; Mark 16:1 - 8; Luke 24:1-12

Introduction

The Jews accused our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ falsely, and crucified Him on a cross. But Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day as He had spoken before His death. In this lesson, we are going to learn about the glory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Lesson

On the first Friday after Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem, the chief priests of the Jews accused Jesus of breaking the Jews law and claiming to be God. They brought Him to Pontius Pilate, who was the governor of Jerusalem at the time. After talking to Jesus Christ, Pontius Pilate told them that he found no fault with Him. But the chief priests turned the people against Jesus, and they all screamed, "**Crucify Him, Crucify Him.**" So, Pontius Pilate gave them Jesus to do as they wished with Him.

The Jews took Jesus and crucified him on a cross. A man called **Joseph of Aremathea**, and **Nicodemus** took off His body from the cross, covered him with linen and buried him. The Jews kept some men to guard the tomb of Jesus Christ, because they feared that the disciples would steal His body, and falsely claim that Jesus was risen.

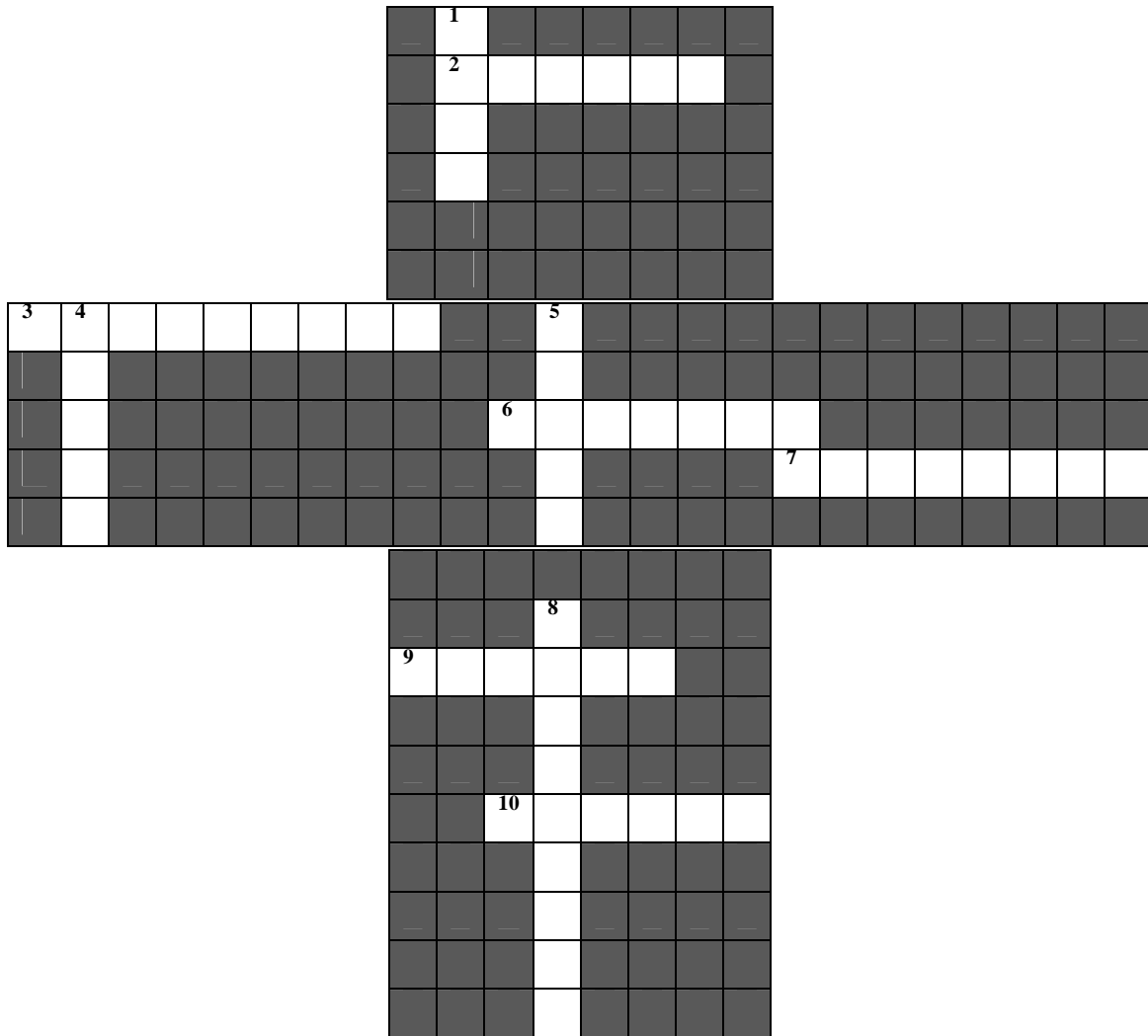
On the third day after His crucifixion, **Mary Magdalene**, and other women went to the tomb of Jesus Christ to anoint His body with perfume. It was early Sunday morning. During the early hours of Sunday, before the women came to the tomb, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb, and sat on it. The angel's garment was white as snow, and he appeared like lightning. The Keepers of the tomb were shaken up and became like as dead men with fear from the appearance of the angel, and the earthquake.

When Mary Magdalene and the other women arrived at the tomb, they saw the stone was moved from the tomb. They looked at the angel with fear, but the angel said to them, "***Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here for He is risen as He has said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.***" So the women departed from the tomb with great joy, rushing to tell the disciples.

As the women ran to see the disciples, Jesus Himself met them on the way. He also told them to go and tell the good news of His Resurrection to His disciples. The women worshiped Him, and told the disciples of the good news.

Complete the Word puzzles using the clue below.

- 1 _____ 3 _____ went to the tomb to 2 _____ the body of Jesus 9 _____.
- An 4 _____ of the Lord moved the stone from the entry of the tomb.
- Jesus Christ suffered on the 5 _____.
- Children sang 6 _____ in the highest, when Jesus came to Jerusalem.
- The angel said to the women who came to the tomb, "*Fear not, I know you seek Jesus of 7 _____; He is not here, for He is 10 _____.*"



The Travelers of Emmaus

Objective: Learn about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and how He revealed Himself to the Travelers of Emmaus.

Memory Verse: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but He is risen."* Luke 24:5-6

References: Luke 24:13 - 35

Introduction

Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third after His crucifixion on the cross. He first appeared to the Virgin Mary, and also to Mary Magdalene and other women. He later appeared to others and to His disciples at different times. Today, we are going to learn about one of His appearances after the resurrection.

The Lesson

An angel of the Lord at the tomb, and also Jesus Christ Himself told Mary Magdalene and the women with her to tell the disciples that He is risen. After they told the news to the disciples, two men who were with them went to a village called **Emmaus**.

On their way, they were talking about the events and the miracles that happened since Jesus was crucified. As they were discussing, Jesus came and asked them what they were talking about, but they did not know Him. He asked them what they were talking about. One of them said, *"Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem, and do not know the things that happened in these days?"* Then Jesus replied, *"What things?"*

Then they told him that there was a prophet, who performed a many great miracles, but the chief priests and their rulers condemned Him to death. They thought that He was the one, who would redeem Israel, but He was crucified on Friday, and it was the third day since He died. But some women from among them went to the tomb, and found that His body was not there, and they said that an angel told them that He was risen.

After they said these to Him, Jesus told them that, their heart was slow to believe what the prophets have spoken concerning Jesus, that Christ would suffer all these things, and rise in glory. He told them all that was said about Him by the prophets beginning with Moses.

When they arrived at the village, they begged Him to stay with them for it was getting dark. So, He went into a house with them. As they sat, He took bread, blessed it and gave it to them. Immediately, their eyes were opened and they knew Him. Then he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other that their heart was burning while He talked with them and opened the scriptures for them. Then, they immediately returned to Jerusalem and told the disciples of all that happened on their way to Emmaus.

Questions

1. To whom did Jesus Christ appear first after His resurrection?

2. What were the travelers of Emmaus talking about?

3. What did Jesus Christ tell the travelers of Emmaus?

4. When did the travelers of Emmaus recognize that the person who talked to them on their way to Emmaus was Jesus Christ?

5. What did Jesus do, so that the disciples understand the Scripture?

6. Why did the Jews keep guards at the tomb of Jesus Christ?

7. Who came in the early hours of the third day of Jesus' crucifixion to the tomb?

The Birth of the Virgin Mary

Objective: Learn about prophesy, the dreams, and the story of the birth of the Virgin Mary.

Memory Verse: "*Blessed are you among women*" *Luke 1:28*

References: Synaxarium of Ginbot 1 (May 9) & the Miracles of Mary

Introduction

Today we are going to learn about the birth of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, whom God chose to be his mother because of her purity and holiness.

The Lesson

Once upon a time in Jerusalem, there were a rich husband and wife, who did not have any child who would inherit their wealth. They were God-fearing people, and prayed to God to give them a child. Once, they saw in a dream, a cow giving birth to another, the new born also giving birth to another up to 6th generations. They dreamed the sixth generation cow giving birth to **a moon**, and the moon giving birth to **a sun**.

They went to an interpreter, who had the gift of interpreting dreams like Joseph, and they told him of what they had seen. He told them that they would have a child, and great grand children up to six generations, and a child greater than all creation would be born from their sixth generation great grand child - which is what they saw as a moon. But he said he couldn't know what the sun represented.

The two had a child as the interpreter had told them up to six generations. The sixth generation daughter was called **Anna**. Her parents wedded her to a man called **Joachim**. **Joachim and Hanna** lived together for a long time, but they grew old without having a child. The people of Israel rebuked them saying that God did not give them a child because of their sin. But they were kind to the poor, and obedient to God's commandments. They prayed to God to give them a child without losing hope.

God heard their prayer, and He sent an angel to Joachim. The angel told Joachim that God has heard their prayer, and would give them a child. Joachim was overjoyed and ran to tell Anna.

A short time after this, Anna conceived a child. She had an aunt whose one eye was blind. Once upon a time, after Anna conceived, her aunt touched her stomach, and when she rubbed her blind eye with the same hand, she was healed and could see with both eyes. People who heard this miracle came to Anna, and they were healed from different kinds of sickness. But the Jews leaders were afraid of what they heard, and they wanted to get rid of them. An angel told Joachim to take Anna and go to **Mount Lebanon**.

On May 9 (*Ginbot 1 of the Ethiopian Calendar*) Anna gave birth to a beautiful child, and she named her Mary. **Mary was the moon her great grand parents saw in their dreams, and the sun was Jesus Christ**, who was born of the Virgin Mary for our salvation.

Questions

1. What was the dream of the Virgin Mary's great grandparents?

2. What kind of Miracles happened when Anna conceived the Virgin Mary?

3. Where was the Virgin Mary born? Why were did her parents go there?

4. Who told Joachim that he would have a child at an old age?

5. Who were the moon and the sun in the dream mentioned in the story?

Washing the Apostles Feet

Objective: Learn about humbleness and its honor.

Memory Verse: *"You also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14*

References: John 13:1 - 17

Introduction

The story we are going to learn today took place on the night of the last supper. Jesus Christ not only told the disciples what to do, but also set an example for them by His actions. Next we will see how He taught them about the importance of humbleness, and serving each other.

The Lesson

On the night of the Last supper, after the Passover meal, Jesus Christ poured water into a basin, and started washing the disciples feet. When he came to a disciple He named Peter, Peter refused to have his feet washed, because Jesus was His Lord and Master. But Jesus said to him, *"What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this ... If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."* Peter let Him wash his feet after he heard what Jesus said.

After Jesus finished washing all their feet he said to them, *"Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you ... If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."* Jesus instructed them to serve each other, and left this example for them on the eve of His crucifixion.

Once before this day, the disciples were arguing among themselves who was the greatest. But Jesus called them and said to them, *"He who is greatest among you, let him serve as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves."* Jesus taught them humbleness by His actions, what he taught them in words.

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ washed the disciples feet on the night of the Last Supper, and instructed them to do the same to each other. He taught them that if one wants to be the greatest, he should be a servant to the others. Every act of obedience and kindness to our friends, our teachers, our brothers and sisters, and our parents is a spiritual virtue that adds that allows us to rise in favor in front of God.

Questions

1. What did Jesus Christ do to teach the disciples humbleness?

2. Which disciple refused to have his feet washed at first?

3. What did Jesus tell the disciples when they asked him who would be the greatest among them?

4. What is the Passover meal?

5. What is the Last Supper?

6. Write some acts of obedience and kindness that you could show to your friends, teachers, brothers and sisters, parents, or other.

Jesus Commissions Peter

Objective: Learn about Peter's love for Jesus Christ, and how we also can express out love to Jesus Christ

Memory Verse: "*Feed my sheep*" John 21:17

References: John 21:17 -18

Introduction

Jesus Christ once asked the disciples, who they say He is. Peter answered, *You are Christ, the Son of the living God.* Jesus said to him that it was His father who revealed this knowledge, and said, *"You are Peter, on this rock I shall build my church. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."* Jesus said this to Peter before His crucifixion and resurrection. Today we are going to learn about the commissioning of Peter to shepherd the Church of God, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ - at during one of His appearance to the disciples.

The Lesson

Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples for the third time after His resurrection, when they were fishing in the night. They couldn't catch any that night, but Jesus appeared to them in the morning and told them to throw their net to the right of the boat. Then they caught too many fish, and weren't able to pull the net. They pulled the net with the boat to the shore, and they dined with Jesus Christ. He blessed the fish, and gave it to them.

After they dined, Jesus said to Peter, *"Do you love me more than these?"* Peter replied, *"Yes Lord."* Then Jesus said to him, *"Feed my lambs."* Jesus asked him the same question again, and Peter replied, *"Lord, you know that I love you."* Jesus said to him again, *"Feed my sheep."* Then Jesus asked him a third time, *"Peter son of Jonas, do you love me?"* Peter was sad He asked him a third time, and replied, *"Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you."* Then Jesus said to him for the third time, *"Feed my sheep."*

Peter shepherd the Church throughout his life witnessing about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was martyred in Rome in the name of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- Jesus knows whether we love Him or not, but He wants us to confess with our mouth that we do love Him. That is why He asked Peter three times if he loved Him. How do we confess our love to Jesus with our mouth? When we praise God in mass prayer and in singing, we are confessing our faith and love of Jesus Christ.
- Peter became a martyr. He died because he would not stop being a witness to Jesus Christ. Today we don't have the kind of persecution Peter and the other disciples were subjected to, but we have problems of self-sacrifice to show our love for Jesus Christ. How can we show our love?
 - By getting up early and getting ready to come to church with our parents.
 - By coming to the Sunday school class room.
 - By listening and paying attention to the teacher.
 - By singing inside the church.
 - By keeping the class room and the church compound clean.
 - By being kind to others: Jesus said that whatever we do to the poor, He considers it a kindness done for him.

These are just few examples of how we can sacrifice ourselves to show our love for Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. What were the disciples doing when Jesus appeared to them for the third time?

2. What did Peter reply, when Jesus asked the, who they say He was?

3. What did Jesus ask Peter three times? What was Peter's reply?

4. What is a martyr? What was the cause Peter died for?

5. Do you love God? How do you show your love to God?

6. Why is it important to help the poor and the needy?

Ascension

Objective: Learn about the Ascension of Jesus Christ, and his message to the disciples before his Ascension

Memory Verse: *"You shall be witnesses unto me." Acts 1:8*

References: Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50; Acts 1:6-11

Review Questions

1. What were the disciples doing when Jesus appeared to them by a shore?
2. What did Jesus ask Peter? How many times?
3. What was Peter's response?
4. What did Jesus command him to do?

Introduction

Jesus Christ was risen on the third day after his crucifixion. He appeared to the His mother the Virgin Mary first, and to Mary Magdalene and other women after His resurrection. He also appeared to two travelers from the company of the disciples. Today, we are going to learn what Jesus Christ taught and commanded the disciples when he appeared to them at different times, after His resurrection, and we are also going to learn about His Ascension into heaven.

The Lesson

Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples at different times in the 40 days after His resurrection, and taught them many things about the kingdom of God. There were many things that they did not understand about the Scripture before, but He interpreted all that were written about Him in the Scripture, and also opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures. He commanded them, *"Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And I am with you always."*

On the 40th day after His resurrection, the disciples were gathered on the **Mount Olives** with Jesus Christ. While they were gathered, Jesus said to them, *"You shall be witnesses to me ... unto the uttermost parts of the world."* And as He spoke these words, He was lifted up from the ground, and ascended through the clouds out of their site. As they stood there staring at the heaven, two angels robed in white appeared to them and said, *"Why do you stand staring up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in the same manner as you have seen Him go."*

The disciples were comforted after they heard these words of the angels, and they returned together from Mount Olive to Jerusalem.

Lessons from the Story:

- The Bible lessons we have today is a result of the commandment of Jesus Christ to His disciples to *"go and teach all nations."* We received these stories because the disciples preached and wrote about the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. They also passed on interpretations of the scripture that were written about Him.
- Jesus told the disciples to teach all nations to keep all His commandments, and they have put His commandments in writings, and also passed them on to us through Tradition. Therefore, we should try to keep all of His commandments. Do you know the Ten Commandments?

Questions

1. What did Jesus command His disciples after His resurrection?

2. What was the name of the place Jesus Christ ascended from?

3. What did angels tell the disciples as they stood, looking up when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven?

4. How did we receive the teaching of Jesus Christ, and the story of His life?

5. How many days after His Resurrection did Jesus Christ ascend into heaven?

Pentecost

Objective: Learn about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse: "*You shall be witnesses unto me.*" Acts 1:8

References: Luke 24:49; Acts 2

Review Questions

1. Where did Jesus Christ gather the disciples on the 40th day of His resurrection?
2. What did He tell them?
3. Who did they see after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven?
4. What did the angels say to the disciples

Introduction

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus Christ commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they receive power from above. Today, we are going to learn what they did, and how they received the promise Jesus Christ gave them.

The Lesson

The disciples returned to Jerusalem after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, and they stayed together, with the Virgin Mary and other believers. There were a total of **120** of them, together, **with one accord in prayer**. Peter stood in the middle of the disciples and suggested that they choose someone to take the place of Judas of Iscariot. *Do you remember what he did?* Then they appointed Joseph Justus and Matthias to choose from, and after they prayed, **Matthias** was chosen by casting a lot.

At the day of Pentecost, all the disciples were gathered in one place. **Pentecost means the 50th day**. It was the 50th day from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Fifty days after Christ's resurrection (which was also the 10th day after His Ascension), as they were gathered in one accord, a sound came from heaven as a rushing wind, and filled the house. The Holy Spirit appeared to them **in the form of fire**, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They received power, courage, and the gift of speaking in different languages.

Pentecost was also the 50th day of the **Jewish Passover** holiday. There were many Jews who came from other countries for the holiday, and they were amazed to hear the disciples speaking in their languages. But others were mocking them saying they were drunk. But Peter stood up and told the people that it was only the third hour of the morning hours, and he taught the people about Jesus Christ, and all the fulfillment of the prophecies about His crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He told the gathering to repent and be baptized to be free of sin and receive the Holy Spirit.

On this day, three thousand people accepted the words of Peter gladly and were baptized.

Lessons from the Story:

- Judas of Iscariot was chosen to be a disciple of Christ, but he betrayed His Lord, and another person took his place. God has chosen to make us His children. We should be kind and loving to remain His children.
- The disciples were all in one accord when they received the Holy Spirit. We should also be in one accord when we play, pray, learn and get together, because the gift of the Holy Spirit is given when we are in one accord. That means God is with us if we agree to share, and help each other.

Questions

1. How many were gathered together with one accord after the Ascension of Jesus Christ?

2. Who suggested to choose a replacement for Judas of Iscariot? Who was chosen to replace him?

3. What does Pentecost mean? What happened on the day of Pentecost?

4. How long did Jesus Christ tell the disciples to stay in Jerusalem after His Ascension?

5. What were the gifts the disciples received on the day of Pentecost?

6. Why did the people say, when they heard the disciples in different languages?

7. How many people believed in Jesus Christ after the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost?

Bahran

Objective: Learn about the guardianship of Angels from the story of Bahran.

Memory Verse: *"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them." Psalm 34:7*

References: Miracles of St. Michael

Review of the Last Lesson

1. Where did the disciples go after the Ascension of Jesus Christ?
2. What is Pentecost?
3. Who was chosen as a disciple in the place of Judas of Iscariot?
4. Describe the events of the day of Pentecost

Introduction

Today's lesson is on story of a person named Bahran, and how the Archangel St. Michael helped deliver him from the evil intentions of a man who plotted to kill him.

The Lesson

Once upon a time, there was a poor man, who used to observe St. Michael's day every month, and save to feed the poor on this day. He had a rich neighbor, who did not like his good work.

The poor man's wife conceived a baby, but the man became sick and died before his son was born. When the son was born, the Archangel Michael came and blessed the child saying God would make him inherit the rich neighbors properties. But the rich man heard this, and wanted to kill the boy. So, he went to his mother and told her to give him her child, so that her son could grow in his house. He offered her money too. Because she was poor, and could not raise a child by herself, she gave him her son. But the rich man took the child, put him in a box and threw him into a sea.

The box floated away on the sea to a far away place. A farmer noticed the box and took it to his home. When he opened the box, he was glad to find a child in it, because he didn't have any children. He called his name **Bahran**, which means a child of the sea, because he found him on a sea.

Twenty years later, the rich man came to the country where this farmer lived, for trading, and went to the farmer's house to spend the night when it got late. At dinner, he saw Bahran, and asked the farmer if he was his son. The farmer told him that he was, and that he found him in a box floating on a sea 20 years ago. The rich man knew that this was the child he threw in the sea. So, he was afraid and wanted to kill him again.

He asked the farmer if he could send his son to his house because he had forgotten something. He said he would pay him for his service. So, the farmer agreed and allowed him to send his son. Then the rich man wrote a note on a paper, sealed it and gave it to Bahran to give it to his servant. The letter said, kill the person who brings you this letter and bury him in a secret place. But Bahran had no idea about the letter, and he started his journey. On his way, St. Michael appeared to Bahran as a young man on a horse, took the letter from him, and changed it's content and gave it back to Bahran. The new letter said, give my daughter as a wife to the person who brings this letter, and let him inherit all that I have.

So, when Bahran delivered the letter to the rich man's servant, he took the letter, and made a big marriage feast for Bahran and the rich man's daughter. Forty days after the wedding, the rich man came from his journey. He heard a loud noise of celebration and asked what it was. His servants told him that they were still feasting for the marriage of his daughter and Bahran, which they arranged according to his letter. Upon hearing this, the rich man was shocked, and died.

St. Michael helped Bahran because he was obedient, and also remembered the good deeds of his father, who used to feed the poor every month on St. Michael's day. Bahran himself became a servant in St. Michael's church, continuing the good deeds of his parents.

Lessons from the Story:

- When observing saints days, we should think of the poor and do all we can to help them. Jesus Christ said, *"Whosoever shall give a drink to one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall not lose his reward."* Matthew 10:42 That means doing good in the name of a saint is rewarding. The poor man not only went to heaven when he died, but his good deeds were also rewarded to his son.

Questions

1. Why did the rich man want to kill Bahran?

2. What did Bahran's parents used to do on St. Michael's days?

3. What did the rich man do to Bahran, after he took him from his mother?

4. Who raised Bahran?

5. What was the message in the letter the rich man told Bahran to deliver?

6. What happened to Bahran when he delivered the rich man's letter?

7. Do you have a favorite angel or saint? Do you do anything special in the name of saints?

Philip baptizes the Ethiopian

III

Objective: Learn about baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch, and the virtues in his journey to Jerusalem

Memory Verse: *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter" Acts 8:32*

References: Acts 8:26-40

Review Questions

1. What did Bahran's parent's used to do on St. Michael's day?
2. Who adopted and raised Bahran?
3. Why did the rich neighbor of Bahran's parents' want to kill Bahran?
4. Who saved Bahran from death? How?

Introduction

Ethiopia was the only country that believed in God, before Christianity other than the Jews. Today, we are going to learn how the first Ethiopian, the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen, became a Christian.

The Lesson

Ethiopians used to go to **Jerusalem** to worship God even before Christianity. Just a year after the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, a treasurer of the Ethiopian queen was going to Jerusalem, and reading from the **Book of Isaiah**. He was reading about what the prophet had written about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, hundreds of years before it happened.

An angel told **Philip** to go toward the south, where the treasurer was traveling. The Spirit of the Lord led him to join the Ethiopian, who was riding a chariot. When Philip came to the Ethiopian, he heard him reading what the prophet Isaiah wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before His shearer, so opened He not His mouth."*

Philip asked the Ethiopian if he knew what he was reading about, and he replied, *"How can I, unless someone guides me."* Then he invited Philip to sit with him on the chariot, and Philip told him about Jesus, His birth from the Virgin Mary, His teachings, His suffering and crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension. As they went on their way, they came across a pool of water, and the Ethiopian said, *"Here is water, what prevents me from being baptized?"* Philip replied, *"If you believe with all your heart, you may."* And the Ethiopian replied he does believe that **Jesus Christ is the Son of God**.

They both got off their chariots, and Philip baptized the Ethiopian, the first non-Israelite to be baptized. As soon as they came out of the water, Philip was taken by the Spirit, and the Ethiopian went back to his country rejoicing.

Lessons from the Story:

- The Holy Bible is full of mysteries. It is not easy to understand without someone to guide us. That is why the Ethiopian told Philip that he couldn't understand without a guide. Because he asked for a guide, Philip told him about Jesus Christ, and he believed and was baptized.
- The section of the prophet Isaiah's book the Ethiopian was reading, describes how much Jesus Christ humbled Himself for our sake by keeping silent when they mocked Him, and crucified Him. Instead He was praying for them. We should do the same to others: pray for not only those who are good to us, but also to those who are not good to us. Our prayer may make them be good to us, and if not, God will repay us anyway for being good, and loving.

Questions

1. Who is the Ethiopian who was baptized just a year after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

2. Who baptized the Ethiopian?

3. Who led Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch?

4. What was the Ethiopian Eunuch reading when Philip came to him?

5. What did Philip ask the Ethiopian Eunuch? What was the Ethiopian Eunuch's reply?

6. What happened to Philip after he baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch?

7. Why is it important to have a guide to understand the Bible?

The Conversion of Saul

Objective: Learn how Saul became a disciple of Christ, the importance of prayer, and reading the Bible

Memory Verse: *"He is a chosen vessel unto me." Acts 9:15*

References: Acts 9

Review Questions

1. Who baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch?
2. Who led Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch?
3. What was the Ethiopian Eunuch doing when Philip met him?
4. What did Philip teach the Ethiopian Eunuch?

Introduction

Today, we are going to learn about one of the early apostles of Jesus Christ, **St. Paul**. He is not one of the twelve disciples. But he wrote most of the books in the New Testament.

The Lesson

There was a man named **Saul**, who used to threaten and persecute disciples of Jesus Christ. He was a zealous Jew, and did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

Once upon a time, he went and received a letter from the Jewish high priest to go to a place called Damascus, and to bound and bring any Christian he found there. As he came close to Damascus, a light from heaven shined around him. He was scared, and fell on the earth. He heard a voice saying, "**Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?**" Then Saul asked, who are you Lord? And the Lord replied, "**I am Jesus whom you persecute.**"

Saul, who was also called Paul, was shaken with fear, and he said, "**Lord, what do you want me to do?**" Jesus told him to go into the city, and he would be told what to do. So, Saul rose from where he fell, but could not see. So the men with Him led him into Damascus. Saul stayed in Damascus for three days without food and drink, praying. He then saw a vision that a man named **Ananias** would come and give him his sight again.

Jesus Christ told a disciple named **Ananias** in a vision to go to a certain house and ask for Saul. But Ananias said to Jesus that Saul had done evil to His disciples in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ said to Ananias, "**He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name.**" So, Ananias went to the house where Saul was. When he saw Saul, he put his hands on him and said, "**Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way as you came has sent me that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.**" Immediately, scales fell of Paul's eyes, and he received his sight again. He was also baptized.

He became a disciple of Jesus Christ immediately and started preaching the gospel to others.

Conclusion:

- **St. Paul** used to persecute Christians without knowing that he was displeasing God. But once Jesus Christ opened his eyes to see the truth, he believed and became His witness like the other disciples. He also wrote many epistles (letters) to different people teaching them how to live according to the commandment of God. We should read and learn from his epistles to learn and know how we can please God.
- After Paul lost his sight, he prayed and fasted for three days. Then Jesus revealed to him in a vision that Ananias would come to give him his sight. We should also fast and pray at times of hardship, because God can give us a solution.

Questions

1. Why did Saul persecute Christians?

2. Where was he going, and why, when Jesus spoke to him?

3. What happened to Saul when a great light shined around him?

4. What did Jesus say to Saul?

5. Who baptized St. Paul?

6. What did St. Paul do after being baptized?

7. How many days did St. Paul fast and pray before he received his eye sight again?

St. Paul's Miracle in Lystra

Objective: Learn about St. Paul's miracle, and his message to those who tried to worship him as a god.

Memory Verse: *"You should turn from these vanities, unto the living God." Acts 14:15*

References: Acts 14

Review Questions

1. What happened to Saul when he was on his way to Damascus?
2. Why was he going to Damascus?
3. Who gave him his sight back?
4. Did you find out how many books St. Paul wrote in the New Testament?

Introduction

Last week, we have seen how **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, converted to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Today, we are going to learn about a miracle he did, and how he turned the people from worshipping him as a god.

The Lesson

When **St. Paul** and his friend **St. Barnabas** were in a place called **Lystra**, they saw a man who was born lame, and could not walk ever since he was born. When St. Paul saw him, he looked that the man had **faith to be healed**. So, he said to him in a loud voice, *"Stand upright on your feet."* Immediately, he stood up and walked.

The people of Lystra were amazed to see such a miracle, and said that Paul and Barnabas were gods who came in the likeness of men. They named Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius - names of the gods they worshipped. Then the priests of their gods brought oxen to sacrifice for St. Paul and St. Barnabas.

When St. Paul and St. Barnabas heard this, they rushed out to the people and told them that they were not gods, but men just like them. They told them that they were servants of God, and whatever miracles they did, they did in the power of God. They said to them, *"Turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein."*

So St. Paul restrained the people from offering them sacrifices, and preached the gospel to the people.

Lessons from the Story:

- When Paul healed the person who was born lame, he did not boast and seek glory for himself. When the people tried to offer them sacrifices, he restrained the people, and taught them to **glorify God** instead. We should also do the same. We should do good deeds not to boast about them, but to let others glorify God through the good deeds we do.
- St. Paul saved the lame man when he saw that he had **faith**. So, faith is important to have God's miracle in our lives.

Questions

1. Who was St. Paul's friend?

2. What was the miracle they did in a place called Lystra?

3. What did the people think of St. Paul and St. Barnabas when they saw their miracle?

4. What names did the people give St. Paul and St. Barnabas?

5. What did St. Paul tell the people when they tried to offer them sacrifices?

6. What did St. Paul see in the man, who could not walk since he was born?

7. Who is supposed to be glorified in our good deeds?

The Stoning of St. Paul

Objective: Learn about the suffering and miraculous healing of St. Paul

Memory Verse: *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" Psalm 23:4*

References: Acts 14

Review Questions

1. When St. Paul looked at the lame person in Lystra, what did he see in him?
2. What did the people of Lystra try to do when they saw the miracle of St. Paul?
3. What did St. Paul and St. Barnabas tell the people?

Introduction

Last week we learned about the miracle of St. Paul, and how the people in the country tried to worship him. But he restrained them, and taught them to worship God instead. Today, we are going to see what happened to St. Paul after some Jews came and turned the people of Lystra against him.

The Lesson

After **St. Paul** went to a place called **Lystra** with another disciple, named **Barnabas**. They healed a person who could not walk, and taught the people about Jesus Christ, and how He sacrificed Himself on the cross for them. But some Jews came, and persuaded the people of Lystra to get rid of St. Paul. Few days ago they were ready to offer sacrifices for him because of his miracle, but now they turned against him and stoned him. They took him out of the city, left him there.

They thought that he was dead. But when Barnabas and other disciples came and stood around him, he rose up as if nothing happened to him. Everyone was amazed at what they saw. St. Paul went back to the city where they stoned him, and preached the gospel to the people again.

The next day, he went to another city, but returned again and taught the people to believe in Jesus Christ and to live in faith, and remained in the city many days praying and fasting. St. Paul and the disciples appointed elders for the church before they left the city.

Lessons from the Story:

- St. Paul knew the dangers of preaching the gospel, but like king David, he was not afraid. King David spoke the words written above under "Memory Verse", *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"* St. Paul wasn't afraid of any evil, because he rightly believed that *"We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God."*(Acts 14:22) Because of his faith, God saved him from many hardships.
- The people of Lystra turned against St. Paul by listening to the false accusations of the Jews. It is not good to act just on what we hear, without knowing facts. We should always seek the truth, and also remain true to our faith like St. Paul. Because God can save us from evildoers, if we remain truthful and faithful.

Questions

1. What did the Jews persuade the people of Lystra to do?

2. What did they do to St. Paul?

3. Was St. Paul dead when they left him out of the city?

4. Who was standing around St. Paul, when St. Paul got up after being stoned?

5. Did St. Paul return to the people who stoned him? Why?

6. What did St. Paul and the disciples do, before they left the city?

7. Who spoke the words, "*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*"?

Qirkos and Iyalota

III

Objective: Learn about Qirkos and Iyalota - how great their faith was, and how God delivered them from a fiery fire.

Memory Verse: *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" Psalm 23:4*

References: Synaxarium

Review Questions

1. Who stoned St. Paul and left him to die?
2. Did he die?
3. What did St. Paul do after he was stoned?

Introduction

This is a story of a mother and a child, who were exiled because of their faith, and who overcame a great deal of persecution through their faith.

The Lesson

Qirkos was the son of a young woman named **Iyalota**. Her Husband died shortly after Qirkos was born. She left her native land with her son when he was only three because of persecution against Christians. But she was accused of being a Christian where she went and the governor put her through a lot of hardships because of this.

The governor ordered Iyalota to worship his **idols** - graven images. She refused to do so, but she became afraid for her son when the governor threatened to put her and her son in a fire, if she didn't worship his idols. Qirkos said to the governor, "your gods are made of stone and wood by the hands of men. There is no other god except my Lord Jesus Christ." Qirkos also comforted his mother saying, "**Do not be afraid for the Lord who saved Ananiah, Azariah, and Misael, will also save us from this fire.**" *Do you remember the story of the three young men, Ananiah, Azariah, and Misael? And how the Archangel Gabriel saved them from a fire?*

When the governor threw Qirkos and Iyalota into a fiery fire, God sent his angel, the Archangel Gabriel and saved them from the fire. Many people who saw this believed in Jesus Christ. Qirkos, and his mother Iyalota were tortured at the hand of the governor several times, but the Lord God delivered them each time, and many people believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because of this. They both received the crown of martyrdom on the 15th of the Ethiopian month Hamle.

May their prayers be with us, Amen.

Lessons from the Story:

1. The governor tried to give Qirkos special treatment so that he would give up his faith. But even though he was a child, he did not give up his faith for comfort in the governor's house. We should not give up our faith for little comforts and fun. We should remember to pray before we go to bed and when we wake up in the morning. We should go to bed early on Saturdays so that we can get up early to go to church on Sundays.
2. Learning the story of other saints helps us be strong in faith. Qirkos knew the story of Ananiah, Azariah, and Misael - how the Archangel Gabriel saved them from the fire they were thrown into. He remembered their courage, and became courageous like them. He remembered their faith, and became faithful like them, and told the governor that the God of Ananiah, Azariah and Misael would save them from the fire. We should also learn the stories of many saints so that we grow stronger in our faith, and learn from their lives.

Questions

1. Why did Qirkos and Iyalota leave their motherland?

2. How old was Qirkos when they left their mother land?

3. What did the governor of the new land they went to order them?

4. Why was Iyalota afraid?

5. Who save Qirkos and Iyalota from the fire?

6. What did St. Paul and the disciples do before they left the city?

7. Why is it useful to know the stories of saints?

Dormition of the Virgin Mary

Objective: Learn about the last days of Mary, and the fast of Assumption.

Memory Verse: *"All generations shall call me blessed." (Luke 1:48)*

References: Synaxarium

Review Questions

1. Who is the archangel that saved Qirkos and Iyalota from fire?
2. What did Qirkos reply, when he was told to worship idols?
3. What are the names of the three young men St. Gabriel saved from a fiery fire?

Introduction

From August 7 to August 22, we observe a fast, in remembrance of **the Assumption of the Virgin Mary**. This is a period during which the disciples fasted after her death. Accordingly, today we are going to learn about the **Dormitioin of the Virgin Mary**, and a miraculous event that happened when the disciples gathered from their missions to be her at the last hour of her death.

The Lesson

The Holy Virgin Mary died at the age of 64 surrounded by the disciples of her Son, Jesus Christ. The disciples were very sad that she departed.

When the Jews learned of her death, they conspired to take her body and burn it. They thought that the disciples would hide her body and claim that she rose from the dead like Jesus Christ. So, one of the Jews strong men, called **Taufania** came and grabbed the bed on which the Virgin Mary lied. But an angel of the Lord cut off his hands from his shoulders with his sword, so that both of his hands remained hanging on the bed.

With great despair, **Taufania** turned to the disciples, and cried for forgiveness. They told him to pray to the Virgin Mary instead. So, he turned to the Virgin Mary, and cried for forgiveness. The Virgin Mary told Peter to put his hands back on his shoulders, and he was healed. St. Peter then told him to go and be a witness of Jesus Christ.

After the Virgin Mary died, angels took her body and put it under **the tree of life**. Only John the apostle saw of this, and told the other disciples. Because of this, the disciples fasted for 14 days to see the body of the Virgin Mary again. This fasting of the disciples is called **Fast of the Assumption of Mary**. God heard their prayers and gave them her body.

Lessons from the Story:

Miracles follow those who believe in Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary, being the mother of God, made a lot of miracles since the time of her own conception. As the mother of God, she is greater than all creation, and closer to God to intercede for us. That is why it is written in the gospel that she said, *"All generations shall call me blessed." (Luke 1:48)*

Questions

1. How old was the Virgin Mary when she died?

2. Why did the Jews want to burn her body?

3. What happened to the man who grabbed the bed on which the Virgin was lying?

4. What did the disciples say to Taufania, when he turned to them and begged for forgiveness?

5. Who took the Virgin's body when she died? Where did they take it?

6. How many days did the disciples fast, after angels took her body?

7. What is this fasting period of the disciples, to see the Virgin Mary again, called?

The Transfiguration

Objective: Learn about the manifestation of Jesus in His glory on Mount Tabor.

Memory Verse: *"Arise and be not afraid." Matthew 17:7*

References: Gospel of Matthew 17

Review Questions

1. Who started the Fast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary?
2. What did the Jews try to do when the Virgin Mary died, and why?
3. Who took the Virgin Mary's body away after she died?

Introduction

The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor is one of the 9 major events of the Lord Jesus Christ celebrated in our church. This day is known as **Debre Tabor** or *Buhe*. We celebrate the Transfiguration on the 13th day of the Ethiopian month *Nehase* (August 19). Today, we are going to learn the events of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

The Lesson

Once upon a time, Jesus took three disciples, **Peter, James, and John** up onto a high mountain called **Mount Tabor**. When they reached the top of the mountain, Jesus' face shined like the sun, and his dress was white and bright. Then, they saw **Moses and Elijah** talking with Jesus Christ. Peter said to Jesus Christ, *"Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you will, let us make here three tents - one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah."*

Immediately, a bright cloud came over them, and a voice out of the cloud said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him."* Do you remember another time when a voice came out of the cloud and spoke the same words? ... This was the same testimony of God the Father at the time of Jesus' baptism.

The three disciples fell down with fear. But Jesus came and touched them, and said, *"Arise, and be not afraid."* And when they looked up there was no one except Jesus Christ.

Lessons from the Story:

- This is the first time Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples in His divine glory. And with Him were two of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. The disciples loved their saints also. That is why Peter asked to make three tents for Jesus, Elijah and Moses.
- Our church is **a tent of saints, and a sanctuary of God**, because a church building is a place where we worship God, and we venerate saints to be partakers of their intercession (*"Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. Matt. 10:42*).
- Peter asked to make a tent because he wanted to live with God, and the saints. We are doing the same when we come to church - to be with God and countless numbers of holy angels and saints.

Questions

1. Which disciples did Jesus take to Debre (Mount) Tabor?

2. Who are the prophets that appeared with Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor?

3. What did Peter ask Jesus when he saw Moses and Elijah with Him?

4. What did the disciples hear on Mount Tabor, and whose testimony did they hear?

5. What happened to the disciples when a cloud covered Mount Tabor, and when they heard a voice?

6. What did the disciples see when Jesus came and said to them, "*Rise, do not be afraid?*"

7. Who do we worship with when we come to church?

The Ascension of the Virgin Mary

Objective: Learn about the story of the Resurrection and Ascension of the Virgin Mary.

Memory Verse: "At Your right hand stands the queen in god from Ophir." Psalm 45:9

References: Synaxarium, and Miracles of Mary

Review Questions

1. What is the Transfiguration?
2. Where did it happen?
3. Which disciples did Jesus Christ take to the mountain?
4. Who were the two persons Jesus was talking to on the mountain?

Introduction

In the lesson "**Dormition of the Virgin Mary**" we learned that angels took the body of the Virgin, and placed it under **the tree of life**. In this lesson we are going to see a continuation of that story.

The Lesson

After the Virgin Mary died, angels took her body and placed it under the tree of life. Because the apostles, except John, did not see the where about of her body, they were sad for a long time. They fasted for two weeks for God to reveal the fate of her body.

On the 14th day of the Ethiopian month Nehase, the Lord gave them her body and they buried her that same day. **Thomas**, the apostle, was not present at the time, but he saw the Virgin Mary ascending into heaven on the 16th of Nehase, three days after the apostles buried her body. She gave him a piece of her burial linen as a proof of her ascension.

When Thomas met the other apostles, he asked them about the Virgin Mary. They told him that they buried her body three days ago. But Thomas said he would not believe it unless he saw her body himself. So, they went to her grave to show him, but found no body inside. Thomas then told them that he saw the Virgin Mary ascending into heaven, and showed them the linen she gave him as a proof for her ascension. (*There is a piece of cloth tied to the cross, which the priests carry. This cloth is a symbol of the linen Thomas received from the Virgin Mary, and thus a symbol of her ascension.*)

The disciples fasted again to see her alive, just as Thomas did, and she appeared to them with the Lord Jesus Christ a year after her ascension.

Lessons from the Story:

- Jesus Christ answers to our prayer requests, which we provide with a pure heart, and faith. When the apostles fasted and prayed to see the Virgin Mary, He answered their prayers.
- Our prayers should be accompanied by fasting. We learn from the Bible that prayer is usually accompanied with fasting, and the result is, God answers the prayer.
- **The Fast of the Assumption (*Tsome Felseta*)** is conventionally known as **children's fast** in Ethiopia, because it is only a two week fast, and children usually start fasting the major fasts with the fast of the Assumption. If you haven't started fasting yet, make this one of your New Year resolutions for the next year. As you have seen from the fast of the apostles, the benefit is great!

Questions

1. What happened to the Virgin Mary's body after she died?

2. Who was the only disciple who knew of what happened to her body?

3. Who was the disciple that was not present when they buried her body?

4. Which disciple witnessed the resurrection and the ascension of the Virgin Mary?

5. What does the linen on the cross of the priests represent?

6. Why is the fast of the Assumption known as children's fast?

7. Do you fast? Which fasts do you fast? If you don't fast, when do you intend to start fasting?

St. Takla Haimanot

Objective: Learn about St. Takla Haimanot, and the importance of observing saints days.

Memory Verse: *"Let your light so shine before men." Matt. 5:16*

References: Synaxarium, and Works of St. Takla Haimanot

Review Questions

1. What happened to the body of the Virgin Mary after she died?
2. How long did the disciples fast to know the fate of the Virgin Mary's body?
3. Which of the disciples first witnessed the resurrection and ascension of the Virgin Mary?
4. What did he show them as a proof of her resurrection?

Introduction

In the past month we learned about the apostolic work and spiritual battle of Jesus' disciples of the first century. Today, we are going to learn about the life of one of the greatest saints of Ethiopia, who taught and baptized many people who were not believers.

The Lesson

St Takla Haimanot was born of God loving parents, **Tsega Ze-Ab** (Gift of the Father) and his Mother **Egezi-Hareya** (chosen by God), on the **24th of Tahsas**, St Takla Haimanot's parents loved God and were very kind to the ill and the needy. They always asked the Archangel Michael to pray for them, and they celebrated his feast on the 12th of every month by feeding the poor. One day they saw a vision in which Archangel Michael told them that they would have a child who would be blessed and who would be like John the Baptist. They did have a child, according to their vision, and they named him **Fesseha Tsion** (The Joy of Zion).

The Holy Spirit descended upon Feseha Tsion three days after his birth and he opened his mouth and said *"One is the Holy Father. One is the Holy Son. One is the Holy Spirit."*

As a child, Feseha Tsion performed many miracles like increasing the amount of flour and oil during a time of famine so his parents would be able to make their monthly **Zikir** for the needy in honor of St. Michael. **Zikir is a feast on behalf of a saint or an angel.** Feseha Tsion grew to love and adore God. He was later ordained a deacon at the age of fifteen by Bishop Kyrellos II.

When he returned home his parents chose a young lady for him to marry, but he refused. Once, when he was hunting with his friends, the Archangel Michael appeared to him. St Michael told him that he would spend the rest of his life saving people's souls, the angel and changed his name to **Takla Haimanot** (which means Tree of Faith).

When Takla Haimanot returned home, he gave his money to the church and the poor and went to the monastery. He later became a priest. St. Takla Haimanot preached to people about God and a lot of people were converted to Christianity. For a while St Takla Haimanot was living in a monastery on a mountain, where they used ropes to climb up and down the mountain. One day St. Takla Haimanot was on the rope, and all of a sudden it broke. St. Takla Haimanot prayed to God whiling falling down, and God gave him six wings. So he was able to fly down the mountain safely.

St Takla Haimanot went to a place called Ketata where the people worshipped a tree. He saw an evil Spirit in the tree and made it disappear in the Name of Jesus Christ.

St. Tekle Haimanot spent the last 29 years of his life in a place called **Deber Asbo**, and used to stand and pray for a long time. He lost one foot from standing too long for prayer and worship. But this did not stop his dedication to prayer. He prayed standing on his one foot for seven years. When St Takla Haimanot was ninety nine (99) year old, he became very sick. He gathered all the monks and told them to continue to lead a life of prayer and love. He departed on the **24th of Nehase**, which is August 30th.

May his prayers be with us all. Amen.

Lessons from the Story:

- So Often in our lives, we become so occupied with just ourselves, we forget to pay attention to others who seek, and need our help. St. Takla Haimanot's parents used to feed the poor every month on St. Michael's day. So, observation of Saint's days reminds us of helping the others. We get more blessing by helping the needy. St. Michael was the patron saint of St. Takla Haimanot

Questions

1. Who are the parent's of St. Takla Haimanot?

2. What is the meaning of Takla Haimanot?

3. How old was St. Takla Haimanot when he praised God for the first time? What did he say?

4. What did St. Takla Haimanot's parent's use to make a feast for?

5. How was St. Takla Haimanot saved, when he was falling down from a mountain?

6. How did he lose one of his foot?

7. Did St. Takla Haimanot stop praying after he lost his foot?

8. Do you know if your parents do *Zikir*? Ask your parents.

Elijah's Sacrifice

III

Objective: Learn that our God is a strong God, who does not forsake those who believe in Him

Memory Verse: *"Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:11*

References: *Kings 14:20 - 40*

Introduction

Today's lesson is about the contention of the prophet Elijah with 450 prophets of an idol called Baal. There was a great deal of pagan worship during Elijah's time. We are going to learn how Elijah overcame this evil and led many to believe in God by offering a sacrifice that the Lord God accepted.

The Lesson

Once upon a time there was a good and strong prophet by the name of **Elijah?** Elijah was the only prophet out of 450 prophets who was still following God. All the other prophets were following the false god "**Baal**". So, Elijah warned the rest of the prophets and the people to follow and worship the true God. He also wanted to prove to them that his God is the true God.

Elijah told the prophets of Baal to choose a bull and place it on wood. Then, he told them to pray for their god Baal and see if he would send a fire from heaven to eat the bull. The prophets of Baal prayed and prayed for a long time to Baal. They prayed all morning and afternoon but Baal did not listen to them and did not send a fire from heaven to eat the bull. They were disappointed but Elijah told them to pray louder, for may be Baal is busy or sleeping. So, the prophets of Baal prayed louder and louder hoping that Baal would wake up and hear them. But nothing really happened. This is because Baal is just an idol.

Then, it was Elijah's turn to present his bull and pray to his true and strong God. Elijah brought his bull and repaired **the altar of the Lord** that was broken before. Then, he put 12 stones around it and he put the wood on top of the altar and on top of it he placed the bull. He asked the people to pour 4 water pots on the bull and the wood? So the people did as he told them. Elijah asked them to pour water again and again on the bull and the wood. So, they poured water three times on the bull and wood.

Finally Elijah prayed to God and asked Him to prove to the people that He is the true and strong God. Immediately God sent fire from heaven that fell and ate Elijah's bull, the wood, the water and the stones. When the people saw the fire from heaven, they were scared and they fell on their faces and they said: "**The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God**". They knew then that the God of Elijah is the true God who listened to his prayer and sent the fire to eat the bull.

Lessons from the Story:

- ▶ The God of Elijah is our God. He is strong. He also listens to our prayers just as he listened to Elijah's prayer. We should trust Him and depend on Him all the time.
- ▶ Elijah did not keep quite from warning the people to worship God, even though he was the only person left worshipping God. He did not go along with the multitude to worship an idol. Instead he contended with the prophets of Baal. We should do the same for our faith according to the following commandment of the Scripture: *"I find it necessary to write to you urging you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3)*

Abimelech - the Ethiopian

III

Objective: Learn that God can protect us in the middle of chaos

Memory Verse: *"Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:11*

References: *Paraleipomena of (The Rest of the Words of) Jeremiah*

Introduction

Today's story is about how God protected one of His prophets from seeing the destruction of Jerusalem. This happened during what is known as "*The 70 Year Captivity of Jerusalem*", during the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

The Lesson

Once upon a time, a king of Babylon - **Nabuchednezer** took over Jerusalem, destroyed the city and took many Israelites captive. But before this happened, God revealed to His prophet, **Jeremiah** that he was not going to protect the Israelites because of their sins.

Jeremiah had an Ethiopian friend, named **Abimelech**. Abimelech once saved Jeremiah from a muddy pit, where he was trapped. When God revealed to Jeremiah the fate of Jerusalem, he was worried for his friend, and asked God about what would happen to Abimelech. God told Jeremiah to send Abimelech to the vineyard of a certain person. God promised Jeremiah that He would shelter Abimelech until He returns the Israelites to Jerusalem again.

Jeremiah told Abimelech to go to a certain man's vineyard and bring figs for the sick. Jeremiah went on his way, and got the figs. After he got the figs, he carried them in the heat, and coming upon a tree, he sat under its shade to rest a little. And leaning his head on the basket of figs and he fell asleep, and slept for sixty-six years.

When Abimelech woke up from his sleep after sixty-six years, he said, *"I slept pleasantly a little, but my head is weighed down because I didn't get enough sleep."* Then he hurried to go back to Jeremiah thinking that he had only taken a nap for a few minutes. But, when he looked around, the city was different from what he had known, and he could not recognize anything. He was confused, and asked an old man if the city he was in was Jerusalem, and the where about of his friend Jeremiah. The old man, wondering if Abimelech was new to the country, told him that the city was indeed Jerusalem, and that Jeremiah was in Babylon with the people.

But Abimelech did not believe the man. He said that it was only a few minutes since Jeremiah sent him to get figs. He took out the figs from his basket, and showed it to him. The figs were still fresh, but figs were not to be found during this season. When the old man saw that the figs were fresh, he told Abimelech that **God had sheltered him** so that he would not see the destruction of Jerusalem. He told him that no figs could be found in this season, and that it was now 66 years since the people of Jerusalem had been taken captive to Babylon.

Abimelech looked around and knew that God indeed sheltered him from the destruction of Jerusalem. He gave the old man the figs, and the old man blessed Abimelech and they parted.

Lessons from the Story:

- ▶ God protects and shelters those who walk in His way as Abimelech.
- ▶ God accepts the intercession of the holy, as He accepted the intercession of Jeremiah for Abimelech.
- ▶ Do you think of the well being of others during times of hardship? That is what Jeremiah did. He remembered his friend Abimelech and asked God of what would happen to him. By this, he was also relieved of being worried about Abimelech, because God said He would shelter him from the destruction of Jerusalem. God can likewise ease our worries, when we depend on Him.