

WEEK 1 : INTRODUCTION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 1/11/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Why should we learn about God?

How can we apply what we learn?

Go over the syllabus.

Why should we learn about God?

- So we can know who we worship
 - *So be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. 18 Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:17-18*
 - Not knowing who we worship, can lead us to worship the “wrong” god
 - E.X. Israelites made an idol while Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments
- To receive salvation
 - We believe that because Christ died on the cross, He opened the gates to the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - But, who is Christ?
 - *Then he [Christ] asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Matthew 16:15*
- To have **confidence in our faith**
 - *And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 1 Peter 3:15*
- **Why wouldn't you??**

How can we apply what we learn?

- If you believe what you learn to be true, follow God's commandments:
 - *"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. [e] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. [f] 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40.*
 - Just like any other subjects, theology can easily become dry and boring to learn about it if we decide to **take out the spiritual component from the lessons.**
 - Use each class and lesson as means to drive you closer to God.
- Teach others what you have been taught:
 - *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:14-16*
 - People want to hear the gospel, and they are waiting on you to deliver it

WEEK 2 : GOD'S EXISTENCE PT1

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 1/18/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

What does the world look like without God?

Ontological argument

Teleological argument

Moral argument

Historical argument

What does the world look like without God?

- If God does not exist, life does not have meaning, value and purpose
 - Meaning- significance
 - Value – good and evil, right and wrong
 - Purpose – goal, reason for something
- Absent of God, our lives do not “matter”. We are simple biological organisms. **We are the universe’s accidental bi-products.**
- Our lives resemble that of a dust which we brush off without care.
- Without God our lives become dark
 - Ex: astronaut drinks potion to live forever, instead of potion which would kill him.

Ontological argument

1. Everything that begins to exist has an explanation (a cause)
 - Nothing produces nothing:
 - **Objection:**
 - i. Casimir effect

1. If two uncharged metallic plates come in close proximity, when studied using the QED vacuum (quantum electrodynamic vacuum), the fields surrounding the plates fluctuate thereby effect the “virtual photons”.
2. Something (i.e. fluctuation of virtual photons) was induced by nothing (i.e. vacuum)

➤ **Rebuttal:**

- i. The “QED vacuum” is a place where the system is in its ground state, meaning the LOWEST energy state
 1. Lowest energy level is not nothing!
 2. Space being occupied by the vacuum is NOT nothing!
 3. Most of all plates being placed within the vacuum are not nothing!

➤ **Objection:**

- i. God must have an explanation

➤ **Rebuttal:**

- i. Two “kinds” of things exists: things that exist necessarily, things that began to exist, which do not necessarily have to exist
 - i. The number 7 **necessarily exists**
 - ii. The universe **did not HAVE to exist**
- ii. Before the big bang, there was no universe!
 - i. Because the universe exists, there must have been an unembodied mind who caused the universe in to being, **because number 7 sure didn't!**

- ii. An abstract object, like the number 7, can NOT cause the universe into being
- iii. The other spaceless and timeless being that exists is an “unembodied mind”.
- iii. The explanation does NOT need an explanation
 - i. This is a **“red herring”** intended to distract us from the question, what is the explanation for the universe?

➤ **Objection:**

- i. This universe is exempt from the first premise; the universe did not need a cause to come into being.

➤ **Rebuttal:**

- i. “taxicab fallacy”
 - i. Taxicab fallacy – assumes a certain “law” to be true, so jumps on the “cab”.
But when faced with an uncomfortable reality, jumps off the cab.
 - a. We know that things don’t “pop” into being, there has to be a cause... no exceptions. Even the universe!

2. The universe began to exist

- Universe could NOT have always existed (A posteriori argument)
 - A posteriori - from particular instances to a general principle or law; based upon actual observation or upon experimental data
 - If the universe always existed the number of past of events would have been infinite, and infinity is not reality (hey ...that rhymed!)

➤ **Hilbert's paradox**

- i. If a hotel has 10 rooms, and all the rooms are taken, if a new guest comes he, he will be told: "no rooms available".
 - ii. If a hotel that has an infinite number of rooms existed and an infinite number of people were staying in the room, the hotel WOULD still be full.
 1. However, if a new guest came to check in, the hotel would be able to accommodate him!
 2. If an infinite people come to check in, the hotel would still be able to accommodate them even though they were full!
 3. But if the guests in room 7 checks out, the hotel is suddenly no longer full!
 - a. Infinity can NOT EXIST in reality !
 4. Since you can not count to infinity, we can not count from infinity
- Edwin Hubble through the famous "Hubble telescope" discovered that light from distant galaxies appeared to be "reddish"
 - This was thought of being the result of the stretching of light waves as galaxies were being separated from each other (hence the "big bang" theory was born).
 - If we reverse time, there must have been a single point at which the universe must have started in
 - Second Law of Thermodynamics:
 - In an isolated system (i.e. universe), entropy increases.
 - i. Entropy is the measure of "disorder"

$$dS = \frac{\delta Q}{T}$$

ii. EX: hot coffee sitting in room temperature will eventually give out energy, heat, to its surrounding.

1. The coffee can only get hotter if **an external "force" is applied to it**

iii. Eventually, scientist predict that we will reach "heat death", thermodynamic equilibrium in the distant future.

1. Thermodynamic equilibrium = state where no energy is available "for work"

2. But if the universe existed "forever" when will we reach heat death in the future?

a. Since the universe has been giving off energy forever, it gave off an infinite amount of energy...

i. How come we have NOT reached heat death yet?

➤ **Objection:**

i. Oscillating universe

1. Oscillating Universe: universe is in constant oscillation: expanding, contracting, expanding, contracting. Thus, it has always existed.

➤ **Rebuttal:**

i. Second law of thermodynamics states that entropy level accumulate from one "cycle" to the next. Each successive cycle would encompass larger level of entropy.

1. Based on current empirical data of the universe and the entropy levels, astronomers have calculated that, if this theory is indeed true, the maximum amount of cycles this universe could have gone through is around 100... hence the universe **had a beginning!**

➤ **Objection:**

i. Bubble universe

1. This universe is part of a “mega universe”, and the universe is one of many universes that, much like a bubble, came into being
2. The theory states that the second law of thermodynamics applies to the bubble and not to the “mega universe”.

➤ **Rebuttal:**

i. Borde- Guth – Vilenkin theorem - there MUST be a beginning to all imaginable universes

1. In the case of “mega universe”, if “mega universe” existed forever the universe should have reached thermodynamic equilibrium, thereby prohibiting life to exist

3. The universe has a cause.

4. If the universe has a cause, then an uncaused, personal Creator of the universe exists.

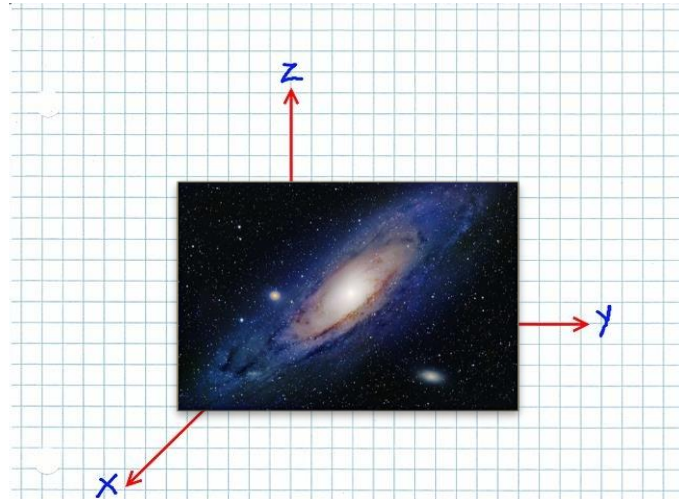
i. The universe has a beginning, changes, is made of material and bound by: time, space and energy

ii. Since the cause, personal Creator is outside the boundary of the universe, the personal Creator MUST BE

1. beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless and enormously powerful.

5. An uncaused, personal Creator of the universe who is: beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless and enormously powerful exists.

God



Teleological argument (fine tuning argument)

- This universe is finely tuned, but who tuned it in such matter?
 - Lets see how finely tuned this universe truly is:
 - **DID YOU KNOW?**
 - 10^{17} seconds since the beginning of the universe
 - 10^{80} subatomic particles in the entire known universe
 - Chance that the entropy level in this universe is low enough to permit life is 1 out of $10^{10^{123}}$
 - **Objection:**
 - We got lucky

- Chance to win a lottery, slim to none. But, if 10^6 lottery tickets are all sold, one person has to win!

➤ **Rebuttal:**

- wrong analogy
 - The correct analogy is guessing a number from 1 to 10^{1230} . If you get the number right ... you get to live. If not, you will die. Still feeling lucky?
- Second law of thermodynamics
 - System goes FROM order to disorder
 - When the universe went “boom” all elements should have evenly distributed resulting in a homogenous universe.
 - That’s not what we see ☹

Moral argument

- If God does not exist, there is no good, bad, morality, immorality. Everything is permitted...
 - **Richard Dawkins:** “there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference... we are machines for propagating DNA”
- Argument does not say atheists are immoral NOR that a belief in God is necessary for morality, but morality does not exist if **God does not exist.**
 - Exercise: Would killing David be “wrong”?
 - While killing would be considered “wrong”, choosing the “wrong” color would be a matter of opinion.

- Because there are instances in which people can generally agree something to be “moral or immoral” there MUST be a standard for morality.
 - Who sets the standards?
 - Who decides wrong and right?

Historical argument

- Since the beginning of time, people at one time or another have at least “thought” about a higher being.
 - Where does this natural desire to worship a God come from?
 - I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart.”

Psalm 40:8

WEEK 3: THEODICY

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 1/25/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Nature of God

Dealing with Theodicy:

Intellectual Problem

- Through the ontological argument, we concluded that the universe has a cause.
- What is the nature of the cause?
 - Since space and time started at the start of the universe, the cause **cannot be bounded by space and time.**
 - The cause thus has to be:
 - **Omnipresent**
 - **Eternal**
 - Referring back to the Morality argument, absent of God, terms like “good” and “bad” really do not have meaning.
 - But we use the terms during various situations because without even knowing it, we are comparing that particular situation to a certain **“standard”**.

- Exercise:

White



Black



- Is Box A white or black?
- Is Box B darker than Box A?
 - How do you know?
- When comparing the two boxes, in order to determine that something is “darker”, there has to be an **absolute color that is white and black.**
 - Color white is white by itself, without being compared to another color we know that the shade white is white.
- When it comes to the terms “good” and “bad”, although certain acts could be considered “good” there are other actions which are “better”.
 - Ex: which is better, letting someone borrow a pencil or saving someone’s life from a burning house?
 - How do we know one act is “better”?
 - There must be an absolute “good” and absolute “bad”
 - When compared to the two extremes, the act of saving someone’s life appears to be closer to the absolute “good”.
 - Following this logic, there must also be an “absolute” power and knowledge since it is possible to have more power and knowledge.
 - The nature of the cause of the universe:
 - Since he created the universe he must have had “absolute” power and knowledge
 - Because the universe is limited in power and knowledge, the being that has “absolute power and knowledge” can NOT **be within the universe.**

- Therefore the cause of the universe MUST have “absolute power and knowledge”.
- Therefore, the nature of the cause of the universe is:
 - Omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal.

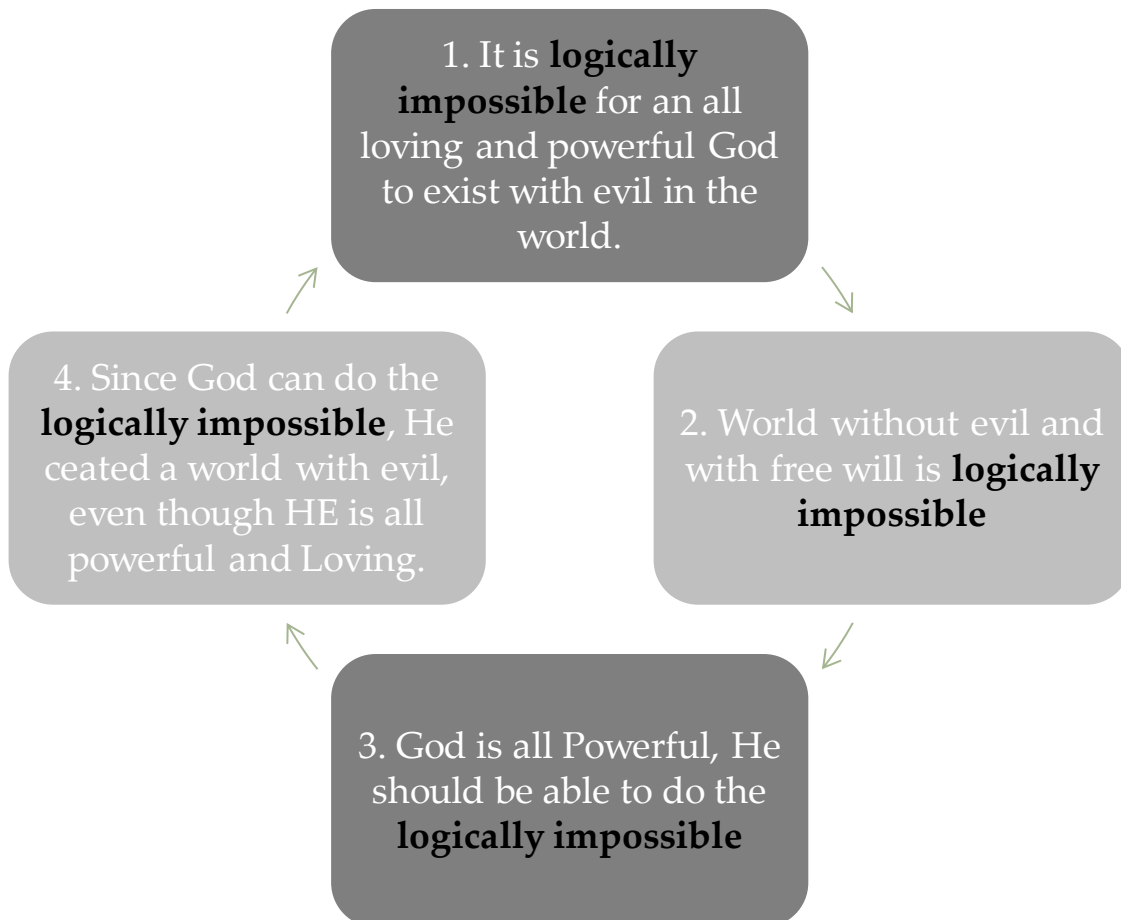
Dealing with Theodicy

- When we read the scripture, the bible discloses yet another nature of the cause (God) of the universe:
 - “God is Love” 1 John 4:8
 - Note, verse does NOT say God loves us, but He is love
- **Theodicy:** the branch of theology concerned with defending the attributes of God against objections resulting from **physical and moral evil**.
 - **Objection:** God can NOT be Omnipotent (all powerful) AND all Loving.
 - If God is Omnipotent, He CAN NOT be all loving because he permits evil to occur in this world (i.e. war, rape, poverty...etc.)
 - If God is all Loving, He CAN NOT be Omnipotent because he is unable to stop the evil that occurs in this world.
 - **Rebuttal:**
 - This objection stems from two sources: brain and heart
 - The brain is looking for an intellectual answer. More concerned with the **theological/logical explanation**.
 - More concerned with the question: “**Why does this happen?**”
 - Heart is looking for emotional answer. Logical answers will not suffice.
 - More concerned with the question: “**How can this happen?**”
 - Most people who are in pain, i.e. have lost loved ones, are looking for emotional answer.

Intellectual Answer

If God is all-powerful, can He create any world that He wants? (i.e. world without evil)

- If He can, can this be possible with a world that encompasses absolute free will?
 - Free Will enables humans to choose. Even if all humans agree never to commit another “evil”, evil exists!
 - They just have chosen not to commit it.
 - A world without evil would take away the option of “committing evil” away. Thereby removing free will.
- Not that God is incapable, but this is **a self-refuting statement.**
 - It like demanding God to create a square that is a circle or a married bachelor
 - This is logically impossible, just like world **without** evil and **with** free will.
- If we demand the all-powerful God to do the logically impossible
 - God has done the logically impossible!



Why did God choose a world with evil?

- If God is all loving, does He prefer a world without suffering?
 - Evil that stems from free will, you can always “blame” the individual.
 - What about natural disorders?
 - **Answer:** Can’t suffering be a stepping stone to achieve goodness?
 - **Ex: God allowing suffering**
 - Losing a loved one makes us think about how we are going to die one day and get closer to God.
 - Married people who overcome trials in their marriage are less likely to get a divorce
- **We are not in a position to question God’s judgment. (i.e Why did he allow the suffering ?)**
 - When we look at suffering in the world; we don’t understand why it happens but it doesn’t mean that God didn’t have a reason
 - We cannot know the reason for “temporary” suffering without **knowing the end of the story**
 - We can’t see the future we don’t know what is going to happen
 - So the suffering that exists now can be revealed centuries later;
 - Ex: Old Testament VS New Testament
 - Adam “suffered” when being kicked out of the Garden of Eden
 - But Christ died on the cross and promised to have him placed in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christians, four things to consider:

1. The chief purpose of life, is not happiness **in this world**; but the knowledge of God
 - a. Suffering in life may be utterly pointless with respect to the **goal of producing human happiness**; but it may not be pointless with respect to producing a deeper knowledge of God.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose to guide people towards Him
 - a. Christians expect suffering
 - i. Ex: Noah's flood was result of their sin
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternal life.
4. The knowledge of God is an un-measurable good
 - *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.*

Emotional Answer

- Suffering is there to strengthen us; God asks us to suffer so we can be closer to Him
 - **Ex: YouTube video, man without hands and legs**
 - If this man was fully able, not as many children would have listened to him. So this man's "suffering" ultimately was a good thing.
- **God is the answer to suffering**

WEEK 4: HOMILETICS

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 2/1/2015 12:00 AM |

OBJECTIVE:

What is homiletics?

Qualities of a good preacher

The purpose for a sermon

What is homiletics?

- **Homiletics:** branch of practical theology dedicated to the art and science of effective of preaching
 - derived from greek work “homiletikos”, meaning conversation. Signifies a **mutual talk/ conversation.**
 - has two parts: Material Homiletics (substance of being preached) and Formal Homiletics (investigation, arrangement, and expression of ideas to be preached)
- **Preaching:** is the oral proclamation of the word of God made by the church through her ministers to the community of the faithful as well as non-faithful.
 - *“The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. **Isaiah 55:10-11***
- In other terms, preaching is the communication of divine truth **by man** to men. But not just any communication, **must be communication under the authority of God.**
 - The purpose of a preacher should be to save the souls of men and women.
- **Preaching contains** two vital elements:
 - the divine truth proclaimed
 - the personality of the proclaimer.
 - Who is the preacher?
 - *We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. **1 John 1:3***

Qualities of a good preacher

- **Preacher:** a preacher is he who is separated by God the specific work of the preaching of the truth.
 - He preaches to men **on behalf of God.**

- The preacher is not a mere machine. He must be full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.
- his sermon must be the expression of his very life and experience.
- **We have given too much attention to the preaching that occurs from the pulpit!**
 - Preachers instead of concentrating on the goal of the sermon, to connect people to God, the make sermons that are simply **“audience grabbing”**.
- Preaching is a gift, but one has to kindle this gift
 - *This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. 2 Timothy 1:6*
 - **“Good preachers are born not made”**. There are no techniques one can learn to be a “good preacher”. But the good preacher can learn techniques to kindle the gift that has been given to him.
- Preacher needs to be conscious of: description of the world (i.e. current events on Sunday), people’s attitude towards “organized religion”, personal relationship, and personal struggles.
 - Because these change all the time, preacher needs to be **up to date with current events.**

Four things to consider when preaching:

1. Spiritual, physical and mental qualification of a preacher.
 2. The urgent necessity of preaching.
 3. The importance of proper preparation of the material to be preached, including its discovery and arrangement.
 4. The best means of securing its effective presentation and reception by an audience.
- The preacher, like the people he ministers, needs to be consistently growing.
 - preaching, like clothes, can shrink over time
 - Each time a preacher preaches, there is **an unexplainable joy that is felt by the preacher**
 - When the preachers spiritual life becomes stagnant, so does his preaching
 - The sermon becomes dry, preacher begins to repeat a sermon!
 - First indication that preacher is headed for destruction!

- A preacher can preach the story of Adam and Eve each week, if his spiritual life is growing, each lesson will be different, unique, and most of all, the sermons will be getting theologically deeper and deeper from one week to the next
- Preacher eventually will be dissatisfied with service and not look forward to the next sermon that he has to give.
- A Christian minister must be concerned with and committed to the **Christian faith with his whole heart and soul and mind and strength.**
- A minister must be willing to learn from others and accept any help to stimulate his thought.
 - Biggest way devil tempts preachers, is by boosting their ego.
 - **EX: preachers unwilling to learn from others**
- To avoid this, make sure you are growing spiritually. READ READ READ

The purpose for a sermon

- To Christians, preaching serves to teach, strengthen, and enthuse congregations that they may become more effective witness to Christian truth and the Christian way of life.
- To non-Christians its purposes has been so to move those who listen that they become, a congregation of believers.
- Each sermon, should be about **solving a problem (something specific).**
- **The test for a “good sermon”:**
 - Does it lead to a new life or increase subscription?
 - Increasing subscription, is a what concerns an entertainer (Joel Olsten) –
 - NOT biblical but addresses problems, without actually fixing it, so has a lot of subscription
- Preacher needs to balance between the congregation **wants and needs.**
- 8 purpose and objective to preaching:
 1. Investigation – find the man
 2. Evangelization – win the man
 3. Identification – hold the man
 4. Information – build the man

5. Sanctification – purify the man
6. Consecration – use the man
7. Supervision – improve the man
8. Perfection – mature the man

How to prepare for a sermon

- There is role for man **and role for God**
- We must be able to organize themes, ideas, quotation, and reflect on them
 - Total preparation for a 30 min sermon should take about 10 hours for a veteran, much longer for a novice.
 - Anyone can slap verses together and call it a “sermon”, but that’s not going to change people’s lives.
 - Most of all God will not accept our service
 - Ex: Abel VS Cain
- When we prepare, we should prepare by reading the bible, and by staying up to date with current events
- How do we prepare?
 1. Pray
 2. Pick a theme
 3. Read books/bible concerning that theme
 4. Write down thoughts we have found helpful
 5. Mediate/contemplate then write down our own thoughts
 6. Organize our notes in a clear manner for the sermon
 7. Pray
- **Requirement for preparation:**
 1. For weekly sermons, preparation should begin early in the week
 2. Come with a definite aim
 3. Strive for simplicity (make sure you know your audience)
 4. Arrangement of points—there should be a flow

- **Personality of preacher has very much to do with effectiveness of his message.**
 - Do not try to be like others when your preaching.
- The more sermons you give, the better you will become.
- Novice preachers will use many theological terminologies trying to appear “smart”, but what they end up doing is confusing their audience (remember the goal).

WEEK 5: HOMILETICS

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 2/8/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Knowing the audience

Method of preaching

Types of preaching

Delivery of preaching

KNOWING THE AUDIENCE

- Kerygmatic (Missionary) preaching: to the unconverted
 - Ex: Paul’s preaching to Thessalonica
 - *“for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about.” Acts 17:23*
- Didactic (instructional) preaching: to the converted
 - *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 1 Timothy 2:1*
- Paracletic (renewing) preaching: to the converted
 - Deepens the worshippers’ apprehension of Christian faith and truth

- *“And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, ²²let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.” Hebrew 10:21-22*

METHOD OF PREACHING

Golden Rule of preaching

- Make some scripture statement the basis of your message
- Know what it means
- Preach what it says
 - “meaning” of scripture is NOT ours to decide, but ours to discover

Choosing a scripture:

- The scripture selected will determine **your parameter of your sermon**
- The scripture needs to be **directed to the audience (i.e. needs action verbs)**
- **Good example:**
 - *All of you who are on the LORD’s side, come here Exodus 32:26*
 - *Study this Book of Instruction Joshua 1:8*
 - *Show me a sign Judges 6:17*
 - *I give myself to you Psalm 86:4*
- **Bad Example:**
 - *Moses called all the people of Israel together Deuteronomy 5:5*
 - *As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. Matthew 11:7*

Preaching what it says:

- EVERY SERMON NEEDS:
 - **Objective (2 min)**
 - What is the main thing we are learning today
 - 1-2 sentence
 - **Intro (5 min)**
 - Who said the verse
 - Where was it said
 - Why was it said

- When was it said
- To whom was it said
- **Body (20 min)**
 - Connect main points (each sermon can have about 1-3 topics:
 - Why do we need to study the scripture?
 - To change our lives
 - So we can teach others
 - How do we study scripture?
 - Reading the bible
 - Asking the church
 - Putting to practice what we study
- **Conclusion (3 min)---very important section**
 - NOT SUMMARY, but last main point that ties everything together
 - Ex: since Joshua studied the scripture he was able to get Israel into the Promised Land. If we study the scripture, we can lead people to the promised land of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Content of sermon

- Sermon needs to be biblical and accurate
- Sermon needs to be **relevant** to the congregation
- Sermon needs to needs **A CLEAR PRACTICAL PURPOSE**
 - A preacher, much like a bus driver, is transporting people from one form of ideology to another (with a known destination)
- Sermon needs to be interesting
 - For a 30 min. sermon, maximum of 3 verses!
 - DO NOT GET CARRIED AWAY, remember you are in church
 - Each word should be carefully examined
- Sermon needs to be intellectually engaging
- Sermon needs to have a flow!!!!
 - Don't jump from one idea to the next without connecting the ideas together.

TYPES OF PREACHING

➤ Textual sermon

- Opening verse is selected from **the passage being employed for the sermon**
 - Ex: *Beware! Guard against every kind of greed Luke 12:14*
 - **Read passage: Luke 12:16-21**
 - Summarize the parable (in the intro)
 - Break down the parable and take main points away
 - He mistook his body for his soul
 - We need to be aware that our soul is eternal
 - He mistook himself for God
 - God is in control of our lives, we need to ask for His blessing
 - He mistook time for eternity
 - We are not guaranteed tomorrow
 - Passage selected needs to be an **event, story or parable**

➤ Expository preaching

- Teaching on a passage (not a story)
 - **Ex: Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:1**
 - how should we praise God
 - Explain each verse one by one

➤ Topical sermon:

- EX: Faith, prayer, forgiveness
 - Pick a sermon related with the topic
 - Number the topics within the sermon
 - Ex: *stand firm in the faith 1 Corinthians 16:13*
 - **how do we stand firm in our faith**
 1. by not giving up
 - a. because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't give up, St. Gabriel came to save them from the fire (Daniel 3:19-30)
 2. not being scared
 - a. apostles were not afraid, even when they were being beat
 3. by working hard
 - a. it was because David rested, that the devil entered his heart.
 - b. This caused him to fornicate with Bathsheba

➤ Biographical sermon

- Examine and analyze the life of a character within the bible
 - Make sure NOT to only tell the story but **relate it with the congregation**
 - Ex: Abraham
 - Abraham's faith grew throughout his life
 - His first faith was tested in his father's house
 - He trusted God enough to leave his parents' house
 - If we trust God, we need to leave our old ways
 - He was then asked to trust God with the blessing of his child
 - God will provide for you just trust him
 - He was asked to sacrifice his son
 - Even through the difficult moments, remember that God is with you.

➤ Comparative sermon

- Pick two characters within the bible and **compare and contrast their lives**
 - Both Peter and Judas betrayed Jesus
 - Peter truly repented
 - Judas did not truly repent
 - May God give us the heart of Peter... Amen!

Sermons for different occasions

➤ Sermons to children

- Remember they are children!
 - *For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. **Hebrew 5:13***
- Usually stick with biblical stories (Abraham, Moses, Daniel...etc)

➤ Sermons to youth

- Mostly interested about: relationships, drugs, alcohol, good/bad friends

➤ Sermons to adults

- Needs to get the congregation to change something about their lives

➤ Sermons for a wedding

- Something for the people that are not married
 - If you follow their (the ppl getting married) example, you will receive this blessing

- Something for the people getting married
 - Long journey ahead of you
- Something for people who are married
 - If it is difficult, hold on
- Sermon for the sick, and their family
 - Hope, hope and hope
 - Not “fake hope”
 - God is in charge, let us see what He will do
 - Get the person to confess, take Holy Communion
- Sermon for a funeral
 - Acceptance
 - We will all be departing from this world

DELIVERY OF PREACHING

- Know your material (rule of thumb, if you haven't said anything for 10 seconds, you in trouble!)
- Make the audience believe that you **care about what you are saying**
 - Body language:
 - Eye contact
 - Hand gestures
 - Posture
 - Voice color!!!!
 - Two variables:
 - Volume and speed
 - Start low, then go up, come back down, go back up, slow down, go fast, go back down. (doesn't have to be in this order, but you always start low and finish low)
 - Appearance:
 - No bright colors/ definitely netela (if a deacon/priest kemis)
 - NO jewelry
 - Neat haircut, clean facial hair
 - Floss/brush your teeth, make sure no food is stuck between your teeth

- BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU EAT 24 HOURS BEFORE A SERMON
- If it is an afternoon/evening sermon, make sure you have food in your system
- Get enough sleep the night before

➤ Important elements for effective delivery of the sermon:

- The spirit of the delivery needs attention:
 - Mostly manifested by his/her voice color
- Approach to an audience should be **humility not pride**
 - Ex: **WE** need to study scripture NOT **YOU** need to study scripture
 - Remember, congregation needs very little to be distracted
- The time of the sermon, be prepared for a set period of time
 - Read your audience and adjust accordingly
- Engage the audience
 - Make them repeat the opening verse
 - Ask them questions
 - Ex: God said these words to Joshua, whom did God say these words to?
 - Through the sermon, if you notice people are non-responsive... time to finish the sermon
 - Try to get the people to say “amen”
 - May God give us the blessing He gave to Joshua
 - AMEN!

WEEK 6: INTRO TO 5 PILLARS

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 2/15/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Need for creed

Why do we learn the 5 pillars?

Methods of “knowing God”

- Apostolic Age (33AD -100AD)
 - Christianity was exponentially growing
 - Christians were also being persecuted
 - Nevertheless, many did not know how to deal with **the hypostatic union of Christ**
 - This was the “talk of the town”
 - Remember there was no Trinitarian formula put in place for the Christians to refer to
 - The creed, as we know it today, was not formulated
 - They knew that Christ died and that through His death we had salvation
 - But who was Christ?
 - God, man, God-man...?
 - Because of the persecution, however, these questions were not properly addressed.
- Pre-Nicene Period (100AD-325AD)
 - Christians were still being persecuted
 - The goal of the Church was to survive and expand!
 - Although heretical teachings began to circulate within the Christian circles, Holy Fathers were able to effectively provide didactical writings and sermons to educate the community
 - On October, 28 312, during the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Emperor Constantine I was successfully able to defeat his opponent Emperor Maxentius even though the prior was greatly outnumbered.
 - Emperor Constantine I attributed his success to a divine vision he received from **Jesus Christ**.
 - As a result, he became converted to Christianity, making him the first Roman Emperor to accept Christianity.
 - This meant the persecution of Christians would cease.
 - Now Christians had the time and ability to deal with theological matters.
- Post-Nicene Period
 - Prior to the first Ecumenical council (325AD), Arius began to teach that Christ was created.
 - The bases of his teaching was:
 - *“The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23 I have been established from everlasting,*

From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,

When there were no fountains abounding with water.” Proverbs 8:22-24

- In order to address this issue, in 325 AD the first Ecumenical council was held in Nicea.
 - 318 Holy Fathers unanimously agreed the teachings of Arius were to be considered anathema. Furthermore, to ensure such matters do not arise again, the Trinitarian formula was put in place along with the creed.
- Prior to the second council, Macedonius began his heretical teaching of the Holy Spirit
 - The Macedonians (followers of Macedonius’ teachings) believed that the Holy Spirit was one of the angels.
 - As a result, the council of Constantinople was held in 381.
 - Over 200 Holy Fathers agreed, like the first council, that the Macedonians were heretics.
 - The creed, initially written in the first council, was further amended to incorporate:
 - “Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life Giver. Who **proceeded from the Father, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.**”
 - With the creed put in place, the Christian fathers hoped that such matters would no longer affect the Christians.
- Nevertheless, in 431 at the council of Ephesus and 451 at the council of Chalcedon, our church fathers found themselves defending issues regarding Christology.
 - Although the creed was not further amended, the teachings of Christology were expanded.

WHY DO WE LEARN THE 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

- The 5 pillars have one message, our communion with God the Father in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, by His Holy Spirit.
 - Without learning this mystery, one cannot understand the sacrifice that was made on the cross.
 - Understanding the pillars will help us conceive our redemption.
- When learning, we must NOT approach it in a merely secular manner like we learn in school.

- We must instead think of the church as an institution which worships God and serves mankind. Thus, we must approach it with spirituality.
 - The ultimate goal of learning being **getting closer to God.**
- Dogmas, such as the 5 Pillars of Mystery, are mirrors of the Holy Scriptures. They explain them and attract men to enjoy their spirit.
 - *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"[h]). Galatians 3:13*
- When we look at the early church fathers, especially during pre and post Nicene Period, their knowledge about God was directly related with their ascetic life style. The more they prayed and fasted, the more theological their writings and preaching became.
 - Mystery [μυστήριον]: **anything that is kept a secret**
 - The secret is with God, and we have to ask Him to tell us.
- We have to learn so we can correctly answer questions.
 - Post council of Ephesus (in 431 AD) and pre-Chalcedon(451) council, a monk by the name of Eutyches was asked the following questions:
 - Do you accept the union from two natures?
 - He answered: yes
 - Do you accept the two natures AFTER the union?
 - He answered: only one nature after union
 - Do you accept the con-substantiality of Christ with us in His humanity?
 - He answered: the Virgin Mary is con-substantial with us and God became incarnate from her.
 - **Note: these questions will be on the exam!**
 - Because he was unable to successfully answer the questions he was ex-communicated.
 - The answer of Eutyches became the bases for the council of Chalcedon.

METHODS OF "KNOWING GOD"

- Cataphatic approach:
 - Knowing God through positive theology
 - Theology concerns with what God is

- Mainly attributed to **western theology**
 - Uses hard and fast definitions and principles
 - Although the cataphatic approach has many benefits (i.e providing reason for theology), one must always remember that we cannot positively identify all the attributes of God. We always will be limited in our understanding because we can only know what He reveals to us.
- Apophatic approach
 - Knowing God through negative theology
 - The divine mysteries are beyond human perception and we cannot make definitions or theories reading it.
 - Mainly attributed to **eastern theology.**

WEEKS 7 AND 8: MYSTERY OF TRINITY

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 3/1/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Significance of Trinitarian Formula

The Triune God is One (Mono-theism VS Poly-theism)

God is three in

SIGNIFICANCE OF TRINITARIAN FORMULA

- Trinity = three are one
 - Originated from the Latin word “trinitas”

- ሥላሴ = ሦስትግት

- Mystery of Trinity is the belief that says that the God we worship has three hypostasis (persons) in one God Head.
 - God is **three in one and one in three.**
- Why should we spend time learning about this mystery?
 - *if you confess with your mouth **the Lord Jesus** and believe in your heart **that God** has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **Romans 8:9***
 - In order for me to “believe” I must first understand.
 - If Jesus is Lord and our God is Lord, do we believe in more than one Lord?
 - *“You shall have no other gods before Me. **Exodus 20:3***
 - *Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. **Romans 5:18***
 - The one man’s offense is the offense of Adam
 - The one Man’s righteous act is the act of Christ on the Cross
 - But how can one man’s act result in JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE?
 - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God **Romans 3:23***
 - If the Son was not equal to God in everything, then **His atonement on the Cross is not enough to fulfill God’s own Justice.**
 - If the Holy Spirit is not God then **our fallen nature cannot be sanctified to match God’s requirements of holiness.**
- Our forefathers, and our current brothers, died defending Christianity.
 - The best way to honor their death is by learning about the faith they died for!

- Our belief in a triune God does not imply a belief in polytheism.
 - Poly (many) theism (god) = the belief in many gods
 - Mono (one) theism (god) = the belief in one God/god.
- Christianity is a monotheistic religion which professes **One personal and transcendent God.**
 - He is One Essence (*Ousia*) in three persons (hypostasis).
- Our faith in the Holy Trinity does not contradict the Oneness of God. We do not believe in three divine essences (*ousia*) but in a single Divine essence.
- YAHID/EHAD
 - When the bible, originally written in Hebrew, uses the word “YAHID”, it conveys a single number.

<p>way·yā·bō</p> <p>וַיָּבֹא 34</p> <p>And came</p> <p>Verb</p>	<p>3173 [e]</p> <p>yə·hī·dāh.</p> <p>יְהִי־דָהּ</p> <p>[was his] only child her</p> <p>Adj</p>	<p><i>Judges 11:34</i></p>
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- When the word “ECHAD” is employed however, it still means “one”, but a unified “one”.

<p>we·'ā·hab·tā,</p> <p>וְאַהַבְתֶּם 5</p> <p>And you shall love</p> <p>Verb</p>	<p>'e·hād</p> <p>אֶחָד :</p> <p>[is] one</p> <p>Adj</p>	<p>Yah·weh</p> <p>יְהוָה </p> <p>LORD</p> <p>Noun</p>	<p>'ē·lō·hê·nū</p> <p>אֱלֹהֵינוּ</p> <p>our God</p> <p>Noun</p>	<p><i>Deuteronomy 6:4</i></p>
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- The Bible clearly teaches that while God is one, He exists in three Hypostasis. But not as three separate persons in the human sense but the “Three Hypostasis” are in one “God Head”,
- The Holy Bible, in both Testaments, assures us in many occasions of the Oneness of God.
 - *“Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving[d] that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”*
 - Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. God, the Lord is One,’” Mark 12:29*
- When we confess in one God, we do not just mean a single God, we also mean a UNIQUE God.
 - God is above the “number one” and any understanding of our concept one.

➤ What is His name?

- There are three types of names:
 - Given name (i.e the name we are given at birth)
 - Promotional names (i.e manager, commander, deacon...etc)
 - “natural names” or names that describe their nature (i.e. “sew”)
- The name of God (እግዚአብሔር) is a name that describes His nature.
 - እግዚእ (igzi)= Lord, creator, governor
 - ብሔር (biher)= land (place)
 - እግዚአብሔር (igzi a biher) = the Lord who created and governs this world.
 - This is His unified name.
- As we read the bible, we find God’s unified names:

šad·day, שַׁדַּי the Almighty Noun	'el אֱלֹהִים God Noun	'ă·nî- אֲנִי I [am] Pro	“el- shaday” = Almighty God (Genesis 17:1)

Yah·weh,
יְהוָה
JEHOVAH
.. “YAHWEH” OR “JEHOVAH” = I am that I am or I am the one who is (**Exodus 6:3**)

'ă·dō·nāy
אֲדֹנָי
Lord
Noun
“adonay” = my Lord (**Ezekiel 20:49**)

GOD IS THREE IN ...

- After a careful study of the bible, we notice that our God is three in:
 - Name, hypostasis (person) and deed.
 - hypostasis = underlying state or underlying substance

- ***Note: person does NOT mean human!
- *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; Genesis 1:26*
 - The term "God said", in its singular form, is indicative of a singular Essence (*Ousia*)
 - The terms "Our image" and "Our likeness" is indicative **of multiple hypostasis (persons)**
 - At least two "hypostasis" (persons)
 - Is it possible that God was speaking to angels?
 - *I am the Lord, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.' Isaiah 45:6-7*
 - God does not need help!
 - Where were these "angels" during the other days?
 - *Then God said, "Let there be light";*
 - *Then God said, "Let there be a firmament*
 - *Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together*
 - *Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass*
 - God should have said then God said: -- Let there be man –
 - Did God refer to Himself in the plural form to "respect" Himself?
 - No other king from the bible, who saw themselves as gods, did not speak that way...
 - *And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Genesis 41:41*
 - How do we know that there are **three hypostasis (person)?**
- *Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us Genesis 3:22*
 - The term "God said", in its singular form, is indicative of a singular Essence (*Ousia*)
 - The term "like one of US" is indicative of multiple hypostasis (persons)

- We still do not know the complete number of hypostasis (persons)
- *Come, let Us* go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Genesis 11:7

- The term “*Come, let Us*” lets the readers know that one hypostasis (person) is speaking to at least another hypostasis (person).

- From reading this passage we know there **are at least two hypostasis (person)**.

- Compare the same passage in Amharic ...

- ኑ፥ እንወረድ፤ አንዱ የአንዱን ነገር እንዳይሰማው ቋንቋቸውን በዚያ እንደባልቀው። **አሪት ዘፍጥረት 11:7**

- The term “*ኑ፥ እንወረድ*” lets the readers know that one hypostasis (person) is speaking to at least two other hypostasis (person).

- Now we know that there are **at least three hypostasis (person)**, but there can be more.

- *Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre,^[a] as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, **three men** were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³and said, “**My Lord**, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest **yourselves** under the tree. ⁵And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh **your hearts**. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” **They said**, “Do as you have said.” ⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly, make ready **three measures** of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.” **Genesis 18:1-6***

- Now we know that there are no more or less than three Hypostasis (persons).

- በቀትርም ጊዜ አርቡ በድንኳኑ ደጃፍ ተቀምጦ ሳለ እግዚአብሔር በመምሬ የአድባር ዛፍ ተገለጠለት። ዓይኑንም አነሣና እነሆ፥ ሦስት ሰዎች በፊቱ ቆመው አየ፤ ባያቸውም ጊዜ ሊቀበላቸው ከድንኳኑ ደጃፍ ተነሥቶ ሮጠ፥ ወደ ምድርም ሰገደ፥ እንዲህም አለ። ፤ አቤቱ፥ በፊትህስ ሞገስ አግኝቼ እንደ ሆነ ባሪያህን አትለፈኝ ብዬ አለምናለሁ፤ ጥቂት ውኃ ይምጣላችሁ፥ እግራችሁን ታጠቡ፥ ከዚህችም ዛፍ በታች ዕረፉ፤ ቀራሽ

እንጅራም ላምጣላችሁ። ልባችሁንም ደግፋ ከዚያም በኋላ ትሄዳላችሁ፤ ስለዚህ ወደ ባሪያችሁ መጥታችኋልና። እነርሱም። እንዳልህ አድርግ
አሉት። አብርሃምም ወደ ድንኳን ወደ ሣራ ዘንድ ፈጥኖ ገባና። ሦስት መስፈሪያ የተሰለቀ ዱቄት ፈጥነሽ አዘጋጁ፤ ለውሺውም፤ እንጎቻም
አድርጊ አላት። ኤፊት ዘፍጥረት 18:1-6

WEEKS 8 AND 9: MYSTERY OF TRINITY

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 3/1/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

God is three in

God is one in

GOD IS THREE IN ...

➤ Name:

- Go therefore[c] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of **the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19**

➤ Hypostasis (persons) (akal)

- Three persons does NOT MEAN **three bodies that carry flesh**
- Hypostasis (persons) instead is an indication of independence or capable of being auto-sufficient
- Someone that can say "I"
 - Only three beings can say "I":
 - God, angels and humans.

- When we speak of persons in the Mystery of Trinity we speak of immaterial person(s) that cannot be measured.
 - *When He had been baptized, **Jesus** came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He[c] saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly **a voice came from heaven**, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” **Matthew 3:16-17***
 - The “voice” was the voice of God the Father
 - Jesus is the “beloved Son”
 - The “Spirit of God” is the Holy Spirit
 - We see that God is three in persons
- Each person has **an image and a form.**
 - In the case of God though, the form of God is not contained nor is it restricted
 - *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image **Genesis 1:26***
 - Since we are speaking of a meta-physical world (of the spiritual world) we do not say a visible image.
 - *Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. **John 6:46***
 - In order for the Son, to “see” the Father, an image must be there.
 - When we say that God is three in Hypsostasis (persons) we are saying:
 - God the Father has a perfect person, image and form
 - God the Son has a perfect person, image and form
 - God the Holy Spirit has a perfect person, image and form
 - *Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, **Psalms 33:18***

- *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.*

Isiah 59:1

- When the bible is mentioning features such as “eye”, “ear” and “hand”, it is clearly NOT referring to human-like characteristics. Instead these are features of the Divine that we cannot conceive.
 - Similarly, even though the terms “image” and “form” are fitting for the Divine, we are forced to use the terms because there are no other words that can be used.

➤ Deeds

- God is three in deeds
 - *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness **Genesis 1:26***
 - Man has three attributes:
 - a rational soul, word, and breath
 - The word we speak is begotten from our rational soul
 - Our breath proceeds (comes out) from our rational soul
 - The Logos (Word) is **begotten from the Father**
 - The Breath, or Life, **proceeds from the Father.**
 - Therefore: we say
 - God the Father, is the begetter
 - “begetter”, should not be conceived in the worldly sense
 - The Father, without a “mother”, is the begetter or “generator”
 - “begetter” does NOT imply a “time frame”
 - At no time has the Father existed without the Son nor the Holy Spirit.

- The Father “Generates” or “Gives Birth” to the Son from all eternity.
- The Father is the first person of the Holy Trinity and the source of being for the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- *“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You [are] My Son, Today I have begotten You. **Psalm 2:7***
- *I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. **John 5:30***
- *“But when the counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me.” **John 15:26***
- God the Son, is the begotten
 - Son is ONLY begotten FROM the Father
 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth. **John 1:14***
 - “begotten” does NOT imply a “time frame”
 - At no time has the Son existed without the Father nor the Holy Spirit.
- God the Holy Spirit, is the one who proceeds
 - *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth **John 14:16***
 - “proceed” does NOT imply a “time frame”

- At no time has the Holy Spirit existed without the Father nor the Son.

➤ **Examples used to describe the trinity**

- Fire:

- *“For I, says the Lord, will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst”*

Zechariah 2:5

- the three attributes of fire:
 - flame, light and heat
 - light born out of the flame
 - heat proceeding from the flame
 - One fire, three attributes
 - the Son, like the light, is born from the Father
 - the Holy Spirit, like the heat, proceeds from the Father
 - One God, three deeds

- Sun:

- The three attributes of the Sun:
 - The body of the star, light and heat
 - The light is begotten from the body
 - The heat proceeds from the body
 - One Sun, three attributes
 - the Son, like the light, is born from the Father
 - the Holy Spirit, like the heat, proceeds from the Father
 - One God, three deeds

➤ Divinity:

- Divinity: able to create or creator of the world
- The Father is fully divine
 - *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? **Malachi 2:10***
- The Son is fully divine
 - *“But to the Son He says: ...‘You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.” **Hebrew 1:8-10***
- The Holy Spirit is fully divine
 - *You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth. **Psalms 104:30***

➤ Essence:

- **The Father is:**
 - omnipotent (all powerful)
 - *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. **Matthew 19:26***
 - omniscient (all knowing)
 - *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! **Romans 11:33***
 - omnipresent (present everywhere)
 - *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. **1 Kings 8:27***
- **The Son is:**
 - omnipotent (all powerful)

- *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

Philippians 3:20-21

- omniscient (all knowing)
 - *attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and[a] of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **Colossians 2: 2-3***
- omnipresent (present everywhere)
 - *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. **2 Corinthians 2:14***

○ **The Holy Spirit is:**

- omnipotent (all powerful)
 - *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you **Luke 1:35***
- omniscient (all knowing)
 - *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. **1 Corinthians 2:10***
- omnipresent (present everywhere)
 - *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? **Psalms 139:7***

➤ **Existence:**

○ **The Father is Eternal**

- *For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. **2 Corinthians 4:18***

○ **The Son is Eternal**

- *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting. **Micah 5:2***

○ **The Holy Spirit is Eternal**

- *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? **Hebrew 9:14***

- No one of the three Persons precedes the others in time, but all are equally eternal because they have **the same divine nature**.

➤ **Will:**

- What the Father wills, the Son and Holy Spirit will

- What the Son wills, the Father and Holy Spirit will

- What the Holy Spirit wills, the Father and the Son will

- *For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. **1 John 5:7***

- *Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done. **Luke 22:42***

- When Christ said this:

- He was saying –I do not have a separate will— or – your will is my will –
- He was showing his human nature
- He was speaking against Adam, who resisted the will of the creator and followed the will of his enemy.

- The second Adam, Jesus, was correcting the mistake that was originally made.

WEEK 10: MYSTERY OF TRINITY

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 3/15/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

Heretical teachings of Mystery of Trinity

Heretical Teachings of Mystery of Trinity

➤ Macedonianism:

- In 325 AD, at the council of Nicea, Arius' teachings of Jesus being created were declared to be blasphemous.
 - As a result, St. Athanasius along with 318 Fathers drafted the creed.
 - The creed was put in place for future generations.
- In 381 AD, at the council of Constantinople, Macedonius brought forth his false teachings **of the Holy Spirit**.
 - He declared that the Holy Spirit was one of the angels.
 - The council, like the council of Nicea, unanimously declared Macedonius' teachings to be blasphemous.
 - The council further amended the creed drafted in the council of Nicea, to the creed we know it today.

- Namely, the section that recites: “Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life giver, **who proceeds from the Father**, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified who spoke by the prophets” was added.
 - *You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth. Psalm 104:30*

➤ **Filioque Fallacy:**

- The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhedo Church follows the Cappadocian Fathers who developed the Trinitarian formula that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of ‘one *ousia* and three *hypostases*’
 - There is no subordination among the three divine persons in the Holy Trinity.
 - Cappadocian Fathers, however, explains **Father as the center of unity in the Holy Trinity.**
- The Catholic Church follows the theological stand point of St. Augustine regarding doctrine of the Holy Trinity.
 - Holy Spirit is presented as the Love Bond between the Father (Love) and Son (Love Shared).
 - This theory paved the way for the later Catholic teaching of dual procession of the Holy Spirit.
 - As we saw above, the creed established in 381 Ad reads: “Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life giver, **who proceeds from the Father**”
 - In 451 Ad, at the council Chalcedon, the Orthodox Tewahedo Church rejected the teaching of Pope Leo concerning the two natures of Christ.
 - As a result the first schism occurred between the Orthodox and Catholic Church.
 - During the 6th century, however, the term “filioque” began to appear in the creed.
 - Filioque means “from the Son” in Latin.
 - Hence, their creed suddenly read: “Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life giver, who proceeds from **the Father and the Son**”

- Catholic Church to this day uses this creed.
 - However the bible clearly shows the Holy Spirit proceeding only from the Father.
 - *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. **John 15:26***
 - *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. **John 14:16***

➤ **Gnosticism (Dualism):**

- During the late 1st century and the late 2nd, they laid claim to superior knowledge by which they were able to understand the mysteries of the universe.
- They taught that the Supreme God, the God of the New Testament, dwelt in the pleroma (fullness of light). **This God is good** and is Spirit.
- The **inferior god**, the god of darkness, or Demiurge created this world of matter and this god is the god of the Old Testament and of the Jews.
 - *I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. **John 5:30***
 - *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. **Colossians 1:15-16***

➤ **Sabellianism:**

- According to this theory, God has one personality:
 - This single personality became
 - manifest in the Old Testament as Father

- Son in Jesus Christ in the New Testament
- Holy Spirit in the church
- the single everlasting personality of God thus revealed itself in **three periods in three modes**
- Sabellianism denied the Trinity, the reality of the Incarnation and the eternity of God the Son.
 - *For I am the LORD, I do not change; Malachi 3:6.*

WEEK 11: MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 3/22/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

THE ORIGINAL SIN

THE CONSEQUENCE OF ORIGINAL SIN

THE NEED FOR GOD BECOMING MAN

ORIGINAL SIN

➤ The trees planted in the Garden of Eden

- God planed three trees
 - The tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food
 - The tree of knowledge of good and evil

- The tree gave good knowledge if they obeyed God and did not eat it, but gave evil knowledge if they disobeyed.
- The tree gave the knowledge of death (which is evil) when they ate it. Nevertheless, because they ate it, man was given the knowledge of Christ (which is good).
- The tree of life
 - Man would eat from the tree of life to renew his life.

➤ **The fall of Man**

- The devil united his evil nature with the nature of the serpent and approached Eve.
 - He convinced her to eat from **the tree of knowledge of evil and good.**
 - Eve then convinced Adam to eat from the same tree.
- God, through His Word, then called Adam saying: “Where *are* you?” **Genesis 3:9**
 - Then Adam told God what he did, and blamed his sin on Eve.
 - Eve in turn blamed it on the Serpent.
- The serpent was cursed:
 - **He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:14-15**
 - The best way to kill a snake is by striking it on the head.
 - “He shall bruise your head” is a prophecy for Christ destroying death, thereby the devil, on the cross.
 - “You shall bruise His heel” is a prophecy for Christ willingly submitting to the authority of death, thereby the devil, by dying for three days and three nights.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF ORIGINAL SIN

- God had told them that they would “die” if **they ate from the forbidden fruit.**
 - Since God’s Word cannot change, they were kicked out of the garden

- God had the cherubim **guard** the tree of life
 - The fact that God did NOT destroy the tree of life, was indicative of God’s mercy.
- “ God said: Behold, the man has become **like one of Us**” **Genesis 3:22**
 - Just as man stretched his hands on the tree, to get the forbidden fruit, God stretched His hands on the cross.
 - Just as man became cursed because of the tree, Christ became cursed by being crucified on the cross, who was for the sinners.
 - Man’s main sin was the desire to be like God. Because of the Incarnated Word, when the Son became Man, Man became God.
- The devil approached them and promised them to ease their pain.
 - Adam and Eve agreed to make the devil their new King.
 - They signed a death letter which recited: አዳም ገብሩ ለዲያቢሎስ (Adam is the devil’s male servant) and ሌዋን ዓመቱ ለዲያቢሎስ (Eve is the devil’s female servant)
 - Where one copy was sent to the Jordan River and the second was sent to Hades.
 - Since the gates of the Garden of Eden was being guarded by the angles, everyone now entered **hades**.
 - The devil was the new master of the world.
 - “God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image’” (**Genesis 1:26**)
 - This image was now destroyed because of the sin.
 - Having realized that they had made a mistake, Adam and Eve repented
 - God heard their plea and promised to save them.
 - But man became more corrupt, further destroying the image made by God.
 - God sent several prophets to remind man of the promise that was made.
 - Amongst the prophets was Moses, who received the Law of the 10 commandments.

- The Law was given to:
 - show man that he was full of imperfections.
 - show man that he could not fulfill the requirement of the Law.
 - show man that he was in need of a Savior.
- God also used Moses to give the nation of Israel to Mosaic Law.
 - Which included the Law of Sin Offering.
- *Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them, ³ if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. **Leviticus 4:1***

THE NEED FOR GOD BECOMING MAN

1. To repair the image destroyed by the original sin

- a. God created man in His image
 - i. When Man disobeyed, **that image was ruined** .
- b. When a portrait that been painted on a panel becomes destroyed, the subject of the portrait has to come and sit for it again, and then the likeness is re-drawn on the same material.
- c. In this case, the Son of God, who was the subject of the image, came and dwelt in our midst, in order that He might renew mankind made after Himself.

2. Man needed a divine teacher

- a. Sin defiled the vision of man.
 - i. Because the vision was clouded by sin, man was unable to see God.
 1. This caused him to forget the things that were holy.
 - ii. By God becoming man, He was able to teach mankind how to live in this world.

3. Man needed a divine Savior

- a. The devil was in charge of this world.
 - i. The sin offerings were not sufficient. It did not bring true forgiveness.
- b. Satan was like a wolf devouring humans one by one until all of humanity lost their life by becoming prisoner in his belly.
 - i. When Satan saw our Lord Jesus Christ as a man, he thought that Christ was like all other men, so he devoured Him by death.
 - ii. But his belly could not **hold Christ**.
 - iii. Christ then destroyed the gates of death and rescued those who believed in Him from eternal death.
- c. *As a courageous Shepherd, He took captive the lion that frightened the flock and destroyed the sheepfold. He broke his teeth, took out his claws, shaved his hair, and left him as a toy for kids to play with. It was in this manner that Christ was victorious over death - a source of fear for humanity. He robbed death of its terrifying property. St. John Chrysostom*
- d. Through this one deed of salvation, Christ both: freed man from slavery AND destroyed death once and for all.

4. To look for Adam (man)

- a. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve hid (so they were "lost")
 - i. God, through His Word, said: "Where are you?"
- b. God's Word was looking for man in the garden.
- c. Now, the same Word came to this world to look for mankind who was lost.

5. To offer the ultimate sin offering

- a. Prior to the Israelite's Exodus, they were instructed to celebrate Pass Over by slaying a lamb.

- i. They were further instructed to eat the meat and anoint the blood on their door to serve a sign. (Exodus 12)
- b. Similarly, Moses was instructed to let the people know to offer an animal as a “sin offering”.
- c. The high priest would offer the offering, an animal, and sprinkle the blood across the sanctuary seven times. Then God would accept their offering. (Leviticus 4 and 17)
- d. One is also reminded of Abraham’s offering. Although it was not a sin offering, Abraham was asked to offer his only son.
 - i. When the time came, however, Abraham was told to NOT lay hand on his son.
 - ii. “ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket [bushes] by its horns. “ **Genesis 22:13**
 - 1. Abraham did not know where this ram came from.
- e. Christ, our true lamb, came to this world to be sacrificed.
 - i. Just like the ram of Abraham came from the sky (or he just appeared), God the Son appeared to men from the heavens.
 - 1. The ram, a male lamb, had his horns caught in bushes just like the true lamb had his “thorns”, which is His divine strength, caught on the “bushes”, or the cross.
 - ii. Just as the Israelites were asked to eat the flesh of the lamb and anoint the door with the blood of the lamb before they could Passover to the promised land, Jesus-the true lamb, was slain so we could eat His flesh and anoint ourselves with His blood so we can Passover to the Promised Land.
 - iii. Just like the lamb was offered as the sacrifice, our lamb Jesus was the sacrifice.
 - 1. Just as the high priest offers the sacrifice, our High Priest, Jesus, offered the sacrifice.
 - 2. Just as God would accept the offering in the Old Testament, Jesus accepted the offering He made.

iv. *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified **Hebrew 10:11-14***

f. Since the divine by his very nature cannot die, He took a form of a body **whose nature was to die.**

6. To shed blood

a. "For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" Hebrew 9:22

i. God's divine nature does not have blood, so he became man.

7. To fulfill Adam's wishes of becoming God.

a. The serpent lured Adam and Eve by telling them that eating the forbidden fruit would make them like a god.

i. When God became man, man become God.

8. To fulfill His promise and the prophecies of the Old Testament.

a. God promised Adam that He would save him.

i. This promise was fulfilled on the cross.

b. The serpent was told that Eve's seed will bruise his head, And that he was to bruise His heel.

i. This was fulfilled on the cross.

9. To destroy the death letter

a. One of the death letter signed by the devil and Adam and Eve, was thrown into Jordan River and the Second in Hades.

i. The one thrown into the Jordan River was destroyed by **His baptism.**

ii. The one thrown into Hades was destroyed through **His death.**

10. To show His Love.

- a. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. **John 3:16**

WEEK 12: MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 3/29/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

NATURE OF MAN VS NATURE OF GOD

THE SINGLE NATURE OF CHRIST

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

NATURE OF MAN VS NATURE OF GOD

➤ Mystery of Incarnation is the doctrine that says the second person of the Trinity assumed human form in the person of Jesus Christ and is completely both **God and man.**

➤ **Nature of God:**

- Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent
- eternal (Alpha and Omega)
- Intangible and invisible
- Does NOT: eat, sleep, drink, die ...etc.

➤ **Nature of man:**

- Limited in power, knowledge, and space
- Has a beginning
- Eats, sleeps, drinks and dies.
- Note: nature is defined as being the fundamental quality or identity of a person
 - Person in this context does not necessarily mean human
 - Nature is something that **does NOT change**
 - If something has a nature, that “something” necessarily requires a body.
 - The nature is obviously describing a body that is present.
 - Hence, every body has a nature and every nature has a body.

THE SINGLE NATURE OF CHRIST

- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.14 And the **Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:1-14***
 - **Word “became” flesh**
 - In the bible, the word “became” is used to indicate a change in nature/substance. One nature is changing to a second unique and different nature.
 - *But his wife looked back behind him, and she **became a pillar of salt**. **Genesis 19:26***
 - Lot’s wife actually changed into salt.
 - She no longer exhibited the nature of human.
 - She, or rather it, was now exhibiting the nature of salt.
 - *And He said, “Cast it [the rod] on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; **Exodus 4:3**.*
 - The rod was no longer a rod but a serpent.

- Even though the serpent returned to the nature of a rod when Moses reached out and picked up the serpent, the nature of the rod had actually changed to the nature of a serpent.
 - Similarly, when Moses picked up the serpent, the nature of the serpent changed to that of a rod.
 - Even though the rod returned to its original nature, it required another change in nature to return to its original state.
 - Hence, the word “became” is employed in a permanent and irreversible manner.
- In the bible, the word “dwelt” is used to indicate a type of a host (reversible action). This does NOT require a change in nature. Instead requires two separate and distinct natures.
 - *Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan Genesis 13:12*
 - Abram is able to leave Canaan anytime he wishes.
 - Abram, the first nature, dwelt in the land of Canaan, the second nature.
 - *Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. 1 Samuel 27:7*
 - David left the country of the Philistines after his time was over.
 - David, the first nature, dwelt in the land of the Philistines, the second nature.
- Therefore, the term “became” and “dwelt” are two opposite words.
 - “became” invokes a permanent and an actual change in nature
 - “dwelt” invokes a temporary resting place for a specified nature (person).

- In the case of Christ, we can NOT say His human nature simply hosted the divine nature since it says the Word “became” flesh.
 - If the human nature simply hosted the divine nature, the two nature **become separated and divided.**
- We also can NOT say His divine nature changed into the human nature since it says “and dwelt among us.”
 - Thus we say: the union of the divine nature with the human nature happened without: **change, confusion, separation nor division.**
 - **Change:**
 - the nature of one substance completely changing into a new nature
 - EX: Staff of Mosses changes its nature and becomes a snake.
 - **Confusion:**
 - The nature of one substance partly giving up its nature to the second nature.
 - EX: mixture of milk and coffee
 - **Separation:**
 - One nature being held in (or being hosted in) a second substance
 - EX: separating components of a pen from the body of the pen.
 - **Division:**
 - Two natures existing without full union.
 - EX: mixture of water and oil
- Instead we say that the hypostatic union is like **the union between iron and fire.**
 - In the case of ignited iron, we do not say that there are two natures: iron and fire, but we say iron united with fire.

- Similarly, we speak about the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, and we do not say "God and man".
- In the union of iron with fire, the iron is not changed into fire nor fire into iron.
 - Both are united without mingling, confusion or alteration.
- Similarly, we say the hypostatic union is like the union between the soul and the body.
 - This united nature does not include the body alone nor the soul alone but both together are combined without mixing, confusion, alteration or transmutation
- Therefore, we say that God the Son, in His unique image, came down to this world to take natural soul and natural flesh from the Virgin Mary.
 - He united His Divine nature with the human nature he took from Theotokos.
 - The person of God the Son and that of man were united into one person.
 - The two persons were united into one person of Jesus.
 - The nature of God the Son and that of man were united into one nature.
 - The two natures were united into one nature of Jesus.
 - The nature that belonged to God the Son, through the hypostatic union, now belonged to the nature of man.
 - The nature that belonged to man, through the hypostatic union, now belonged to the nature of God the Son.
- When we worship Christ, we do not separate His Divine nature from His Human nature and ONLY worship the divine nature.
 - We worship the single nature of Christ, both divine and human united into one.
 - *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord 1 Timothy 1:12*

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

- There should be no doubt in our mind that **the single nature of Christ died on the cross.**
- *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

- What is this single nature?
 - The divine nature united with the human nature
 - Hence, the one that does NOT die (the divine nature), through the unified human nature died.
 - The Divine nature is not susceptible to suffering yet He suffered due to His humanity, and was physically crucified.
 - He, the man, united with the Godhead, physically died and **His death provided unlimited atonement.**
- Some find this difficult to believe (how could the divine die?) so they claim the divine never participated in the death of Christ.
- Logical answer:
 - By asserting that ONLY the human nature died, we unknowingly have divided/separated the divine nature from the human nature.
 - Going back to the ignited iron, when the blacksmith strikes the red-hot iron, the hammer is actually striking both the iron and the fire united with it.
 - The iron alone bends (suffers) whilst the fire is untouched though it bends with the iron.
 - Hence, when Christ was suffering, both the divine and human nature was experiencing (feeling) the suffering.
 - Redemption cannot be fulfilled if we say that the human nature alone underwent suffering, crucifixion, blood-shedding and death.

- Biblical answer:
 - Let us first see how His flesh experienced death.
 - *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us[e] to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, **1 Peter 3:18***
 - Let us now see how his divine nature, through unified human nature, experienced death.
 - *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, **14** in whom we have redemption **through His blood**,[c] the forgiveness of sins. **Colossians 1:13-14***
 - The “Son” shares the same nature as the Father, the divine nature.
 - How can the divine nature have blood if the divine nature never experienced death through the unified human nature?
 - *“For God so loved the world that **He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **John. 3:16***
 - What does it mean to “give” His only begotten Son?
 - The Son shares the same nature as the Father, the divine nature.
 - *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, **that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. ... Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. **16** For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. **17** Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **18** For in that He***

Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Hebrews 2:9-18

- Paul is not describing the human nature since it is not a miracle to see the human nature experience death.
- *These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life **Revelation 2:8***
 - Since the human nature cannot be referred to as the First and Last, it is obvious that this is referring **to the divine nature of Christ.**
- Answers from the Church Fathers (Anaphora)
 - “Willingly he became hungry as a son of man, and granted many hungry people to be satisfied with little bread according to his power. He thirsted as a man who dies, and changed the water into wine as being able to give life to all.” **Anaphora of John Son of thunder, page 160, verse 36.**
 - “Priest: He took flesh and was made man and taught us the path of salvation, and granted us the birth from on high, of water and of the Holy Spirit.
People: Amen, we believe.
Priest: And he made us unto himself a pure people, and purified us because he loved his own who are in this world, and gave himself up by his will to deliver us from the death which reigned over us,” **Anaphora of Basil, page 264, verses 20 and 21.**
 - He put on mortal flesh and made it immortal, and through this flesh, God who can never be scourged, was scourged. **St. Gregory, page 294, verse 39.**

WEEK 13: MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

OBJECTIVE:

THE COUNCIL OF NICEA

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

THE FIRST AND SECOND COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

THE COUNCIL OF NICEA

- Arius, a bishop at the time, began to teach that since the Father begot the Son, God the Son had a beginning; furthermore, the Son was created by the Father.
 - Saint Peter of Alexandria (not to be confused with Simon Peter), had a dream of Jesus.
 - He saw Christ wearing a garment which was torn in two.
 - When St. Peter of Alexandria asked who was responsible for the torn garment, Christ responded
- Arius.**
- Since Arius claimed Christ was created, Arius in essence was tearing/splitting the Son from Father.
- In order to address Arius' teachings, the council of Nicea (also known as the first council) was held in 325 AD.
 - 318 holy fathers attended (319 including Christ, who was believed to have been present)
 - Arius used the following verses to state his case:
 - *You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **John 14:28***

- *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **Colossians 1:15***
- *The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. **Proverb 8:22***
- St. Athanasius rebutted with the following:
 - *"I and the Father are one" **John 10:30***
 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **John 1:1***
 - *He that has seen Me, has seen the Father **John 14:9***
- For these reasons, St. Atanasius concluded that Christ is:
 - The creator, not created
 - Consubstantial (equal) with the Father
 - Although He became man, God the Son did NOT lose His glory nor His place in the Godhead with the Father and Holy Spirit.
- The council declared Arius to be a heretic.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

- Many became indignant over Arius' teachings.
 - One of whom was Apollinarius.
 - In attempt to teach against the heretical teachings of Arius, he was trapped in his own heretical teaching.
 - He taught that the God the Son did NOT **need a human soul**
 - He began to teach that the divine Logos took **the place of the rational soul of man** and united with the body.
 - He held that the rational soul which dominates man had a tendency to do evil, and so it was impossible for Christ to take up on Him that part of the human nature which would have tempted Him to do sin.

- His teaching denied the perfect humanity of our Lord.
- We, however, believe that that God the Son took **natural flesh AND soul from the virgin.**
 - *Jesus wept. John 11:35*
 - Crying is NOT of a nature of the divine, nor is it the nature of the flesh.
Instead it is the nature of a rational soul.
 - He was opposed by Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great and was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD (also known as the second council).
 - **Note, as discussed before (see Week 10 notes), one of the other major topics in this council was the heretical teachings of Macedonius (who held the view Holy Spirit is created).

THE FIRST AND SECOND COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

- Prior to the first council of Ephesus, Anastasis, the main priest from Constantinople, delivered a Sermon criticizing the use of Theotokos (Mother of God) to the Holy Virgin Mary.
 - According to him, she does not deserve this title, for she was only a human being and it was not possible for God **to be born of a human being.**
 - The people protested against Anastasis. But Nestorius, the pope at time, agreed with Anastasis.
 - Nestorius thus proposed the name Christotokos' ('Mother or bearer of Christ') and 'Anthropotokos' ('Mother or bearer of man').
 - Furthermore, Nestorius taught that Christ had two distinct natures: the divine and human.
 - The personality of Christ consisted in the meeting place of these two natures in the two united persons.
 - The union between the divinity and humanity of Christ, was therefore a moral one by love and good pleasure only.

- Making Christ encompass **two natures and two persons**.
- The first Council of Ephesus (also known as the third council) was held in 431 AD to address these heretical teachings.
- St. Cyril explained the union of the two natures in Christ.
 - He laid emphasis on His divinity. He acknowledged ‘one nature of the Word that was made flesh’.
 - Jesus was not an individual man, but the God incarnate. He is one from two natures and that one is the Logos united with humanity.
 - St. Cyril used the example of the union between the iron and the fire to edify his audience.
 - St. Cyril later on went on to construct the “12 anathemas” which covered the 12 errors of Nestorius.
- Meanwhile Eutyches, the leader of 300 monks, became an advocate of St Cyril’s teachings.
- He was accused by some to have echoed the teachings of Monophysites, which is the belief of the divinity absorbing the humanity.
 - Hence, no more manhood existing after the union.
 - Eutyches was asked the following questions:
 - Do you accept the union from two natures?
 - He accepted the union of the two natures
 - Do you accept the two natures after the union?
 - He responded: “I confess that our Lord was from two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature.”
 - This was seen to be problematic.
 - Do you accept the con-substantiality of Christ with us in His humanity?

- Accepted that the Holy Virgin Mary is con-substantial with us and so our God became incarnate from her. But he was reluctant to say that Christ is 'con-substantial with us in His humanity'
- Hence, he was accused of:
 - Denying the human nature of Christ and its consubstantiality with us.
 - Believing that the humanity of Christ was absorbed in His divinity.
 - Proclaiming only one dominant nature in Christ.
- To further investigate the teachings of Eutches, the Second Council of Ephesus was held in 449 AD.
 - St. Dioscorus, the successor of St. Cyril, gave Eutches a chance to explain his views.
 - He affirmed that his faith is on the creed of the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) as confirmed by the Council of Ephesus (431 AD)
 - The council then exonerated Eutches.
 - **Note, Eutches soon after went back to his old teachings, thus was excommunicated by St. Dioscorus himself.

THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

- As a result of the second council of Ephesus, the opposers of Eutches were enraged.
 - They wanted a fourth council to settle the matter.
- The Council of Chalcedon was held in 451 AD as a result.
 - The council declared that **Christ has two natures in one person.**
 - Hence, rejected the idea of Christ encompassing a single nature.
 - St. Dioscours, and his likes, however adamantly protested by pointing out a **denial of a single nature of Christ is an acceptance of two natures, which is one with the teaching of Nestorius'**.
- Pope Leo, an opposer of St. Dioscours, through his infamous Tom of Leo, declared:

- “it does not belong to the same nature to weep out of deep-felt pity for a dead friend, and to call him back to life again at the word of command, once the mound had been removed from the four-day-old grave; or to hang on the cross and, with day changed into night, to make the elements tremble; or to be pierced by nails and to open the gates of paradise for the believing thief. ... **it is on account of this oneness of the person, which must be understood in both natures**, and again that the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, since he suffered these things not in the divinity itself whereby the Only-begotten is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father, but in the weakness of the human nature.”
- St. Dioscorus, however, opposed the “two natures after the union” or “into two natures” teachings.
 - He explained that the two natures were united into one nature without: change, confusion, separation and/or division.
 - Thus, the phrase: “from two natures” meant to him that the Godhead and manhood continued to exist in the one person of Christ even after the Union
 - As a result of the union, neither of the natures had been lost or reduced or absorbed.
 - It is improper that Christ existed “in two natures” or say that He is “two natures” after the union.
 - Instead, it should only be that He is “from two nature” at moment of his incarnate life.
 - St. Dioscorus thus rejected the decision made at the council of Chalcedon. Him along with the others that left became known as the Non-Chalcedonians.

WEEK 14: MYSTERY OF INCARNATION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

OBJECTIVE:

FAQs

FAQs

1. *Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Matthew 12:32*

Question: Is the Son lower than the Holy Spirit?

- **Answer:** This verse is referring to those who speak against the Son of Man without fully understanding the **divine nature of Christ**.
- Christ, to show his humility, gave up his glory and came down to this world and became one of us. With the exception of sin, He did everything else that we do.
 - For this reason, those who did not understand his Divinity and curse at Him, if they repent after they understand who He is, will be forgiven.
- But those who curse at Christ AFTER they understand His Divinity, will not be forgiven since God the Son shares the same nature **as the Holy Spirit**.
- **EX:** *Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. John 12:15-16*
- *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Luke 23:34*

2. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" *Matthew 27:46*

Question: Is God the Father the God of Christ?

- **Answer:** the devil was able to convince Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit by changing **his appearance**.
- If the devil had not changed his appearance, Eve would have never approached the devil.
 - The same way, the devil would have never approached Christ had he seen Christ's divinity first.
 - When the devil heard Christ say this prayer, he approached Him just as he approaches a regular man.
 - Note: "approach" means kill in this context.
 - Christ then revealed His divinity to the devil at which point the devil surrendered.
- This prayer is also indicative of the human nature of Christ.
 - Since His human nature (i.e. flesh) was created by God, Christ in essence is saying "Yes I am fully God, but I am also fully Man!"
- Christ also said this since He was fulfilling a prophecy
 - *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? **Psalm 22:1***

-
3. *However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, **not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. Matthew 24:36***

Question: Is God the Son limited in knowledge?

- **Answer:** Jesus Christ is consubstantial with us in His humanity.
- The nature of man is limited in knowledge; therefore, will not know the "hour".

- Note this verse did NOT say humans will not know the “hour” because humanity is included when Christ said not even the Son himself knows.
 - However, Christ OBVIOUSLY KNOWS THE HOUR!!!
 - He is the one who told them about the signs of the end of the world, so how could He not know about the timing of the end of the world?
 - In other words, He was telling us that the flesh (i.e. we) will not know the hour.
 - Because of the hypostatic union, the Divine Nature took flesh which encompasses a nature that is limited in knowledge.
 - This does NOT imply that the body He took AFTER unification is limited in knowledge since the body has been united with the omniscient nature of God the Son.
 - He was telling us I have a flesh which is limited in knowledge.
 - The Father in His heart has planned it (so He knows it), but the Son has not manifested this date to the world or He has not told us the date (meaning He does not know it)
 - EX: You think of something but do not say it out loud.
 - If Christ told His audience that He knew the “hour”, everyone would pressure Him to tell them.
-

4. *My Father is greater than I. John 14:28*

Question: Is the Father greater than the Son?

- **Answer:** God the Son, by uniting with the nature of humanity, willingly gave up His glory.
 - God the Father and/or the Holy Spirit never united with the nature of humanity
 - *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, **taking the form of a***

bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:5-8

- Due to the hypostatic union, Christ is described as even being lower than Angels!
 - *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. Hebrew 2:9*
-

5. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" John 20:17

Question: Does Christ have a God; if so, is He different than the God of Mary Magdalene?

- **Answer:** When Christ said “my Father”, separating it from “your” Father, He was letting Mary know that Christ calls God the Father “Father” since God the Son is begotten from Him. But we call God the Father “Father” since He is our Father by grace.
 - The difference therefore is that the Son is a son by nature while we are sons by grace.
 - When Christ said “my God”, separating it from “your” God, He was letting Mary know that Christ is fully man. His flesh is created by **the creator (i.e. God)**.
 - He also separates it and says my God and your God since we call God “God”
 - We are not consubstantial with Him.
 - Although the flesh of Christ is created, Christ by nature (his divine nature) is consubstantial with God the Father.
 - Therefore, Christ was showing us even AFTER the resurrection, the divine nature and human nature never separated/divided.
 - Some heretics deny in a physical resurrection of Christ
-

6. After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. **25** For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. **26 And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.** **27** For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.” (Of course, when it says “all things are under his authority,” that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) **28** Then, when all things are under his authority, **the Son will put himself under God’s authority**, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere. (NLT) 1

Corinthians 15:24-28

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. **25** For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. **26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.** **27** For “He has put all things under His feet. But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. **28** Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the **Son Himself will also be subject to Him** who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (NKJV) 1 **Corinthians 15:24-28**

Question: Will the Son be put under the “authority” of the Father?

➤ **Answer:** This chapter (if read in entirety) is referring to death and its relationship with Christ.

ho	ὁ	the	Art-NMS
Huios	Υἱός	Son,	N-NMS
hypotagēsetai	ὑποταγήσεται	will be put in subjection	V-FIP-3S
tō	τῷ	to the [one]	Art-DMS
hypotaxanti	ὑποτάξαντι	having put in subjection	V-APA-DMS
autō	αὐτῷ	to him	PPro-DM3S
ta	τὰ	-	Art-ANP

- The Greek never says that Christ will be made subject to the Father, but instead says will be “put in subjection to the one having **put in subjection to Him**”
 - The question really is who is the one who had all things under “Him?”
 - The answer is death!
 - After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, death ruled over this world.
 - Hence, all things were made “subject to Him”.
 - At the cross, however, Christ willingly was made “subject” to death. In doing so, death was destroyed and God’s glory was shown all in all (i.e. everywhere).
 - When we re-read the verse with filling in the prepositions we understand the verse better.
 - For “He [Jesus] has put all things under His [death] feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him [death],” it is evident that He [God] who put all things under Him [death] is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him [death], **then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [death]** who put all things under Him [death], that God may be all in all.

7. *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.**34 **Who then is the one who condemns? No one.** Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also **interceding for us.** (NIV) Romans 8:32-34*

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 **Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?** It is God who justifies. 34 **Who is he who condemns?** It is Christ who died, and*

furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes *intercession for us*. (NKJV)

Romans 8:32-34

Question: Does Christ pray (intercede) on our behalf?

- **Answer:** Christ interceded for us **once and only once** when He was in this world, then He said “It is finished” (John 19:30).
- *in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him Hebrew 5:5-9*
 - He offered the sacrifice, He was the sacrifice, and He became the sacrifice.
 - Since man and God were separated due to the original sin, Christ interceded on our behalf and reunited us to Himself.
- Is it only Christ (from the three persons) that can intercede?
 - *but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us Romans 8:26*
 - *If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?” 1 Samuel 2:25*
- If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all interceding... who is the once receiving the prayers?

◀ **Romans 8:34** ▶

Transliteration	Greek	English
tis	τίς	who [is]
ho	ὁ	the [one]
katakrinōn	κατακρινῶν;	condemning?
Christos	Χριστὸς	Christ
Iēsous	Ἰησοῦς	Jesus
ho	ὁ	the [one]
apothanōn	ἀποθανῶν,	having died,
mallon	μᾶλλον	rather
de	δὲ	moreover
egertheis	ἐγερθεῖς,	having been raised up
ek	(ἐκ	from
nekrōn	νεκρῶν)	[the] dead,
hos	ὅς	-
kai	καὶ	also
estin	ἐστίν	is
en	ἐν	at [the]
dexia	δεξιᾶ	right hand
tou	τοῦ	-
Theou	Θεοῦ,	of God,
hos	ὅς	-
kai	καὶ	and
entynchanei	ἐντυγχάνει	is interceding
hyper	ὑπὲρ	for
hēmōn	ἡμῶν.	us.

Dictionary: ἐντυγχάνω

Greek transliteration: *entynchanō*

Gloss: to intercede, appeal, **petition**

Definition:

to fill in with, meet; to have conversation with, address; to address, or apply to any one, Acts 25:24; ὑπέρτινος, to intercede for any one, plead the cause of, Rom. 8:27, 34; Heb. 7:25; κατά τινος, to address a representation or **suit against any one, to accuse**, complain of, Rom. 11:2*

Dictionary: ὑπέρ

Greek transliteration: *hyper*

Gloss: (acc.) **above**, beyond, more than; (gen.) for, in behalf of, for the sake of; in place of

Definition:

(1) gen., **above, over**; met. in behalf of, Mt. 5:44; Mk. 9:40; Jn. 17:19; instead of beneficially, Phlm. 13; in maintenance of, Rom. 15:8; for the furtherance of, Jn. 11:4; 2 Cor. 1:6, 8; for the realization of, Phil. 2:13; equivalent to περί, about, concerning, with the further signification of interest or concern in the subject, Acts

5:41; Rom. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:12; 8:23; 2 Thess. 2:1. (2) acc., over, beyond; met. beyond, more than, Mt. 10:37; 2 Cor. 1:8; used after comparative terms, Lk. 16:8; 2 Cor. 12:13; Heb. 4:12. (3) in NT as an adv., in a higher degree, in fuller measure, 2 Cor. 11:23

Hence, the same Greek words actually give another meaning...

who also makes ~~intercession~~ for us.

Files a suit above us/ rules above us

እንግዲህ እርሱ ራሱ ካጸደቀ እግዚአብሔር የመረጣቸውን ሰዎች የሚቃወማቸው ማን ነው? የሚፈርድስ ማን ነው? ይልቁንም ከሙታን ተለይቶ የተነሣው፣ በእግዚአብሔርም ቀኝ የተቀመጠው፣ (ከአብ የተካከለው)፣ ደግሞ ስለ እኛ የሚፈርደው ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ነው።"

- If you read the bible printed before 1938 in Ethiopia, you will instead find the verse reading who also judges over us.
- If you look at the verse again (NKJV), Christ is the one who judges/condemns.
 - Therefore he cannot also be the one interceding.

WEEK 15: MYSTERY OF BAPTISM

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 4/26/2015 12:00 AM |

OBJECTIVE:

What is baptism?

How did this sacrament begin?

Is this mystery to be taken literary or symbolically?

WHAT IS BAPTISM

- Holy Baptism is the mystery of our rebirth.
 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. John 3:5*
 - We are first born from our biological parents. Since we are born from them, we become their children.
 - We also need to be born from the Holy Spirit by being **submerged into water**.
 - Water is used to wash away dirt. During baptism it washes away our sins.
 - Water is cheap (inexpensive). So, everyone has access to it.
 - Water reflects images, so through baptism we are able to see our sinful nature.
 - *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Matthew 3:11*
 - In early church history, when the faithful were martyred, the fire counted as their “baptism”
 - Baptism from blood
 - Rare instances when the infant is about to die AND parents can NOT find a priest to baptize a baby
- Without being baptized we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, not only were they kicked out of the Garden, but they corrupted their human nature (i.e. original sin).
 - As a result they experienced death both in flesh (when they departed from this world) and in soul (when they were sent to hades) (i.e. consequence of original sin).

- When Christ died for us on the cross, all debt was paid in full, and we became free from our previous master, Lucifer.
 - The gates to the Garden became open.
 - Christ rescued those that were patiently waiting for Him in Hades **and took them to the Garden of Eden.**
- Our nature was still corrupt and we still needed medicine. In other words, we experienced the consequence of original sin, which is death.
 - Christ gave us this medicine during His time in this world.
 - The medicine is/was Baptism.
 - Since we are born from our parents, we are born with the same corrupted flesh (even after the Resurrection).
 - Baptism is the only act that can wash our flesh.
- Baptism does not undermine the great Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.
 - While the crucifixion opened the doors for us in the Kingdom, Baptism allows us to enter.
 - **EX:** Imagine a college that has been closed down for years due to funding issues. A rich kind man comes and pays off all of the debts of the college, hires new employees and leaves.
 - The college opens and is back in business. Students begin to apply; and the college sends out acceptance letter to those who applied and met the qualifications.
 - Students who decide to go this college send in their notice to let the college know that they will attend.

- After four intensive years, those who study and work hard will graduate and receive their degree.
 - Christ, like the rich man, paid all the debts that were needed to reopen the Garden of Eden, like the college.
 - Upon opening, people show their interest in going to the Garden when they get baptized. If they meet the qualifications (i.e. they believe in the Triune God and that Christ died for them on the cross) they get accepted to come in.
 - But they must still work hard, pray, fast, and do all the things that a Christian is supposed to do. Then, they get their reward in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- A child inherits what belongs to his parents.
 - If we become the children of God, through Baptism, we will inherit what belongs to our Father, the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - Through Baptism we become adopted as the children of God.
 - Note: this is why we say God the Father is our Father by grace.
- Since the flesh is the antithesis of the spirit, through Baptism we kill the deeds of our body so that we may **live in spirit**.
 - *If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **Romans 8:13***

➤ HOW DID THIS SACRAMENT BEGIN?

- When Christ was 30 years old, He went towards John the Baptist and was baptized in the Jordan River.
 - *³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.¹⁴ And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.*

⁶When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He⁶ saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
Matthew 3:13-17.

➤ Why did Christ get baptized?

- To be an example.
 - Although His flesh did not exhibit the corrupted nature that resulted from the original sin (since the Virgin Mary was protected from it), Christ became baptized to show us that we need to be baptized as well.
 - Christ going towards John shows that we need to go to the church to be baptized.
 - It does NOT matter how rich/powerful we may be, everyone has to go to the church to be baptized.
- Once Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden, they signed a death letter with the devil.
 - The letter/agreement form recited that both Adam and Eve were slaves and **their master was the devil.**
 - One form was thrown into Hades while the other was thrown in the Jordan River.
 - When Christ was baptized, the first letter was destroyed.
 - When Christ died, the second letter was destroyed.
- The trinity was revealed in a clear way during His Baptism
- To fulfill prophecy.
 - *The sea saw it and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, The little hills like lambs. What ails you, O sea, that you fled? O Jordan, that you turned back? O mountains, that you skipped like rams? O little hills, like lambs? Psalm 114:3-6*
- To restore Adam back to the way he was at creation.
 - Adam was created as a 30 year old man. When he was created Adam was pure.

- Christ being baptized at 30 is symbolic of restoring Adam back to his purity.
 - In addition, the Israelites would not begin mission work before they were 30.

Since Christ was beginning his ministry, He became baptized.

➤ **IS THIS MYSTERY TO BE TAKEN LITERARY OR SYMBOLICALLY?**

➤ Is this mystery to be taken literary or symbolically?

- *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,[b] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples **to obey all the commands I have given you.***

Matthew 28:19-20

- Notice, Christ tells his disciples to: baptize new believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit AND to **teach new disciples to obey all the commands.**
- Some think that baptism is a symbolic act of showing our faith. And others think baptism, like prayer, fasting, going to church...etc, are Christian virtues that we have to complete.
 - However, baptism is not like the “other virtues of Christianity” since Christ explicitly says: “Teach these new disciples to obey ALL the commands...” AFTER He commands them to baptize people.
 - If “all” the commands included baptism, Christ would have not separately commanded for the disciples to baptize new believers.
 - This shows that baptism, like faith in Christ, is a fundamental chronological priority.

➤ *Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born **of water and the Spirit.***

John 3:5

- if we are to say he was speaking in symbolism here, we MIGHT be inclined to say that the “water” still symbolizes the Holy Spirit... but who would the “spirit” symbolize?

➤ *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 1 Corinthians 1:17*

- This verse simply indicates that Paul himself was not called to baptize.
- The reason why Paul felt compelled to write this was because the Church of Corinth became divided by claiming that they were followers of a specific teacher instead of God.
- *For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Corinthians 1:11-13*

WEEK 16: MYSTERY OF BAPTISM

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 5/3/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

SYMBOLISMS/FORESHADOWS OF BAPTISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

INFANT BAPTISM

SYMBOLISMS/FORESHADOWS OF BAPTISM IN THE OT

-
- In Genesis we get the first foreshadow of the baptism of salvation.

- *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:2***

- On one hand (“andim”), the darkness symbolizes sin while the water with the Spirit of God symbolizes Baptism.
- On one hand (“andim”), the darkness symbolizes sin while the water symbolizes the blood of the Virgin Mary.
 - The later view foreshadowing **the Birth of Christ.**

- As we read the epistles written by St. Peter, we find that he has provided an exegesis for Noah’s ark and the flood (see Genesis 6 & 7 for the story of the flood).

- *when once the Divine longsuffering waited[f] in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) **1***

Peter 3:20-21

- On one hand (“andim”), the Ark symbolizes the church. Those inside the ark (i.e. Noah with his family) symbolize Christians who heed to the instructions of Christ, while those outside symbolize the heathens.
- On one hand (“andim”), the Ark symbolizes baptism, those inside symbolize the believers who have been saved by the water (i.e. the flood) and those outside symbolize the wrath of God that awaits for them.

- The circumcision, according to the epistle of Paul, foreshadows the Baptism.

- *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins[c] of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **Colossians***

2:11-12

- The crossing of the Red Sea is also a symbolism for Baptism (See Exodus 14)
 - *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea* **1 Corinthians 10:1-2**
- The floating ax head (2 Kings 6:1-6)
 - Elisha's disciple, when he was cutting down a tree with an ax, accidentally dropped the head of the ax (made out of iron) into the water. The iron top sank into the ocean.
 - Elisha cut off a stick and threw it into the water and the stick sank! This caused the iron **to float on the water.**
 - On one hand ("andim"), the sinking of the iron head symbolizes Adam/mankind while the stick symbolizes the cross.
 - Because of the sins of Adam and his children, mankind fell into the abyss of sin.
 - When Christ died on the cross (i.e. stick), we were able to be restored back to our glory.
 - But we were able to remain on the surface (or not sink back) because of the water (i.e baptism).
 - On one hand ("andim"), the iron head symbolizes mankind while the stick symbolizes **the divinity of Christ.**
 - The one that was supposed to sink, the iron, floated up while the one that was NOT supposed to sink, the stick, sunk.
 - The same way, the one who was supposed to die, was lifted while the ONE that was NOT supposed to die, the divinity of Christ, died and saved mankind (see Andimta of Matthew 3:13-17, page 39 col.2).
 - On one hand ("andim"), the iron head symbolizes Christ.

- He died on the cross (i.e. the sinking of the iron head), but He resurrected after three days and three nights.
- Naaman's leprosy healed (2 Kings 5).
- Naaman, who was a commander of Syria, had leprosy.
 - He was desperately looking for someone to heal him.
 - A young Israel girl advised him to see the great prophet Elisha.
 - When Naaman went to Elisha, Elisha told him to "wash" in the Jordan River 7 times.
 - Although he was reluctant at first, he end up following Elisha's advice.
 - When he did, he became cured of his disease.
 - This is symbolic of how baptism cleanses us from our spiritual sickness (i.e. sin).

BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The baptism of John the Baptist.
- John is the last prophet and the first disciple, hence is a unique person in the bible (we commemorate him in the beginning of every year).
 - His baptism, unlike the baptism instituted by Christ, was a baptism of repentance. The baptism of Christ is **a baptism of salvation**.
 - *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **Matthew 3:11***
- Peter's baptism at Pentecost.
- Peter preached to about 3000 people at Pentecost.
 - The people were so moved by his sermon, they asked "What shall we do?"
 - *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of*

you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:37-38

- The next sequential step to believing is baptism.
- The fact that Peter said baptize them in the “name of Jesus Christ” means to baptize them according to the Baptism that Christ instituted, which requires them to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)
 - There is no contradiction between what Peter said and what Christ said.

➤ The baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch

- *Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Acts 8:35-36*

- After Philip preaches “Jesus to him”, the first question of the Ethiopian is... “What hinders me from being baptized?”
- Note, this means that St. Philip also taught him about baptism. Also, in order to be a follower of Christ, the Ethiopian knew and understood that baptism was a prerequisite.

➤ The Baptism of Cornelius

- Cornelius was the first gentile to be converted to Christianity. His conversion is a testimony that Christianity is not limited to only the Israelites (“isreal ze-siga” or Israel of the flesh) but is also extended to all believers (“isreal ze-nefis” or Israel of the spirit).
- Once Peter preached to Cornelius and his family, and once they believed, they were baptized.
- *Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts 10:47-48*

INFANT BAPTISM

- Historical significance
 - Many would wait until last minute to get baptized
 - Many died before having the opportunity
 - Our church fathers CANONIZED infant baptism
 - NOTHING in the bible prevents infant baptism
- Biblical support for infant baptism
 - *“One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. But Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.”¹⁵ And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.” Matthew 19:13-15*
 - God order the men Israelites to get circumcised at eight days old.
 - *Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Genesis 17:10-11*
 - Our “sign” in the New Testament is baptism, therefore we should baptize infants just like God ordered infants to be circumcised.
 - Peter baptized 3000 PEOPLE at the day of Pentecost
 - *“Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles^[1]—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Acts 2:37-39*
 - Also, there must have been some children present out of 3000 “souls”.
 - The Baptism of Lydia

- *And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us. Acts 16:15*
 - In the OT, mother who gave birth to a **baby boy**
 - Would be "unclean" for 7 days
 - After waiting for 33 days for purification, she would be able to take the child to the sanctuary; $7 + 33 = 40$ days
 - Similarly, mother who gave birth to a **baby girl**
 - Would be "unclean" for 14 days
 - After waiting for 66 days for purification, she would be able to take the child to the sanctuary; $14 + 66 = 80$ days (**Leviticus 12**)
 - According to our church fathers, Adam waited 40 days before entering the Garden of Eden while Eve waited 80 days before entering the Garden of Eden
- If we claim that belief in Christ is a prerequisite to baptism, does that mean infants believe in God?
 - *I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations. Jeremiah 1:5*
 - God chooses us even before we are born.
 - *When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Luke 1:44*
 - John the Baptist leaped for joy (i.e. he believed) when he heard the voice of the Virgin Mary.
 - Our fathers interpret that to mean John bowed (segede) inside the womb.
 - *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. Matthew 18:1-5*

WEEK 17: MYSTERY OF INCARNATION...CONT.

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 5/10/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

HISTORY OF TEWAHIDO

TSEGA (GRACE) VS KIBAT (UNCTION)

HISTORY OF TEWAHIDO

- In the 16th century, Mohammed the left handed was able to receive support from the Ottoman Empire (present day Turkey).
 - In doing so, he was able to destroy many churches, priest, and holy books at the time.
 - He was also able to expand the teachings of Islam in Ethiopia.
- The Ethiopian king at the time, King Geladewos turned to the Portuguese for military assistance.
 - After many years of battle, Mohammed the left handed and his followers were defeated.
 - Portugal, being a catholic nation, seized this time in history to permeate their catholic believes on our nation.

- Despite the Ethiopian Orthodox Kings' refusal, the Roman Catholic sent a charismatic, likeable priest to Ethiopia to evangelize.
 - His name was Petro Paez.
 - He managed to convince the Ethiopian emperor at the time, Susiniyos, to declare the state of Ethiopia's official religion to be Roman Catholic.
 - Most of the Ethiopians, however, did not accept this decree and Emperor's Susiniyos decision was overturned by Emperor Fasilides, his son.
- After the death of Petro Paez, the Pope of Rome sent Alfonso Mendez, a catholic priest, to finish what Petro Paez had started.
 - But the approach and methodologies employed by the latter priest were extreme and divisive.
 - The country became indignant at the policies being proposed by the catholic priest.
 - When Emperor Fasilides became in power, he ordered the priest to leave Ethiopia.
- On his way out, Mendez taught two of his disciples the fallacious teachings of what became known as "Qibat" and "Tsega".

TSEGA (GRACE) VS KIBAT (UNCTION)

- Kibat (unction).
 - They believe that Christ was anointed, as opposed to being incarnated.
 - They taught that the union between the human nature and the Divine, was a result of this anointment.
 - According to this view, the Holy Spirit anointed the Son.

- If this is true, it would require the Son to be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, thereby breaching the Trinitarian formula.
- It would also require Christ to encompass two natures in one body, which we saw in the earlier lessons to be fallacious.
- This teaching prevailed mainly in Gojjam, Ethiopia.

➤ Tsega or Yesega lig meaning the song by grace

- They are also known as the three birthers
 - We, the two birthers, believe that God Son was born before creation of the world without a mother and again from the Virgin Mary without a Father.
 - The Tsegas however, say during the second birth, Christ was not God!. He was merely a man.
 - They believe that another birth was necessary, which they claim occurred at baptism.
 - According to this view, Christ became a child of God the Father's at His baptism.
 - This teaching clearly breaches the teaching of Mystery of Trinity and Incarnation since it implies that God the Son is NOT the Son of the Father by nature, but by grace.
 - Recall when we were talking about baptism, we claim that we are adopted as the children of God during baptism.
 - Hence, through baptism we become the children of God by grace.
 - Meaning our status of being His child is not that of necessity but of grace.
 - This teaching also implies that Christ has two natures in one body.
 - This teaching prevailed mainly in Shewa, Ethiopia.

- In order to distinguish the official teaching of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from the teaching of “tsege” and/or “qibat”, the term “tewahido” was added to the name of the Church. Thus, we became known as the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.
 - The term “tewahido” is derived from the geez word “ahade” which means one
 - Tewahido means he made one.
 - In English, the term Mia-physite would be used to correctly translate “tewahido”.
- These two teachings circulated around Ethiopia for nearly 200 years!
 - It was not until early 20th century that the “tsege” and/or “qibat” teachings became a relic of the past.
 - Although, there are some people who still hold the views of tsege” and/or “qibat” in their respective cities of Gojjam and Shewa.

WEEK 19: MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 5/24/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

INSTITUTION OF EUCHARIST

BENEFITS OF EUCHARIST

FORESHADOWS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

REAL PRESENCE VS SYMBOLIC PRESENCE

INSTITUTION OF EUCHARIST

- This Mystery, as we saw before, is also one of the sacraments offered within our church.
 - A sacrament known as the “supreme act of worship” is offered for those who have submitted themselves to God.
 - Also known as the “crown of sacraments”, this is administered after all the other sacraments.
 - This sacrament is known as: Holy Communion, Lord’s Supper, Holy Qurbana (Quraban), Divine Flesh and Blood of Christ

- This sacrament was instituted by Christ on Holy Thursday right before his arrest
 - *As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this and eat it, for this is my body.” 27 And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, “Each of you drink from it, 28 for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant^[e] between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. **Matthew 26:26-28***
 - In one way, the pieces are a foreshadow of the number of affliction **He will endure for man kind**
 - He “took” does not only mean He “picked up” the bread, but it means He received/ate the bread as well.
 - In one way, He did this to be an example, “just as I eat it, you shall too.”
 - In one way, He ate it to set an example for priests. Now, when priests offer the Holy Flesh of Christ, they must first “take” it before they can offer it.

- The disciples then continued this sacrament after the Ascension of Christ Jesus
 - *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper^[i]), and to prayer. **Acts 2:42***

BENEFITS OF EUCHARIST

- When we partake in the Holy Eucharist, we literally abide (dwell) in Christ, and Christ dwells in us!

- *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. John 6:56*
- To fully understand the efficacy, we first have to ponder on the question “Who is Jesus?”
 - As we reviewed before, Jesus is fully divine and fully man.
 - And in His divinity, He is the source of Love, Joy, Happiness ...etc.
 - Having Christ abide in us means, being filled with abundant source of Love, Joy, Happiness... etc.
- We believe that this Sacrament will enable us to obtain ETERNAL LIFE.
 - *This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever. John 6:58*
 - How long is “eternal”?
 - Imagine you were asked to Read the bible, but you were asked to read ONLY one letter from the bible each day.
 - How long do you think it will take you to read the entire bible?
 - It will take you about a year to finish just the first 5 verses of Genesis!
 - But now, imagine you were asked to read **all** the current copies of the bible in the world in the same manner... How long do you think that will take?
 - When compared to “eternity”, the time it will take you to complete this task will pass by faster than a blink of an eye.
 - Now imagine being with Christ for eternity!
- All of our sins are forgiven!
 - *For this is My blood of the new[c] covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Matthew 26:28*
 - Our flesh is weak and thus we continue to sin.
 - We cannot defeat the temptation of the world by ourselves.

- When we partake in the Holy Communion, not only does our sins get forgiven, but Christ will be within us protecting us from **committing other sins.**
- We have the hope of an afterlife when we take Holy Communion,
 - *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. **Romans 5:5***
 - The “love of God” is His precious Blood.
 - His Blood is our Hope in the kingdom of heaven

Conditions for accepting this Sacrament

- This sacrament is only offered to those who have examined themselves
 - Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood^[e] of the Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.**29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner^[e] eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s^[e] body.**1 Corinthians 11:27-30**
 - Note two conditions: examining yourself AND discerning the Lord’s body
 - Examining yourself
 - First accept that you are a sinner
 - all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God **Romans 3:23**
 - Second, make a conscious decision to seek Christ
 - Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. **Acts 4:12**
 - Sin is like cancer, and the ONLY thing that can save you is this sacrament
 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

- Discerning the Lord's Body
 - One must take into consideration **that they are appearing before Christ**
 - For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56** Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. **57** I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. **John 6:55-57**
 - **Example:** We clean ourselves and dress up before going to a fancy restaurant
 - We must clean our soul before appearing before God by showing ourselves to a priest.

Common Misconceptions about Mystery of Eucharist

- After reaching the age of reason (“akeme adam” or “akeme hewan”) one must STOP taking Holy Communion
 - So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, **unless you** eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. **John 6:53**
 - He did NOT say unless children and/or elderly people eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ...
- Holy Communion should be something we take once we are older
 - As stated above, this sacrament does NOT have an age restriction

People:- Halleluia! If there be any-one of the faithful that hath entered the church at the time of mass and hath not heard the holy Scriptures, and hath not waited until they finish the prayer of the Mass, and hath not received the holy communion, let him be driven out of the church: for he hath violated the law of God and

Halléluya! imebo bi'isee im'imenan zebo'a béte kiristeeyan begeezé qidase we'eete'ageese iske yifeşimu şelote qidasé we'eetemeşewe imqwurban yiseded imbéte kiristeeyan isme amasene hige Igzee'abihér we'astehaqere qemete qidme nigus semayawee nigus siga wemenfes kemez meharune

Figure – Liturgy Book of EOTC, Preparatory Service

- This is not intended to discourage people from coming to Liturgy but to encourage them to take Holy Communion.
- You can NEVER sin again after taking Holy Communion
 - As humans we will sin until we die, but the goal for Holy Communion is to commit ourselves to Christ **by seeking** the road towards righteousness instead of wickedness.
 - It would be better to battle the temptations brought by the devil with Christ on your side rather than fighting the temptations on your own
- Before/after taking Holy Communion you HAVE TO....
 - When it comes to taking Holy Communion, there **are many** ceremonial acts (“tsiriat”) associated with it.
 - The main one we CANNOT forget is speaking to OUR spiritual father on this topic.
 - Whatever canonized order the spiritual father prescribes to you is what you have to follow

FORESHADOWS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The tree of Life

- *The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Genesis 2:9***

➤ The offering of Melchizedek (Genesis 14)

- *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. **Genesis 14:18***

➤ Passover Lamb (Exodus 11 and 12)

- The Israelites were asked to eat the flesh of the lamb and anoint the blood on their doors.
- That evening the death angel came and “passed over” the houses marked with the blood and struck down the first child of every house which did NOT have the marking.
- The Israelites then headed towards the “promised land”.

➤ Manna from heaven (Exodus 16)

- *Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. 33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. **John 6:32-33***
 - Just like Manna, came from heaven, God the Son came down from heaven.

➤ The angel’s visit to Elijah

- *Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel[a] touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel[b] of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.” **1 Kings 19:5-7***
 - Before we take a “journey” we need to partake in the Holy Communion

➤ Isaiah’s call to be a prophet

- *Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Isaiah 6:6-7*

REAL PRESENCE VS SYMBOLIC PRESENCE

- Since the divine God does NOT have blood to shed, He united Himself with the flesh.
 - After unification, we do NOT speak of two natures. (hypostatic union)
- Through this mystery, we believe that the bread and the wine offered will TRANSFIGURE to the actual flesh and blood of Christ (without separating divinity and humanity, we say the body and flesh of Christ).
 - Trans- changing thoroughly
 - Substance - that of which a thing consists
 - Transubstantiation- the substance offered, that is the bread and wine, thoroughly changes to the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ
- When one partakes in the Eucharist, the flesh and blood of Christ (fully divine and fully man) is united with our flesh and blood
 - Through communion, we are actually seeing and touching God Himself!
- Consubstantial, unlike transubstantiation, is the view that says the "substance" of the body and flesh of Christ is present ALONG with the "substance" of the bread and wine offered.
 - Believes in a simultaneous presence of both the substances
 - View proposed by Martin Luther
 - Problems with the view of consubstantiation
 - Divinity is something we cannot touch and see, the nature of humanity is something we do touch and see.

- If two substance exist (i.e. the substance of the bread AND the substance of Christ's flesh), we should be able to see and touch two substances
- Real Substance VS Symbolic Presence
- Over the years the view proposed by Martin Luther were modified to be a view that believes in a symbolic presence
 - The substance of flesh and blood of Christ is never present during the sacrifice!
 - As we will see, this view stems from a lack of faith ("how can the same flesh and blood of Christ appear 2000 years later?")
- Biblical support for Real Substance:
 - If Christ spoke symbolically, and people did NOT understand it, the bible let the readers know!
 - *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' **But He was speaking of the temple of His body.**" John 2:19-21*
 - *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' **But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.**" John 7:37-39*
 - But, when He was talking about Holy Communion, even when they found it "hard to understand", Christ kept repeating that He was real food!

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is food

indeed,[h] and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. **John 6:51-56**

- Whenever the term “eating flesh” occurs in symbolically in the Holy Scripture, it refers to slander, hate, and back stabbing.
 - “When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell.” Psalm 27:2
 - If we interpret the Lord’s words about eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood symbolically, we fall in the worst interpretation.

WEEK 20: MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 5/31/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

HISTORY OF LITURGY

HOW TO PREPARE FOR LITURGY

HOLLY VESSELS

HISTORY OF LITURGY

- The word Kidase (Liturgy) comes from the geez word “kedese” which means **to separate or to praise**
 - Kidase means worship (misgana)

- Also has an implicit meaning of a public worship
- Kidase is a prayer “above all prayers” truly unique and special because it is the ONLY service the church gives which encompasses **all the 5 major offerings**:
 - offering of light
 - twaf, candle, made out of two materials
 - Symbolizes that our spiritual life needs to be made out of works and faith
 - God’s commandments are light
 - *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. Psalm 118:105*
 - The life of a Christian is light
 - Light defeats darkness
 - Christ is light
 - Offering of incense
 - Symbolizes the fact that Christ is a High Priest
 - Symbolizes the divinity of Christ. Just as the smell perfumes the room with good smell, His divinity perfumes this world and cleanses our dirty smell of sin
 - Offering of the lips
 - Men and angels are the only that can make this offering.
 - Offering of the body
 - Bowing down and standing up are physical offerings.
 - “I am tired”... good!, that’s is the offering!
 - We have to fast 15-18 hours before coming.
 - Offering of Holy Communion
 - The Holy Bread and Holy Wine transfigures to the actual flesh and blood of Christ when:

- Priest's authority is confirmed
- Person's faith is confirmed
- God give His will

➤ When we read the bible, we know that Angels were the first ones to worship God together.

○ *I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" **Isaiah 6:2-3***

- God before creating this world, was ALREADY worshiped. He was already glorified.
- When the angels were created, however, they continued to glorify a glorified God.
- Notice, it says that during the time of their worship "*one cried to another*" signifying that Liturgy (kidase) should be done in public with others. And that there are various sections that are said by one group of members (i.e clergy) and the other parts are said by the rest (i.e. congregation).

➤ Angels were the first ones to worship (kidase) God when Christ was born in the manger.

○ *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" **Luke 2: 13-14***

- This part is repeated in Kidase even to this day.

➤ Angels were the ones who also taught Adam how to worship.

○ When Adam died, his kids preserved the body and used it to make offerings to God.

- It served as an altar.

○ When the flood came, Noah took the body and placed it in the arc. After the flood, Noah asked his son Shem to care after the body.

- Shem found Melchizedek to care after the body. Melchizedek eventually placed the body at

Calvary (the place where Christ was crucified).

- Eventually Moses received the Arc of the Covenant which served as the new altar for making offerings. The Arc of the Covenant received a permanent place when King Solomon built the temple.
- Thousands of years later, right before His crucifixion on Holy Thursday, He instituted Holy Communion.

- After His crucifixion, the practice of “breaking of the bread” continued.

- *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42*
- *Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As **they ministered** to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Acts 13:1-3*

Leitourgountōn	Λειτουργούντων	As were ministering
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- Original Word: λειτουργέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: leitourgeó

Short Definition: I minister, serve publicly

Definition: I act in the public service, render service, minister, in the widest sense, of some special public religious service, but also of the service of priests and Levites.

- Several years after the ascension, Peter and John were ministering to gentiles and they told them that the indigenous people could no longer worship idols.
 - The people demanded that in place of an idol they receive a place to permanently worship Christ.
 - Peter and John, not knowing what to do prayed and Christ took them up to the Kingdom of Heaven and they were able to partake in the Divine Liturgy with Christ. Christ even allowed them to partake in the Holy Communion.
 - When they came back, Christ built the church for the gentiles out of three rocks.
 - Three rocks symbolize the trinity
 - Three rocks also symbolize **the altar of Adam, Moses and Christ.**

HOW TO PREPARE FOR LITURGY

- We must prepare: physically, intellectually, mentally and spiritually
 - Physically: be clean!
 - Shower, get clean cloth ready, get ready like a wedding!
 - Know where you are going!
 - When you go to a wedding you plan ahead ... so do the same!
 - Both men and women need to have netala.
 - *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. **Revelation 4:4***
 - No shorts for both guys and gals.
 - Do not wear clothing that is “distracting”
 - Intellectually: learn about kidase!

- Common misconceptions: for a new Christian, sermons are better THAN Kidase.
 - This comment is a sign of ignorance, since inside the Liturgy we find many “educational” or sermon-like parts in it.
 - Some want to shorten it
 - If we took the time to review the entire liturgy, we find that there are no parts that can be removed nor extended. The kidase is a set length and we simply have to conform.
 - Some say it is too long, and have a hard time standing the whole time.
 - You are not required to stand the whole time, standing is for those we can stand, but if you can not.... You can sit down.
 - All these reasons show that one important factor has been neglected. And that factor is, in the kingdom of heaven, all we will be doing is Liturgy!
 - If we are not prepared in this world, how do we plan to do liturgy in heaven?
 - We need to be able to LEARN kidase.
 - This takes time and patience.
 - If possible, read the book of “gitsawe” and read the readings during liturgy before coming to church.
- Mental preparation:
 - Clear your mind, close your phone, go to sleep before (Seyoum!) and come to church ready to be a part of Kidase.
 - Prepare spiritually:
 - Talk to God
 - Talk to your confession Father
 - Talk to yourself.

- During the Divine Liturgy, we use various tools to help us perform some of the spiritual rites. But since these “tools” are Holy (“ytekedsu or are separated for God), we give them a special name.
- Menber or tabot
 - Replaced the altar of Adam and Mosses
- Silat (tablet)
 - During liturgy, they carry the sahil (which holds the Holy flesh of Christ) and the siwa (which holds the Holy blood)
 - Technically, “tabot” is the place that holds the tablet
 - *And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. Exodus 31:18*
- Sahil
 - It holds the holy flesh of Christ.
 - Made of either silver or gold
 - It symbolizes the **manger which He was born in**
 - *And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7*
- Siwa
 - Holds the precious blood of Christ
 - Symbolizes the chalice that Christ used on palm Thursday
 - *Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new^l covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Luke 26:27-28*

- Irfe meskel
 - “kind of like a spoon” used to offer the Holy Blood to the congregation
 - At the tip of it, there is a cross
 - Symbolizes the spear that was used to pierce the side of Christ

- Awid,
 - It is used during “dirget”. Its where the sahil is placed.
 - The name symbolizes public scenery (think of awide-mihert), symbolizes the public trial of Christ

- Mahifedat
 - Various clothing’s that are used.
 - Placed under the sahil and over the sahil,
 - Wraps around the Holy Flesh
 - Covers the siwa
 - Symbolizes the linen **used to wrap Christ after the crucifixion**
 - Also symbolizes the clothing that was used to wrap Him when He was born

- Dwell and “kachil”
 - Two different bells used to symbolize the voice of John the Baptist and John the son of Thunder
 - John the Baptist used to tell everyone to confess
 - *Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance **Matthew 3:8***
 - John the son of thunder was crying when He saw Christ

- Every time there is kidase, these Holy Vessels are blessed through prayer

WEEK 21: MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

OBJECTIVE:

PREPARATORY SERVICE

SIRATE KIDASE (FROM AHUDU-tinsiu leselot)

PREPARATORY SERVICE

- Liturgy has three main sections:
 - Preparatory service
 - From besime -ab to ahdu ab kidus
 - During this period priests, deacons and the congregation are preparing for the Liturgy
 - Holy Vessels are consecrated
 - Order of Liturgy (siriate kidase)
 - From ahdu ab kidus to Sau nuse Kristian (or akoteate qurban ze...)
 - Various teachings, readings, and prayers are conducted
 - The Anaphora (fire kdiase or akoteate qurban)
 - from akoteate qurban to the end
 - there are 14 canonized anaphora's
 - there are at least 6 more that are not canonized (and NOT in service)
 - the mystery of Holy Communion is revealed and offered to the congregation
- With the exception of Liturgy that is conducted during Christmas and Pass Over, when the services is held on a Sunday, Liturgy ALWAYS begins at the break of dawn (around 6:00AM)

- *Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to **dawn**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. **Matthew 28:1***
 - Since we are also coming to the church to “see” the resurrected body of Christ, we come at the break of dawn.

- After beginning the Liturgy by the power of the cross (i.e. saying “besime- ab”) the priest says:
 - “How **awful is this day and how marvelous this hour** wherein the Holy Spirit will descend from heaven and over shadow and hallow this sacrifice” (Chapter 3 of Liturgy, pg 35).
 - This day is “awful” because **we are standing before the almighty God.**
 - *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge **Proverbs 1:7***
 - This day is “marvelous” because, as written, the Holy Spirit will descend and transfigure the offered sacrifice to the actual flesh and blood of Christ.

- With the exception of the period between Pass Over and Pentecost, Priests, Deacons, and congregation recite the following if Liturgy is conducted on:
 - Monday, Tuesday and/or Thursday, recite: “imine beha...”
 - Wednesday, Friday and/or Saturday, recite: “meskqel abriha...”
 - Sunday, recite: “Kulu zegebrea...”
 - After saying this on the respective days, we proceed to chant: “Halléluya! imebo bi'isee...”

- When Liturgy is held between Pass Over and Pentecost, however, we recite: “Halléluya, Yoséf weneeqodeemos geneziwo le'Eeyesus besendunat lezetensi'a imutan lemenkir keen.”
 - Translation: Halleluia, Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus with linen cloths, who rose from the dead in wondrous fashion.
 - Since the 50 days proceeding Pass Over commemorates Christ’s resurrection and ascension, it is appropriate to remember Joseph and Nicodemus who prepared the body of Christ after His crucifixion.

- We conclude our chant by reciting “antee wiut...”
 - While we are chanting all these chants, the main deacon carries the Holy Wine and the assistant deacon carries the Holy bread and they come from “bete-lihem” to “bete-mekdes”.
 - The deacons are accompanied by the assistant priest while he censers the church by way of the censer.
 - Especially in Ethiopia, “betelihem”, which is translated to the house of bread, is a separate room/space from the betemekdes.
 - FYI-Christ was born in Bethlehem.
 - The deacons beginning the journey in Bethlehem symbolizes Christ’s birth while their destination, betemekdes, signifies **Calvary (the place of His crucifixion)**.
 - The journey to betmekdes signifies the journey Christ took to Calvary.
 - That fact that the deacons are the ones holding the Holy bread and wine (as opposed to the priests) symbolizes Simon, the man who carried the cross for Christ on the way to Calvary.
 - *Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. **Matthew 27:32***
- When the Holy bread and wine enter the sanctuary (Holy of Holies), the main priest washes his hands and chooses the offering that will be used for Holy Communion.
 - The washing of the hands symbolizes baptism
 - While this is taking place, the deacon proceeds around the altar three times, symbolizing the **three years of ministry of Christ**.
 - The chosen Holy bread is placed down on the “sahil”, symbolizing Christ’s death and is covered with the “mahifedat”, symbolizing the linen used to wrap His body.

- Before saying “ahdu ab”, main priest faces east, main deacon faces west (while they are looking at each other)
 - When the women discovered the empty tomb, they saw two angels. One was on the East side of the tomb, the other was on the West side.
 - The angels, in addition to telling them about the gospel (good news of the resurrection), rolled the stone away so that they may have entrance into the tomb.
 - *Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door,[a] and sat on it. Matthew 28:1-3*
 - The priest and the deacon symbolize the two angels. Their “job” is to roll away the rock for us.
 - Remember, the rock which served as a door for the tomb, was EXTREMELY heavy and required at least two roman soldiers to roll it! Weighed about 1-2 tons!!!
 - The rock symbolizes any burden that we are “carrying”.
 - Sin, transgression, wrongdoing, anguish, grief, misery...
 - In between the priest and deacon (i.e. angels) is the Holy bread and wine which will be transfigured to the actual body of Christ.
 - Once we take Holy Communion, the heavy burden of sin is rolled away.
- The priest then raises his hands and says: “Ahadu Ab Qidus, Ahadu Weld Qidus, Ahadu wi'itu Menfes Qidus.”.
 - Translation: One is the Holy Father, one is the Holy Son, one is the Holy Spirit
 - One is the Holy Father means: the Father is unique/distinct from the Son and/or Holy Spirit since the Father has his own name, deed (begetter) and person
 - One is the Holy Son means: the Son is unique/distinct from the Father and/or Holy Spirit since the Son has his own name, deed (begotten) and person

- One is the Holy Spirit means: the Holy Spirit is unique/distinct from the Father and/or Son since the Holy Spirit has his own name, deed (proceeds) and person
 - As the priest is saying this, he raises his hands up.
 - This symbolizes the prayer that Solomon prayer before the altar.
 - *Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; ²³and he said: “LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. **1 Kings 8:22-23***
 - The raising of the hands signifies the act of receiving. When we pray, we ask God to give us His grace. We lifting our hands is a way of saying, we are ready to receive your grace.
- Then we respond: Be'aman Ab qidus, be'Aman Wold qidus, be'aman wi'itu Menfes Qidus.
 - Translation: Truly the Father is holy, truly the Son is holy, truly the Holy Spirit is holy.
 - The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are holy by nature.
 - We are holy by grace!

Priest:- Praise the Lord, all ye nations.

People:- And praise him, all ye people.

Priest:- For his merciful kindness is great toward us.

People:- And the Truth of the Lord endureth for ever.

Priest:- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

People:- (Shall repeat his words.)

Priest:- Both now and ever and world without end. Amen.

People:- (Shall repeat his words)

Deacon:- Stand up for prayer.

People:- Lord have mercy upon us.

Priest:- Peace be unto you all.

Priest:- Sebihiwo le'Igzee'abihér kwulikimu ahizab.

People:- weyisébihwo kwulomu hizbi.

Priest:- Isme şin'ate mihretu la'iléne.

People:- We'şidquse le'Igzee'abihér yihélu le'alem.

Priest:- Sibhat le'Ab, sibhat le'Wold, Sibhat le'Menfes Qidus.

People:- (Shall repeat his words.)

Priest:- yi'izénee wezelfenee wele'alem alem amen halléluya.

People:- (Shall repeat his words.)

Deacon:- Tensi'u leşelot

People:- Igzee'o tesahalene.

Priest:- Selam lekwulikimu.

he deacon then says “tensiu leşelot” even though we are already standing

- This means, focus on the prayer (spiritually stand).
- We respond by saying “Lord have mercy upon us” because we cannot “stand” by ourselves. We are too weak. Hence, we ask God to give us strength to “stand”.
- Priest (who is representing Christ) says “peace be unto you” which means may you have the strength to “focus” and stand.
- We respond by saying “with your spirit”.
 - “tensiu leşelot” was first recited by Adam just before Christ’s soul **descended to hades**.
 - He encouraged everyone to stand and ask for forgiveness.
 - Everyone else then stood and started asking for forgiveness.
 - When Christ entered hades He said to everyone “peace be on to you”.
 - Since death was defeated, **there was peace from that time on**.
 - Everyone else responded “with your spirit”.

WEEK 22: MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 6/14/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

SIRATE KIDASE

Asst. Deacon:- Pray for them who bring an oblation.

People:- Accept the oblation of our brethren, accept the oblation of our sisters, and ours also accept, our oblation and our offering.

Asst. Deacon:- şeliyu be'inte ile yabewi'u meba'i.

People:- tewekef meba'omu le'ahaw wetewekef meba'on le'ahat lenenee tewekef meba'ane weqwurbanene.

SIRATE KIDASE

- During Liturgy, we offer the sacrifice of: prayer, time and our body (both physical and mental).

Deacon:- This is the order of our fathers the Apostles: Let none Keep in his heart malice or revenge or envy or hatred towards his neighbor, or towards any other body.

* * *

Deacon:- Worship the Lord with fear.

People:- Before thee, Lord, we worship, and thee do we glorify.

Deacon:- sigidu le'Igzee'abihér befirihat.

People:- qidméke igzee'o nisegid wenisébihake.

- Shortly after, the deacon says:

- This reflects what the bible says: *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23*
 - If we have not reconciled with our brother, we should not be bringing **gifts (i.e offering of prayer, time and ourselves) to the church.**
- When the deacon says bow down with “fear”, he is talking about the type of fear one has for his father. It is a fear that a husband has for his wife and/or the fear a wife has for her husband.
- Once we bow down the deacon prays the **prayer of supplication.**
 - It is a plea towards God about our faith, congregation, patience of soul, holy prophets, Apostles, martyrs, clergy... amongst many things.
 - After each clause, the congregation responds by saying: “Amen Kyrie eleison”
- Once the prayer is over, the deacon sings “tinsue leselot”. The priest and the congregation proceed to the next part of Liturgy, “nisgid”.
- After the supplication prayer, also, the first of the 7 processions begins.
 - The procession consists of the assistant deacon, holding twaf (a type of candle), in front of the assistant priest. And behind the assistant priest is **the chief deacon.**
 - The assistant deacon symbolizes John the Baptist. We were first introduced to John the Baptist. Behind (or after) John the Baptist was Christ.
 - *He [John] was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. John 5:35*
 - The assistant priest, since he is behind the assistant deacon, symbolizes Christ.
 - The chief deacon symbolizes St. Stephen since the saint came after Christ.

- The 7 processions symbolizes the seven processions the Israelites took before destroying the walls of Jericho.
 - These processions are a way of asking God to destroy our “wall” of sin that we have built.
- Shortly after the first procession, the first of the five readings are read.
 - The first reading is conducted by the chief deacon. He turns his face towards the west and reads **one of the Pauline Epistles**.
 - The second reading is conducted by the assistant deacon. He turns his face towards the north and reads one of the **non-Pauline Epistles**.
 - The third reading is conducted by the assistant priest. He turns his face towards the south and reads **from the book of Acts**.
 - The fourth reading is conducted by the main priest. He turns his face towards the east and reads from **one of the four gospels**.
 - The four directions symbolizes how Christianity is being preached in the four corners of the world.
 - The four directions symbolizes the four rivers that flow down from the Garden of Eden.
 - *Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. ¹¹The name of the first is **Pishon**; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is **Gihon**; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush.¹⁴The name of the third river is **Hiddkel**;¹⁵ it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the **Euphrates**. **Genesis 2:10-13***
 - The readings being conducted in the four corners gives us life as the four rivers gives the plants in the Garden of Eden life.

- Before the gospel is read, women remove their covering on their head.
 - This is to remind all of us to remove the covering we might have placed on our hearts. During the gospel, there is nothing that should get between us and the gospel. The removal of the head covering is a symbolic way of removing the veil that we have placed around our hearts.
 - Once the gospel is read, the gospel goes around and we all kiss the bible.
 - We kiss is to proclaim and confess that we believe what we have heard.
 - We also kiss it to show and manifest how much we love the gospel.
- Before the chief priest reads the gospel, however, mesbak is chanted by the chief deacon and congregation.
- Misbak is a verse from Psalm.
 - Psalm is the only reading from the Old Testament. The reason for this is because, when compared to the other books in the Old Testament, it has many more prophecies about Christ. It also gives us hope since the prophecies tell us about Christ's second coming.
 - The deacon says the daily selected mesbak first, the congregation follows the deacon once he is done. The deacon repeats the misbak, the congregation then repeats the mesbak two times. Hence, the deacon and the congregation repeat the misbak for a total of 5 times, symbolizing the promise given to Adam (to save him after 5,500 years later).
- Once the gospel is read the deacons says:

Deacon:- Go forth, ye catechumens.

Deacon:- şasu ni'use kiristeeyan.

- The Liturgy up to this point, was mostly worship and educational. No mystery/mysteries have been revealed to the congregation. Now that we are preparing for the transfiguration of the Holy Bread and

Wine, we ask those who have not been baptized to leave since partaking in the Holy Communion requires **baptism**.

Deacon:- Pray for the peace of the one holy apostolic church orthodox in the Lord.

Deacon:- şeliyu be'inte selame béte kiristeeyan ahatee qidist guba'é inte hawariyat riti'it behabe Igzee'abihér.

- This prayer is conducted for the universal church that Christ established:
- This prayer is conducted for our personal parish church:
- Shortly after, the creed is recited.
 - Note: the creed (which includes the clause “we believe in baptism for the remission of sins...”)

Deacon:- Pray for this holy church and our congregation therein.

Deacon:- şeliyu be'inte zatee béte kiristeeyan qidist wemahiberene bewisteta.

People:- Bless our congregation and keep them in peace.

People:- mahiberene barike iqeb beselam.

is recited after the catechumens are asked to leave.

- The last section of Sirate Kidase is the section of liturgy when we “salute” each other.

Deacon:- Pray for the perfect peace and love. Salute one another with a holy salutation.

Deacon:- şeliyu be'inte selam fişimt wefiqir te'amihu bebeyinateekimu be'amiha qidisat.

People:- Christ our God, make us meet to salute one another with a holy salutation.

People:- Kiristos amlakine resiyene diliwane keme niti'amah bebeyinateene be'amiha qidisat.

- This salute is supposed to be for each other. The salute is to be genuine and is NOT supposed to symbolize or reflect the salute that Judas gave to Jesus.

WEEK 23: MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

OBJECTIVE:

FERE KIDASE

FERE KIDASE

* * *

Priest:- To these and to all grant rest to their souls and have mercy upon them. Thy Son whom Thou didst send from heaven to the womb of a virgin was conceived in her womb, and was made flesh, and Thy Son became known by the Holy Spirit.

Deacon:- Ye that are sitting, stand up.

Priest:- There stand before Thee thousand thousands and ten thousand times then thousand and the holy angels and archangels and Thy honorable beasts, each with six wings.

Thy honorable beasts, each with six wings.

Deacon:- Look to the east.

Priest:- With two of their wings they cover their face, with two of their wings they cover their feet, and with two of their wings they fly from end to end of the world.

Deacon:- Let us give heed.

* * *

Priest:- le'ilunee welekwulomu a'irf nefsomu wetesahalomu zefenoke imsemay weldeke wiste mahişene dingil teşewire bekerse siga kone weweldike te'awiqe imenfes qidus.

Deacon:- ile tinebiru tensi'u.

Priest:- leke lezeyiqewim qidméke a'ilafe a'ilafat weti'ilfeete a'ilafat qidusan mel'ikt weleeqane mela'ikt wekiburan insisake ile sidistu kinefeehomu.

kinefeehomu.

Deacon:- wiste şibah neşiru.

Priest:- beki'étu kinefeehomu yikedinu geşomu beki'étu kinefeehomu yikedinu agromu beki'étu kinefeehomu yiseru imşinf iske aşnafé alem.

Deacon:- nineşir

Priest:- And they all constantly hallow and praise Thee, with all them that hallow and praise Thee; receive also our hallowing which we utter unto Thee: Holy Holy Holy perfect Lord of hosts.

Deacon:- Answer ye.

People:- Holy Holy Holy, perfect Lord of hosts, heaven and earth are full of the holiness of Thy glory.

Priest:- wezelfe inke kwulomu keme keeyake yiqédisuke weywédisu misle kwulomu ile yiqédisuke weywédisuke.

adee tewekéf zezee'anehee qidasé ile zengileke Qidus Qidus Qidus Igzee'abihér šeba'ot fišum.

Deacon:- awsi'u.

People:- qidus qidus qidus Igzee'abihér šeba'ot fišum milu'i semayate wemidre qidisate sibhateeke.

- Just like we saw before, the deacon is telling us to “pay attention” when he tells us to “stand up”
- Then the deacon tells us to look towards **the east**.
 - Christ is referred to as “light” many times in the bible.
 - *I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. John 8:12*
 - As we know, the sun rises from the east, so if we want to see our “light” coming, we have to face the east.
 - *Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. 2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. 3 It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw—like the vision which I saw when I[a] came to destroy the city. The visions werelike the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4 And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. 5 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. Ezekiel 43:1*
 - Since Christ also came from (or was born from) the Virgin Mary, “look to the east” can also mean **think about the Virgin Mary**.

Deacon:- Priests, raise up your hands.

Deacon:- ansi'u ideweekimu qesawist.

- In this part, the deacon is instructing the two priests, the chief and helper priest, to raise their hand.
 - They are being told to raise their hand because they need to “get ready”.
 - The helper priest then picks up the mahifedat (the piece of clothing that wraps around the Holy Bread).
 - The removal of the clothing is symbolic of rolling away the rock that was used as a door for the tomb of Christ.
 - The main priest picks up the Holy Bread.
 - This is symbolic of Christ’s resurrection. **We are witnessing His resurrection again!**
 - The Holy Bread being separated from the piece of clothing is symbolic of the linen which was left behind after the body of Christ had separated (resurrected)

Priest:- Grant us to be untied through Thy Holy Spirit, and heal us by this oblation that we may live in Thee for ever.

Priest:- habene nihiber bezezee'ake Menfes Qidus. wefewisene bezintu pirsifora keme bike nihiyew zelekwulu alem wele'aleme alem.

Priest:- Blessed be the name of the Lord, and blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and Let the name of His glory be blessed. So be it, so be it, so be it blessed.

Priest:- buruk simu le'Igzee'abihér. weburuk zeyimes'i besime Igzee'abihér. weyitbarek sime sibhateehu leyikun leyikun buruke leyikun.

People:- Repeat his words.
* * *

People:- Repeat his words.
* * *

Priest:- Send the grace of the Holy Spirit upon us.

Priest:- fenu şega Menfes Qidus la'iléne .

from it.

- During this part of liturgy, many **inncorectly** assume that the Holy Bread and Wine transfigures to the actual flesh and blood of Christ.
 - It is the catholic church, who base their teaching on Thomas Aquinas, who belive in an “instantaneous” transfiguration of the Holy Bread and wine when the “Words of Institution” are recitedd.
 - This, however, greatly takes away of the power of the Anaphora. After all, why the need to recite the enitre anaphora if only this section was required for the transfiguration?
 - For this reason, the Orthodox Church believes that Kidase in its entirety is the process employed to transifgure the Holy Bread and Wine to the flesh and blood of Christ and rejects any “instanteneous” transfiguration.
- The closing of the curtains symbolize the period of the Old Testament. It symbolizes the time before we received our “light” Jesus Christ.

Asst. Deacon:- Open ye the gates,
princes.

Asst. Deacon:- arhisu hohate
mekwanint.

Deacon:- Ye Who are standing,
bow your heads.

Deacon:- ile tiqewimu atihitu
ri'isekimu..

- The assitant deacons says this standing outside.
 - The chief deacon then opens the “gates” or curtain for the assitant deacon.
 - The clergy inside the curtain (the priests and chief deacon) symbolize the disciples. In the New Testament Christ did NOT hide anyting from them.
 - The assitant deacon symbolizes the prophets of the Old Testmanet. The prophets of the Old Testament were “far away” since they were seperated by the “curtain” of sin that had divided man and God.
 - The opening of the curtians symbolize the fact that **Christ was curcified in public**.
 - Opening of the curtains signify opening of the heart. We have to allow Him to enter into our hearts.

Deacon:- Give heed.

Deacon:- neşir.

Priest:- Holy things for the holy.

Priest:- qidisat leqidusan.

People:- One is the Holy Father,
one is the Holy Son, one is the
Holy Spirit.

People:- ahadu Ab qidus, ahadu
Weld qidus, ahadu wi'itu Menfes
Qidus.

Priest:- The Lord be with you all

Priest:- Igzee'abihér misle
kwulikimu.

People:- And with Thy spirit

People:- misle menfesike.

➤ After we are instructed to bow down, and the prayers are recited, the deacon says:

➤ First the priest tells us that Holy Communion is for the "holy".

- We respond back by saying, only The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are holy.
- Priest responds back saying, since "you" are not holy may God be with you.

➤ After recognizing that we are NOT holy enough to take the Holy Communion, we respond with:

Priest:- Lord have compassion
upon us, O Christ: Lord. (3 times)

Priest:- Igzee'o meharena Kiristos.
(3 times)

**People:- The people shall repeat
his words three times.**

**People:- The people shall repeat
his words three times.**

Priest:- Lord, have compassion
upon us, O Christ Lord.. (3 times)

Priest:- Igzee'o meharena Kiristos.
(3 times)

**People:- The people shall repeat
his words three times.**

**People:- The people shall repeat
his words three times.**

Prest:- Lord have compassion upon
us, O Christ. (3 times)

Prest:- Igzee'o meharena Kiristos.
(3 times)

➤ The priest and the congregation says "igzio maherene kristos" 41 times

- The prayer for forgiveness symbolizes the prayer that Adam and Eve prayed
- The number 41 symbolizes the number of times that Christ was beat. Although Pontus Pilot only ordered Christ to be beat 40 time, the soldiers claimed that they kept "loosing count" and they

ended up beating him much longer. The extra "igzio maherene kristos" symbolizes the extra number of times that He was beat.

- Shortly after we say "igzio maherene kristos" the Holy Flesh and Blood of Christ is offered for the congregation.
 - Notice, after this point we do not refer to the sacrifice as Holy Bread and Wine since we believe that it has been transubstantiated.
- After we partake in the Holy Communion, the final prayers are recited.
 - Kidase officially concludes when the deacons says:

Deacon:- Go ye in peace.

Deacon:- itiwoo beselam.

- Now that we have Christ abiding within us, we have peace!

WEEK 24: MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 6/28/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

TYPES OF DEATHS

TYPES OF RESURRECTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE OF MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

TYPES OF DEATHS

- The first form of death is that of the flesh.
 - In this form, death is defined as the separation of the soul from the body.

- This death is experienced by nearly all men.
- There are some people who will not experience this death though.
- *What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 1 Corinthians 15:50-51*
- The second is **death of the spirit.**
 - This is a type of death we experience when we commit sin.
 - Sin is an action which causes us **to lose God.**
 - Since God is our source of life, by losing Him, we lose our life. Ergo, we die.
 - The father, in the Prodigal Son alluded to this:
 - *my son was dead and is alive again Luke 15:24*
 - Christ also talked about “spiritually” dead when He was talking to one of His disciples:
 - *“Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead Matthew 8:22*
- Eternal death is an irreversible death.
 - Lazarus died a physical death but Christ “reversed” it by bringing him to life.
 - When we repent, our spiritual death is “reversed”.
 - Once we are condemned to death for eternity, however, **we will be dead forever.**
 - In this form of death, our spiritual soul will be separated from God, and we will no longer feel His presence.
 - Having lost God and all the good He gives us, we will be left empty.
 - This will be our “punishment” for **not following God.**
 - By “punishment”, we mean the consequence that comes from the decision we make.

- If someone decides to jump off a building, and as a result breaks his hand, the breaking of the hand is his punishment for the bad decision he made.
- The next form of death, spiritual death to sin, is a **death that we all should strive to die!**
- If we die physically, we are no longer **available to this world.**
 - If we die spiritually to sin, therefore, we are no longer available to sin.
 - *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. **Colossians 3:5-6***
 - If we are unable to spiritually die to sin, then we will die an eternal death.

TYPES OF RESURRECTION

- The spiritual resurrection
- As discussed above, one of the forms of death is a spiritual death.
 - Unlike eternal death, spiritual death is reversible through repentance.
 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, **the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. John 5:25***
 - “the hour is coming” is referring to the hour of judgment. It is on this hour of judgment we find our ultimate faith of either **eternal death or eternal life.**
 - “the dead” are those who are sinning and thus have departed from God.
 - If they hear the voice of God, and repent “now”, they will live (i.e. resurrecting a spiritual death).
 - *Blessed and holy is he who has part in **the first resurrection.** Over such **the second death** has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. **Revelation 20:6.***

- “the first resurrection” refers to the spiritual resurrection.
- “the second death” refers to the physical death.
 - Since those who part in the “first resurrection” have repented, when they die the second death, they will be heading towards God to live forever. So it will have no power over them.

➤ The physical resurrection

- Since the physical death was the second death, the physical resurrection is the second resurrection.
- *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which **all who are in the graves** will hear His voice²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. **John 5:28-29***
 - “all who are in the graves” signifies that, unlike the first resurrection, everyone will partake in the second resurrection.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

- Although faith, by definition, is the ability to believe in something we do not see (or have not yet seen), God has provided us a very convincing reason for why we should have faith (or hope) for our second resurrection.
- That “reason” He has given us is the **resurrection of Jesus Christ**.
 - *For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! **1 Corinthians 15:17***
 - Since we have seen Christ’s resurrection, we know that the dead will rise.
 - *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. **Romans 8:11***

- In order gain the benefits of the second resurrection (eternal life), we must have the spirit of God inside our hearts.
 - If we do this, we will be repaid in heaven.
 - *And you will be blessed, because **they cannot repay you**; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14*
 - “they” refers to all the people that we help in this world. If they never pay us back here in this world, we will be paid in the kingdom of heaven.
- Christ also gave us an analogy to help us understand the hope that comes from the Mystery of Resurrection.
- *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John 12:23-25*
 - In order to see the fruits of a seed, one has to be able to let it “die” (by burying in the ground).
 - This means that we have to bury our desires of the flesh (i.e death to sin) willingly.
 - When we are buried physically, the seed we buried (i.e. good works) would produce good fruits (i.e. eternal life).
 - Christ, through the this analogy, is giving us hope of our resurrection.

WEEK 25: MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

OBJECTIVE:

GOD'S GRACE AND SALVATION

PREDESTINATION AND SALVATION

WHO WILL BE SAVED AND WHO WILL PERISH?

GOD'S GRACE AND SALVATION

- Are we saved because of our good works or because of God's grace?
 - Those who say we are solely saved by the grace of God base this belief by misinterpreting the writing's of Paul and by being persuaded **by St. Augustine's response to Pelagius.**
 - Note: although St. Augustine is canonized as a saint in many denominations (including Easter Orthodox Church), the Oriental Orthodox Church has not canonized him.
 - According to St. Augustine, on judgment day, Christ will save us based on the free "gift" of grace.
 - He (St. Augustine) feels as though our bodies have been plagued by sin and thus are incapable of doing good. He felt that we are susceptible to sin and will continue to sin.
 - He used the analogy of a balancing scale to illustrate this point. According to him, the scale has been calibrated on the side of evil. Therefore, naturally we gravitate towards it.
 - Since we are unable to good, God needs to come and save us.
 - According to Pelagius, on the other hand, we have a healthy "scale". This scale is unbiased and thus will enable us to do good or bad based on the "free will" that God has given us.

- He, therefore, thought that we are have to earn our way to the Kingdom of Heaven. If we do good, God will save us. If we do not do good, we will perish.
 - Since the bible speaks of both “free will” and “grace”, we need to know how we are saved.
 - *For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*
Romans 3:22-24.
 - *Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*
Mark 8:34
- According to the bible, grace **is a gift**.
 - *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain*
2 Corinthians 6:1
 - *Do not neglect the gift that is in you*
1 Timothy 4:14
 - In order to make grace a true “gift”, the gift giver (i.e. God) has to give us the gift **without** us doing anything to deserve it.
 - A reward, unlike a gift, is something we receive when we do something good.
 - With this in mind, if we are to say that we are saved **only** by God’s grace, we have to ask why everyone will not be saved on judgment day.
 - *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’*
Matthew 25:41-43

- *Although grace is a gift, however, not everyone will receive it (since they refuse to accept the gift).*
- If God's grace of salvation is truly a "gift" that we receive without deserving it, why do some get saved and some do not?
 - This means that God's "gift" is NOT offered to everyone, but only to those He favors.
 - This premise clearly goes against the bible: "*For there is no partiality with God*"
Romans 2:11
 - According to St. Augustine, we are ALL sinners and the only thing that can save us is His grace.
- The bible, however, makes it clear that God wants to save us all.
 - *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved 1*
Timothy 2:3-4
- Thus, when we combine the concepts together, we know that although "grace" is a free gift that is given to us, NOT everyone will receive this gift.
 - Some will choose to exercise their free gift and choose **NOT to accept the gift which is given to them.**
 - **EX:** Christ asked the man that was sick for 38 years, "*Do you want to be made well?*"
John 5:6

PREDESTINATION AND SALVATION

- The omniscient (all knowing) God knows who will accept the gift of salvation and enter into the kingdom of heaven and who will deny the gift.
 - But His foreknowledge of our decision does NOT interfere with our **free will.**

- If His foreknowledge did interfere with our free will, that means God is “choosing” some people to go to heaven and others to go to hell.
 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*
Romans 8:28-30.
 - ALL THINGS work together to **those who love God!** This means that it depends on us, and on our love towards God, rather than His love towards us.
 - He offers everyone the same destiny, but He has foreknowledge of those that will accept His gift and who will deny it.
 - **EX:** If you take a child to a candy store, you know they will be excited; but you did not interfere with their free will to make them get excited.

WHO WILL BE SAVED AND WHO WILL PERISH?

- As we can imagine, those who do NOT believe in God will perish.
 - *he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God **John 3:18***
- But will all the believers be saved?
 - *Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Matthew 7:21***
 - What is the “will” of the Father?
 - The Father wants us to: **have faith, be baptized, be confirmed, repent, receive communion, and have good works.**
 - Faith alone is NOT sufficient for salvation.

- *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. **James 2:14-17***
- According to the bible, salvation is NOT an event but it is "the story of the whole life".
 - *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us **who are being saved** it is the power of God. **1 Corinthians 1:18***
 - We are being saved, it is a continuing process.
- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **1 Peter 1:3-5***
- With this in mind, we have to wonder how the thief (feyatawi zema), the man who was crucified on the right side of Christ, was saved.
 - It appears at first glance that he was saved simply on "faith".
 - *Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ,[j] save Yourself and us." 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord,[k] remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." **Luke 23:39-43***
 - When we read the bible closely, however, there were about 10 good works that the thief performed.
 1. He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. He repented.
3. Confessed his sins (“we receive the due reward of our deeds”).
4. Held tremendous hope in spite of his evil life.
5. Defended the Lord.
6. Comforted the Virgin Mary when he said “this man has done nothing wrong”.
7. Second confession (complete confession). (“Lord remember me when You come in to Your kingdom”).
8. Endured mocking and insults.
9. When Christ was on the cross, the people gave Him sour wine to drink, but Christ did NOT drink it. He was thirsty. When the thief was confessing His sins, he was giving Him “spiritual water’. (Compare with John 4:1-26).
10. Endured till the end.

WEEK 26: MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

Date 7/19/2015 1:00 PM |

OBJECTIVE:

EVENTS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING

EVENTS ACCOMPANYING THE SECOND COMING

EVENTS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING

➤ When is He coming?

- The gospel makes it abundantly clear that **no one knows when He will be coming.**

- *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night 1 Peter 3:10*

- A thief does not announce the day of which he plans to come to your house. He simply comes **unannounced and uninvited** and takes away what your feel belongs to you.
- In the case of unbelievers, they think that their life belongs to them. They also have blocked their hearts and have NOT invited Christ to come in. When Christ comes for judgment, He will no longer be asking the unbelievers if He can come “in”, He will simply go and “take” their life away as punishment. For this reason, the unbelievers will see Him to be a type of a “thief”.

- *And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming;[a] go out to meet him*

- Matthew 25:6*

- For the believers though, they look forward for His arrival like a bride looks forward for the bridegroom’s arrival. Although believers may NOT know the exact second that He is coming, believers know that He is coming. So we should think of Him as a bridegroom NOT as a thief.

➤ Times of Restoration:

- Before the second coming of Christ, “all things” will be restored.

- What is being restored?

- The original sin destroyed our original image (i.e “God said, Let us create man in our image” **Genesis 1:26**). When we destroyed our original image, our goal/purpose in life was destroyed. We lost our Father, we lost our “home” and we lost our dignity.

- Our goal/purpose was is to **worship God, and to complete His will.**
- When Christ died for us on the cross, all the “tools” needed for salvation were given to us (i.e. 7 sacraments).
- When the gospel is preached across the four corners of the world, people will be baptized, they will confess and be in communion with Christ.
- This will allow their souls to be restored back to the way they were original created.
 - Once this happens, people will be able to worship God and be able to complete His will once again.
- How long is the restoration period?
 - It will be from the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ until the second coming of Christ.
- *Repent therefore and be converted, **that your sins may be blotted out**, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,[a] 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Act 3:19-21*
 - “Blotted out” is a term that was used in the ancient days when people used to write on tablets. Since erasers were not available at the time, when they wanted to remove something from the tablet, they would put wax on the tablet and the unwanted written “message” would be blotted out.
 - Our sins, much like the writing, will be “blotted out” when we put the wax of repentance on top of the tablet of our life story.

- “Whom heaven **must receive**” appear as if this verse was saying that heaven does NOT belong to Christ. Since Christ is the Son of Man, and since He willingly came “down” to this world to become Man, this term is used to show His humility.
- Once, He comes for the second time, however, the faithful who are in COMMUNION with him (which was made possible because of His humanity) will also be taken to heaven. Then heaven will also have to **receive the faithful**.
 - The fact that the faithful will be entering into heaven, thus, will be regarded **as the ultimate restoration**.

➤ The Great Tribulation (see Matthew 24 for details)

- The Beginning of Sorrows, Wars, Famines and Earthquake, False Christs, The love of many will grow cold, The Antichrist

➤ The Antichrist:

- In the book of Revelation, we read about a “beast” that will come from the earth. He will:
 - Perform great signs
 - Deceive many who dwell on earth
 - He will cause all people to receive a mark on their right hand or foreheads.
 - NO one will be able to buy or sell except those who have this mark or the name of the beast.
- *“Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” **Revelation 13:18***
 - “666” refers to his name. Each Greek alphabet corresponds to a number. When we add the number of the Beast’ name we should get 666.
 - There have been many speculations in the past about 666. One of the most intriguing was Adolf Hitler. (there are 6 letters in his first and last name).

- The “1,000 year reign” of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived and reigned with Christ for a[a] thousand years...** Now when the thousand years have expired, **Satan will be released from his prison** 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth **Revelation 20:4-8***
 - Contrary to what many believe, the “thousand” years is NOT to be taken literally.
 - *with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* **2 Peter 3:8**
 - Instead, this period spans from the time we received victory at the cross and goes until judgment day. Since Christ defeated death, death has no more power over us. And when we are in communion with Christ, we are able to “reign” with Christ. But on Judgment day, the devil will be released to rule over those who have received eternal death.
 - In essence, therefore, the thousand years reign is taking place **RIGHT NOW!**
 - *Now is the judgment of this world; **now the ruler of this world will be cast out.** 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.* **John 12:31-32**

EVENTS ACCOMPANYING THE SECOND COMING

- This world will be destroyed.
 - *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken* **Matthew 24:29**

➤ The Son of Man will come

○ *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven* **Matthew 24:30**

▪ The “sign”, according to our church fathers, is interpreted to be the “cross’.

- So when our Lord and Savior comes, everyone will be able to see the “cross”.
- When He comes, He will show His glory.
 - *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. **Revelation 1:7***
 - Those who did NOT worship Him (i.e. who pierced Him) during His lifetime will see His glory and mourn because they will understand that **they made a mistake.**

➤ The trumpet will sound and the Rapture will take place

- *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52.***

- As discussed before in an earlier class, the rapture is a phenomenon that will take place on judgment day when the people who are alive will “exchange” their ephemeral bodies with an eternal one as they are being taken up to heaven.

➤ Final judgment

- The judgment given will result in a reward for the righteous and punishment of the wicked.
- *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy[c]angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘**Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ...**’ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘**Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:” **Matthew 25:31-41*****

- The reward for the righteous will be to inherit the kingdom prepared

- Let us always have our eyes fixed on this kingdom. This is the reason we are Christians, because we have hope that one day we will inherit this kingdom.
- The punishment for the ungodly will be to enter into the everlasting fire prepared.