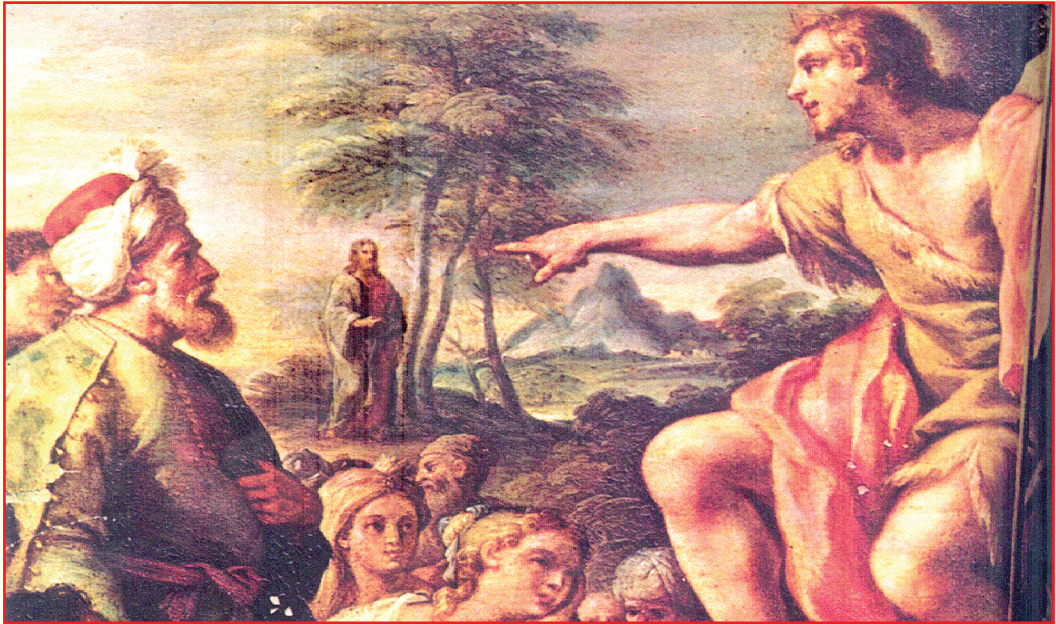


Lesson 15

PROMISES AND PROPHECIES ABOUT CHRIST



Prophets worked among the people of Israel for about a thousand years. God sent them. They constantly reminded the people of the need to keep untainted their faith in one God and to live according to the covenant that God had made with Israel. They tried to guide even the kings along the right path. The prophets warned that God would punish the people of God who live forgetting God and His commandments. At the same time they prophesied that God would never forsake Israel totally. When the kings of Israel ruled without heeding the instructions of the prophets, foreigners subjugated the nation. Quarrels and disquiet spread across the nation. The people longed for redemption. At that time, giving the message of love, the prophets told the people about Christ the saviour. The word 'Christ' means 'the anointed'.

Promises about the Saviour

God promised a Saviour when our first parents fell from grace to the depths of disgrace by their sin. God said to the serpent, the symbol of evil: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers, he shall strike your head and you will strike his heel” (Gen 3:15). It is Christ himself who strikes the head of the serpent. Through the prophets, God repeated the same promise that was made in the Garden of Eden.

Moses had promised the Israelites that God would send a prophet like himself as a Saviour for them. Moses told the people of Israel, “The Lord says: I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command” (Deut. 18:18). This promise raised the hope of a Saviour among the Israelites. Other Prophets also, through prophecies about a Saviour, instilled hope of the future in the people from time to time.

Prophecies about the Saviour

Prophecies of Isaiah

The most important among the prophecies about the Saviour is the 'Immanuel Prophecy' of Isaiah. 'Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah's teaching that Immanuel was the future king, was giving hope not just for Israel, but also for the whole world. “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continuously, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

In his Immanuel Prophecy, Isaiah mentions some rare qualities of the child. This Prophecy is fulfilled with the birth of Jesus. The word 'Immanuel' means 'God with us'. When Jesus was born on earth, God was living with us. In the prophecies of Isaiah we can see many things about Jesus. And all these are fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus began his public life by reading and explaining the Prophecy of Isaiah that says: "...He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor..." (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18).

Prophecies of Jeremiah

"The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety... David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel" (Jeremiah 33:14-17).

Other prophets also gave clear references regarding Christ. Prophets **Nathan** and **Jeremiah** pointed out Christ's lineage to David. Prophet Micah said that Christ existed for ages. Prophet Zechariah presents Christ as the king who comes in humility riding a young donkey. Prophet **Ezekiel** describes **the Christ who is to come, as a good shepherd**.

Witness of John the Baptist

John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, came to prepare the way for Christ. In the deserts of Judah he exhorted people to repent. The Baptist repeated the words of Isaiah who said: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:4-6).

John the Baptist exhorted people to be converted and be baptized (Luke 3:9- 11). Large numbers of people came to John to be baptized. The people who awaited a redeemer mistook John for the Christ. To the priests who came from Jerusalem John said emphatically that he was not the Christ.

Clearing the doubts of the people John said: "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal" (John. 1:26-27).

The next day, seeing Jesus coming towards him. John the Baptist declared: "Here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! **This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me**" (John. 1:29-30).

For centuries prophets had been preparing the way for Jesus, Son of God to be born as a man on earth. It was John the Baptist who completed that mission just before the start of the public life of Jesus. John ended his mission after revealing that Jesus is the lamb who is to sacrifice his own life in propitiation for all the sins of the world. Thus, through Jesus the Christ, the people of the world saw the salvation of God that the prophets had foretold.

Fulfillment of the Prophecies

All the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. The Old Testament people awaited Jesus. Their history culminated in the birth of Jesus. With the birth of Jesus the New Testament people came into being. It is the New Testament people who could enjoy the peace and the kingdom of the saviour, which the Old Testament people awaited with great expectations. Through Moses the old Israel was liberated from slavery in Egypt. Jesus liberated mankind from the bondage of darkness and gave rise to the New Israel. Thus the plan of salvation that started in the Garden of Eden continued through the Old Testament and reached completion in the New Testament.

We enjoy the fruits of God's plan of redemption. We must claim for ourselves, joyfully and gratefully, the redemption that Jesus obtained for us through his Crucifixion. We must lead our lives with the awareness of freedom that we are the children of God. Thus we can reach heaven one day and lead eternal life.

Let us Pray

O Jesus, the fulfillment of all prophecies, help us to accept you as our saviour.

Read the word of God and narrate

Narrate the event of the birth of Jesus
(Matthew 1:18-25).



Word of God for our Guidance

“He must increase, but I must decrease”
(John 3:30).

My decision

Like John the Baptist, who introduced Jesus to the world,
I will also introduce Jesus to my friends.

Let us do

Make a Christmas greeting card



Let us find out the answer

1. What is the meaning of the word Messiah?
2. What is important of all the prophecies of Isiah?
3. When did the Emmanuel prophecy fulfill?
4. What was John the Baptist, the last prophet sent for?
5. What did John the Baptist say seeing Jesus coming to him?

