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VOICE OF JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM CHRISTIAN MISSION

CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS

Beware the Yeast of the Pharisees

(Based on an article by Robert Dick)

In Matthew 16:6 Jesus says to the disciples: "Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Leaven of the Pharisees"—it's a curious phrase. Why did Christ feel compelled to warn His disciples to avoid it? Would you recognize this "leavening" if you saw it today? The disciples did not at first understand what He meant. Christ called the Pharisees hypocrites in verse 3, but the disciples didn't automatically assume a connection.

It is quite likely the disciples were initially blinded by a guilty conscience. They thought they had received a subtle scolding because no one had remembered to purchase food for the group (Matthew:16:7). Christ explained that He wasn't dependent upon whether they remembered to buy groceries, after all, hadn't He just fed a huge multitude with seven loaves and a few fish? With their guilty consciences relieved, they hit upon His true intent which is described in verse 12, "Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

The leaven of the Pharisees is more than hypocrisy; it is also their doctrine. But how or why is their doctrine equated to leaven? We will find as we go along that there is an inextricable link between the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the doctrines of the Pharisees.

Doctrine and Hypocrisy

The clearest connection between the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and their doctrine is seen in Mark:7:1-9 where the Pharisees complained about the disciples eating with unwashed hands. It should be understood that the traditions, or rulings, passed down generation to generation by the wise men of the Pharisaical persuasion took on the power of law. To the mind of a Pharisee the sayings of their elders were as binding as the Scriptures. In fact Christ implies they were even seen as more binding than the law of God if the two came into conflict. To Christ this was hypocritical. How can a body of men who claim to be the most righteous observers of the law of God create traditions that nullify the law of God and still claim righteousness? This didn't make sense. Christ saw their doctrines, in this case, as hypocritical.

As we continue in Mark 7, we can see the conflict. The Pharisees came to Christ and challenged, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (Mark:7:5). Christ responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, and in vain they worship Me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (Mark:7:6-7). Christ continued His rebuke in Mark:7:8-13, giving examples of traditions passed down by the elders that directly contravened the law of God. His final summation was that in many areas of advice, ruling and even law they had put aside the law of God preferring their traditions instead. To Christ this was hypocritical of a body that claimed superior righteousness since the laws of God are righteousness (Psalm:119:172).

May we learn from the cautionary words of Christ—beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. May we determine all the more to worship God with a sincere and honest heart, coupled with a respect for both the letter and the spirit of His Word.



FAITH 'N' LIFE

Psalm 62 5-7:

5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.



CHURCH HISTORY

<http://www.stbarsaumochurch.com/OurChurch/ChurchHistory/tabid/68/Default.aspx>

The Syriac Language in Antioch

The Syriac language is the Aramaic language itself, and the Arameans are the Syrians themselves. He who has made a distinction between them has erred. Throughout the old times, the name Syriac appeared along with the name Aramaic in describing the speakers of that language; hence it is a linguistic name. Following the spread of Christianity, the name Syriac came to be preferred over the name Aramaic. The disciples, the first preachers of Christianity, were Syriac-speakers. In the early centuries, when it was revealed that the disciples spoke Syriac, every Aramaean who accepted their teachings and became a Christian changed his original Aramaic identity to a Syriac one. He would be proud to be called a Syriac. As a result, the name Syriac came to imply the Christian faith, while the name Aramaic had a pagan connotation. This is evident from the Syriac translation of the Bible, known as the "Peshitto" or 'simple', which used the name Aramaic to distinguish a pagan from a Christian.⁹ This is how the use of the term Aramaic to refer to Christians almost vanished in the land of Aram to be replaced by the term Syriac which became synonymous to Christianity.

Hence, the term 'Syrian Church' means the Christian Church. The Syriac language is also known as the Aramaic. Originally it was the language of the Arameans¹⁰ who had settled since the 15th century BC in the lands of Aram-Damascus and Aram-Naharin (Mesopotamia).¹¹

The Aramaic language had spread far and wide in the ancient world, to the extent that the alphabets of many other Oriental languages were derived from Aramaic.¹² During the reign of King Nabo Blassar, it was the official language of the Babylonian Court, and during the reign of Darius the Great (521 - 486 BC), it was the official language between the various districts of the Persian Empire.¹³ It had become a *lingua franca* or 'an international language'¹⁴ across the entire East for a long period of time. The Jews had learned it and used it since the Babylonian conquest in the fifth century BC as their common language replacing their own Hebrew language which they had forgotten. Jesus Christ and his disciples spoke Syriac as well.¹⁵

Thereafter, Syriac remained dominant over a large section of the Orient, until the end of the 7th century AD when Arabic became popular and Syriac started to decline gradually.¹⁶ Some of its dialects, however, are still being used in Tur Abdin, Turkey, the villages around Mosul and other villages in Northern Iraq and in Ma'lula, a village near Damascus, Syria. The trace of its influence is obvious today in the name of several cities and villages in the Middle East and in their common dialects.¹⁷

At the dawn of Christianity, Syriac was the mother tongue of the original inhabitants of Antioch, especially of those living in its suburbs, as well as those in the interior parts of Syria.¹⁸ Syriac was also the language of the Jewish immigrants in Antioch, whereas Greek was the language of the colonists of the Greek community brought in by the Seleucids.¹⁹

The historian Dr. Philip Hitti states that the English name 'Syrian', in its linguistic sense, refers to all the people who speak Syriac (Aramaic), among them those in Iraq and Iran. In its religious sense, it refers to the followers of the Ancient Syrian Church, some of whom are in Southern India. For a Roman, 'a Syrian' (Syrus) meant any person speaking Syriac.

The Church of Antioch used the Syriac language in its religious rites. She celebrated the first Eucharist²⁰ using the Syriac liturgy written by St. James, the brother of our Lord, Archbishop of Jerusalem. This same liturgy is used in the Syrian Orthodox Church all over the world to this day. Today, the liturgy is usually celebrated in Syriac as well as in local languages.

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(To be continued.. Next Month "Ecclesial Status of the Church of Antioch")

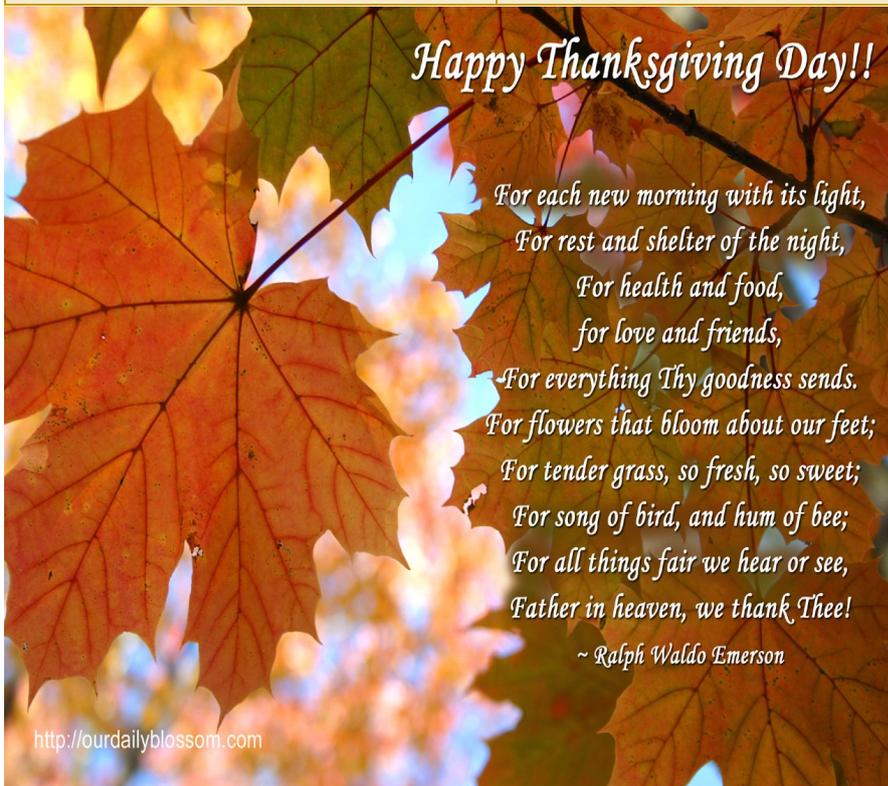
GREETINGS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Manoj Abraham	October 1
Sam K	October 1
Paily Njarlagattil	October 6
Anu Jinu	October 9
Kunjumol Thomas	October 15
Joel Jacob	October 15
Reshma Merin Thomas	October 18
Thomas	October 19
Dr. Jacob Punnaran	October 20
Hana Manoj	October 23
Swapna Jacob	October 23
Julia Jacob	October 31

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Bindu Jacob & Bincy Samuel	Oct 16
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EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,
 Please contribute your articles to the newsletter. Let others be blessed by your talent.
 Please mail articles for the next edition to editor4jcm@gmail.com.
 Warm regards,
 Suraj Mathew, Editor Reena George, Editor editor4jcm@gmail.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMINGS

- Morning Prayer at 8.15 am**
- Holy Mass at 8.30 am**
- Food and socialization 9:30 am to 10:30 am**
- Sunday School and Malayalam Classes 10:30 am to 11 am**

JERUSALEM CHRISTIAN MISSION, 72 BIRCHMOUNT RD, SCARBOROUGH, ON, CANADA M1N 3J6

WWW.JERUSALEMCHRISTIANMISSION.COM

CONTACT: REV. FR. V.V. PAULOSE EMAIL: PAULOSEACHEN.VV@GMAIL.COM CELLULAR: 4165050107

BIBLE QUIZ

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| <p>1) In what book of the Bible will you find the Ten Commandments?
 Genesis
 Exodus
 Leviticus
 Numbers</p> <p>2) Where was the Law given to Moses?
 Mount Ararat
 Mount Everest
 Mount Sinai
 Mount Carmel</p> <p>3) What did God use to write on the stone tables?
 A finger
 A rock
 The wind
 Flowing water</p> <p>4) How long was Moses gone from the people as He talked to God on the mountain and received the Ten Commandments?
 7 days
 40 days
 3 months
 7 months</p> <p>5) What caused Moses to break the tablets on which the 10 Commandments were written?
 God told him to as the people were full of sin
 His people were worshipping an idol
 Aaron lied to him
 Joshua sinned against God</p> <p>6) In what were the Ten Commandments kept?
 Altar</p> | <p>Stone
 Ark
 Pillar</p> <p>David's best friend was
 Jonathan
 Abner
 Absalom
 Saul</p> <p>8) Who was David's father?
 Solomon
 Jesse
 Abraham
 Moses</p> <p>9) What was the name of David's oldest brother?
 Hophni
 Shammah
 Abinadab
 Eliab</p> <p>10) What animals did David slay as a young shepherd?
 Bear and leopard
 Leopard and lion
 Wolf and bear
 Lion and bear</p> |
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Compiled by Vijay Joseph

Please send in your answers before 15th Oct 2014 only to editor4jcm@gmail.com. The correct answers and name of the person with 1st all correct answers will be published in the next edition.

