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CHAPTER ONE

1. MARIOLOGY

1.1 THE VIRGIN MARY AND HER EARLY LIFE REVEALED THROUGH SCRIPTURES

The Holy Virgin Mary was mystically formulated in the minds of the generation of Abraham, the children of hope who anticipated the advent of the Messiah. St. Mary was conceived in the mind of God as part of His redemptive plan. She would bear offspring powerful enough to crush the head of the serpent as predicted in Genesis 3:15, which is frequently identified as the proto evangelium - the first annunciation of the gospel. In his vision, St. John the Evangelist saw the same woman being persecuted by the serpent (Rev 12:l).As awareness grew about God's redemptive plan and people looked forward to that day more and more eagerly, prophecies referring to the glorious woman became more commonplace.

Later forecasters made clear that the woman who was destined to defeat Satan was St. Mary, the bearer of God. Seven hundred years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the woman who had been anticipated by millions was about to appear:" Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is 7:14). Of her powerful offspring and His mission of emancipation, the same prophet added: "For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian....For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:4-7).

Holy Tradition says of St. Mary's parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, that they were a couple known for their strict observance of God's law, uprightness of faith, and saintliness. However, in spite of their yearning for a child, St. Anne remained infertile for most of her life. Vowing to

dedicate their child to the service of God, they were finally given a daughter predestined to be the bearer of the awaited Messiah. On the ninth day after the birth, they summoned their family

members and neighbors to the naming ceremony and gave her the name Mariam.[1]

According to Vassall-Phillips, the name Mariam means Sovereign Lady or Princessin both Greek and Latin.[2] Despite the fact that she was her parents' only child, the Holy Virgin Mary pleased St. Joachim and St. Anne in her glorious life. Solomon writes of her: "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bares her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" (Song of Songs 6:9).

St. Epiphanius (315-403 AD), a well-known exponent of the Orthodox Church in the patristic period, provides a summarized account of the righteous life of the Virgin's family, her exceptional saintliness, and the glorious contributions she made to the salvation of the world. His narrative reads in part:

From the root of Jesse sprung King David and from the family of King David the holy Virgin holy I say and the daughter of holy men. Her parents were Joachim and Anne, who pleased God in their life, and bore fruit also pleasing to Him —even the holy Virgin Mary, at once the Temple and the Mother of God. These three, moreover, Joachim, Anne and Mary, offered to the Trinity a sacrifice of praise. For Joachim is interpreted the Preparation of the Lord, since it was from him that the Temple of the Lord was prepared, even the Virgin. Anne is interpreted Grace, because Joachim and Anne received grace, after having prayed, to bear such fruit, by obtaining the holy Virgin. For whilst Joachim prayed on the mountain, Anne prayed in her garden. Anne then conceived and gave birth to Heaven and the Throne of the Cherubim, the holy child Mary. For she will be found to be Heaven, a Temple and a Throne, since she, whose name of Mary we are wont to interpret Lady and also Hope, gave birth to the Lord—who is the Hope of the whole world—that is, to Christ. Again, this Name of Mary is interpreted Myrrh of the Sea. By myrrh may be understood—and this is my opinion—immortality, since she was to bring forth the immortal Pearl in the sea—that is, in the world. Moreover, the Virgin brought serenity and calm to the sea, that is to the whole world, by giving birth to Christ, who is a Haven of rest. The

1 O. R, Vassall-Phillips, *The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion* (London: Bums, Oates &Washboume, 1922), pp. 5-6.
2 O. R, Vassall-Phillips, *The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion* (London: Bums, Oates &Washboume, 1922), p. 6.

Blessed Name of the Glorious Virgin Mary is also interpreted, She who is full of light, since she was illumined by the Son of God and has enlightened all who believe in the Trinity, even to the ends of the earth.[3]

1.2 THE ROLE OF VIRGIN MARY IN THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SALVATION

Soteriologically, the life of St. Mary is most closely linked with the redemptive works of God. This is precisely because whenever we remember what God has done in the economy - Christ's miraculous virgin birth, His flight into Egypt, His public ministry. and especially His crucifixion and sacrificial death, it is impossible to separate the Mother of God from salvation history. This is mainly because she is the one who gave birth to the Savior, who is persecuted with Him during their flight in to Egypt and is associated with His public ministry and who was never departed from Him even at the last moment beneath the Holy Cross. All of these steps clearly show the vigorous involvement of St. Mary in the economy of salvation.

1.3 BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church uses typological interpretation in its reading of the Biblical witnesses on St. Mary. In the Bible the Blessed Virgin Mary is seen to be symbolically prefigured and typologically typified with various symbols and ideals at the time of the patriarchs. She is also seen to have been revealed in manifold prophecies throughout the Old Testament. Besides, she is also mentioned openly in the New Testament especially due to her significant role in the economy of salvation. In asserting this, the Anaphora titled with her name testifies: "O Virgin, thou art the ideal and the prophecy of the prophets; the favor of the apostles, the mother of martyrs; the sister of angels.,, Nevertheless, a thorough discussion of each and every ideal and prophecy in this limited research paper would be beyond the scope of the thesis. For that reason, it is only a couple of them are taken in to consideration due to their strong soteriological importance. Amongst her numerous ideals and symbols are the Promised Woman (i. e., the New Eve), the Ark of Noah, the Thicket of Isaac and the Ladder of Jacob. In addition, these symbols also unfold the richness and simplicity of the Mariological tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, especially in accordance to its strong relationship

[3] O. R, Vassall-Phillips, *The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion* (London: Bums, Oates &Washboume, 1922), p. 6.

with soteriology.

1.4 THE PROMISED WOMAN OF THE NEW EVE

The Genesis account of the promised Woman is regarded as the forerunner of the divine plan of salvation to humanity. Thus, the prophetic foreshadowing of this woman is the very first divine hope of salvation given to Adam and Eve after their fall into sin. Thus said the LORD God, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15). Basically, this divine promise vividly highlights the thematic significance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mystery of the incarnation, and the subsequent saving works of God to fallen humanity. Interestingly, Judith A. Bauer appropriately refers to this divine promise as, "the first pledge of the Good News.,

Soteriologically, this divine promise of salvation refers to the continuing enmity that exists between the New Eve (i.e., the Holy Virgin Mary) and the devil (Rev 12:1); and it also implies the enmity between her offspring (i.e., Christ) and the angels of the devil. Remarkably, this ongoing enmity became quite evident during the crucifixion of the Savior on the Calvary. According to Ethiopian Tewahedo interpretation of the Psalmist's prophecy: "You crushed the heads of Leviathan" , Christ, the Son of the Blessed Virgin, struck the head of the devil on His mighty cross. Consequently, the devil had stricken the feet of the Savior with nails upon the cross (In 19:23, 34; 20:25).

In referring to this surpassing mystery of salvation, St. Paul aptly speaks: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ... in order to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children" (Gal 4:4-5). In the light of this Pauline assertion, it could be clearly understood that the given divine promise of salvation has been realized through St. Mary. Interestingly, Ethiopian exegetes correlate the designation 'woman' that Christ particularly used to address to His beloved mother in the Gospel with her ideal of the 'promised woman' as prefigured in the First Testament. To clarify this, it suffices to mention what Christ the Savior said to His mother, the Holy Virgin Mary at the Wedding feast at Cana as well as when He saw her beneath the cross at Calvary. That is why St. John the evangelist and the beloved disciple of Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit writes, "And Jesus said to

her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you, and to me?'" (In 2:4); "Woman, here is your son" (In19:26).

Typically, it is quite fascinating to note the striking parallel that exists between the First Eve and St. Mary, the Second Eve. Unlike the disobedience of Eve, which brought about sin and death and curse unto humankind, the obedience of the Holy Virgin (i.e., the New Eve) brought about life and blessing to fallen humanity. In asserting this, one of the texts of the Praise of Mary reads:

The Virgin Mary, the God-bearer, hath become the object of the boast of us all, because through her was destroyed the curse of olden time, which rested upon our race, through the wickedness which the woman committed (when) she ate (of the tree). Through Eve was the door of the Garden shut fast, and because of Mary the Virgin it hath been opened to us again. It is allotted to us to eat of the Tree of Life, that is to say, the body of Christ and His precious Blood.,, As he reflected on St. Mary's prominent role in the economy of salvation, St. Irenaeus shared the same view and rightly referred to the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Eve's Advocate Hence, the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their subsequent expulsion from paradise anticipated their restoration through the wonderful mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God from the New Eve, the Holy Virgin Mary. Also of significance in this regard is the Ethiopian Church' tradition, which maintains that the Blessed Virgin was kept in God's mind even before the creation of the world. This in tom reveals the very fact that the incarnation of the Son of God is not only just a divine response to the fall Rather, it had been planned and designed eternally by God. Accordingly, the divine Logos made use of the flesh of St. Mary as His redemptive instrument (opyavov) the same way just as the devil had made use of the serpent's flesh for his tricky deception (Gen 3:14; 1 Jn 3:8). Exceedingly, one of the Marian hymns illustrates this saying: "Thou was named 'Beloved Woman,' 0 blessed among women Our Redeemer Jesus Christ became incarnate of thee without change, and became the Mediator of the New Covenant and by the shedding of His Holy Blood, He purified the believers ... And because of this we all magnify thee, O our Lady, thou ever pure God bearer.

Thus, the Holy Virgin is prefigured symbolically and foreshadowed prophetically in

the Old Testament, especially in relation with her supreme role in the economy of salvation. St. Gabriel's Annunciation to St. Mary and subsequently her faithful consent and humble obedience to God is looking forward to the Nativity, the advent of the Messiah, which in tom inaugurates the New Testament. To this end, the four Gospels in general, and that of St. Luke's in particular, give a detailed account of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Of particular interest is the Lukan account with its richness of language and the vivid imagery used in describing her personality and showing her own words and the divine favor bestowed upon her.

Soteriological, Ethiopian Mariology considers the exuberant scene of the Annunciation in which the archangel St. Gabriel appeared to St. Mary as the reversal of the tricky appearance of the devil, the fallen angel that brought about death and corruption to humankind. Thus, the mystery of the incarnation is the ultimate loving response of the ever-gracious God to fallen humanity.

As far as the fall of humanity is concerned, the consent of Eve to the deceptive words of the devil, the fallen angel is a parallel case (Gen 3:4-6). Consequently, this became a leading cause for the transgression and subsequent condemnation of humankind to death and corruption. 59 In contrast to Eve's disobedience, however, St. Mary, the New Eve, has reversed the case through her willful and faithful consent to St. Gabriel's glorious words of annunciation. Accordingly, her obedience has made the Incarnation possible (Lk 1:28-38).

Remarkably, the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary has become the culmination of the Old Testament prophecy. This is vividly asserted in the famous phrase of the Church's Marian hymn, "With the words of his tidings, the Holy Gabriel sealed the prophecy of the prophets. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church essentially considers the Lukan prologue of the annunciation episode as the basic foundation of its Christological reflections and Marian devotion as well. Moreover, the Church has also regarded this significant event to be the cornerstone for its dynamic stereological implications mainly due to its strong relationship Within Christology. Hence, the annunciation is seen as a profoundly "world-changing=" phenomenon.

By virtue of her own willful consent and faithful obedience, freely given to the realization of the divine plan of salvation at the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin

Mary directly cooperated in the fulfillment of the saving acts of God through incarnation. Accordingly, Ethiopic Mariology articulates the stereological implication of the annunciation: "As through the words of deception of Satan, the Angel of Error, the curtain of darkness was spread over the whole world, so through the words of the tidings of Gabriel, the Angel of Truth, the light of life was spread in the whole world." In amplifying the soteriological role of St. Mary, St. Yard, the famous hymnologist of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church remarks, "We have become quite closer from the earth to the highest heaven because of you since the Son of God became incarnated from you.,,63Evidently, this in turn vividly shows her decisive role in the economy of salvation. Abba Giorgis, who is also known as the Ethiopian Cyril, colorfully states, "If you seek Eve, then you shall find her there in the heavenly wedding feast as she is rejoicing in her daughter (i.e., St. Mary- the New Eve). For St. Mary has become the New Eve, who brought about salvation to her wounds.', According to him, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the tree of life from whose fruit we all shall eat and live forever. So we all are saved through her and shall become alive eternally by the partaking of the Body and Blood of her beloved Son Jesus Christ. Above all, it is quite evident that we are sanctified with the precious blood of her Son throughout the ages. In turn we have become pure and holy through the living water and blood sprung from the pierced side of her beloved Son, Christ our Savior On 19:34).

The Role of St. Mary in the our Salvation In the study of Mary as the hope of humanity we have seen the relation of Mariology to Christology.

The relation consists in the fact that Mary gave us the Son of God who brought “fallen humanity” back to God the Father. All the biblical symbols that Mar Jacob utilized for this purpose designate the interconnection between Christology and Mariology. The main aspects of this chapter can be delineated as follows

• 1) The “restoration of humanity” takes place with the incarnation and Mary gives a leading role in it. From the homily On the Virgin, let us recapture Mar Jacob’s line of thought. Blessed is she, for by means of her, joy came to Adam’s race; through her the fallen arose who had been cast down from the house of the Father.

• 2) Mary, as the forerunner of the Church in her pilgrim way, is a model for the Church. Thus Mary is the type of the Church.

• 3) We have also seen in this chapter the relevance of ecclesial, sacramental life. For example, in the symbol of the “Ship of treasures” we have seen that the desolate earth is enriched by the treasures, and in the light of Mar Jacob’s work we understand the treasures as faith, Baptism and Eucharist.

• 4) In bringing out the theme of salvation through the symbol of the “new pitcher of Elisha”, Mar Jacob has effectively pointed to the interconnectedness between Mariology and Christology. We will conclude this chapter with the beautiful words that Mar Jacob puts into the mouth of Mary as she bears her Son in her womb.

• In order to have the right understanding of Mar Jacob’s conception on the participation of Mary in the redemption, it is necessary to have a fuller knowledge of his conception of the redemption. According to Mar Jacob divine mercy is the source of salvation. Christ came down to redeem fallen humanity. After Adam had been defeated, humankind took to idol worship and was subject to death. In order to redeem the world from idol worship and death, Christ “the fashioner of babes”, fashioned for Himself a body in the womb of Mary.

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• Mar Jacob’s thoughts on the divine motherhood of Mary. Here the various biblical symbols employed to describe this mystery are briefly analysed. They are: “ark of the covenant”, “second heaven”, “shining castle”, “pure temple”, “celestial chariot”, “new well”, “tabernacle”, and the “cloud of Mount Sinai.”

• The symbolic presentation of Mary as the “ark of the covenant” remains unique. In calling Mary the “ark of the covenant”, Mar Jacob convinced the readers that Mary’s character was excellent without any spot, and just like pure stainless gold, she was the worthiest person in the whole of humanity in whom the Son of God dwelt.

• Soteriologically, the life of St. Mary is most closely linked with the redemptive works of God. This is precisely because whenever we remember what God has done in the economy - Christ's miraculous virgin birth, His flight into Egypt, His public ministry. And especially His crucifixion and sacrificial death, it is impossible to separate the Mother of God from salvation history.

• This is mainly because she is the one who gave birth to the Savior, who is persecuted with Him during their flight in to Egypt and is associated with His public ministry and who was never departed from Him even at the last moment beneath the Holy Cross. All of these steps clearly show the vigorous involvement of St. Mary in the economy of salvation.

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• Through Eve was the door of the Garden shut fast, and because of Mary the Virgin it hath been opened to us again. It is allotted to us to eat of the Tree of Life, that is to say, the body of Christ and His precious Blood. As he reflected on St. Mary's prominent role in the economy of salvation.

• St. Irenaeus shared the same view and rightly referred to the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Eve's Advocate Hence, the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their subsequent expulsion from paradise anticipated their restoration through the wonderful mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God from the New Eve, the Holy Virgin Mary.

• Thus, the Holy Virgin is prefigured symbolically and foreshadowed prophetically in the Old Testament, especially in relation with her supreme role in the economy of salvation. St. Gabriel's Annunciation to St. Mary and subsequently her faithful consent and humble obedience to God is looking forward to the Nativity, the advent of the Messiah, which in tom inaugurates the New Testament. St. Yard, the famous hymnologist of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church remarks, "We have become quite closer from the earth to the highest heaven because of you since the Son of God became incarnated from you.,,

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• ኤራቅሊስ ፵ ፷ • ፲፷፤ኦ ከርሥ ዘተጽሕፈ ውስቴታ መጽሐፈ ግእዛን እምግብርናት ለኵሉ ሰብእ። ለሰው ሁሉ ከመገዛት የነፃነት መጽሐፍ ለተጻፈባት ማለት ሰውን ሁሉ ከግብርናተ ዲያብሎስ የለየ ክርስቶስ ለተፀነሰባት መንፈስ ቅዱስ ላደረባት ማኅፀን አንክሮ ይገባል። ኦ ከርሥ ዘተፀ ውረ ውስቴታ ንዋየ ሐቅል ዘይትቃወሞ ለሞት በእንቲአነ። ስለኛ ሞትን የሚቃ ወም የበዳ ፀብት የተሰቀለባት ዘተገብረ ቢል የተለጎጸባት ማለት ሞትን ድል የነሣባት ክርስቶስ ላደረባት ለተገኘባት ማኅፀን አንክሮ ይገባል።

• “በእንተ ሔዋን ተዓጽወ ሞኅተ ገነት፥ ወበእንተ ማርያም ድንግል፥ ተርኅወ ለነ ዳግመ፥ ከፈለነ ንብላዕ እምዕፀ ሕይወት። ዘውእቱ ሥጋሁ ለክርስቶስ፥ ወደሙ ክቡር። [The gate of Paradise was shut because of Eve; and it is re-opened for us on account of the Virgin Mary. He made us eat from the Tree of Life, which is the precious body and blood of Christ].

• “በከመ ይቤ ኢሳይያስ፥ ‘ትወጽእ በትር እምሥርወ ዕሤይ፥ ወየዓርግ ጽጌ እምጕንዱ።’ ውእቱኬ ወልድ ውእቱ። ወአልቦ ማኅለቅት ለመንግሥቱ። [As Isaiah said, ‘A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots’ (Isa. 11:1); it is the Son to Whose reign there is no end].

• “ቀዳሚሁ ቃል፥ ነሥአ መሬተ እምድር፥ ወለሐኰ ለአዳም፥ በዘዚአሁ አርአያ ወአምሳል። ቀዳሚሁ ቃል እምአብ ውእቱ፥ እምድኅረ ለሐኰ ለአዳም፥ ርእየ በውስቴቱ ብእሲተ፥ ከመ ባሕርይ ፅዕዱተ ወብርኅተ፥ ለውሉደ ሰብእ ትኵን መድኃኒተ።

[The eternal Word took dust from the earth and fashioned Adam in His own image and likeness. The eternal Word is from the Father. After He fashioned Adam, He saw a woman in him that was like a pure and radiant pearl that is to be a medicine for humankind.

• “ኢየሐፅፅ ወልድ እምህላዌሁ ለአብ፥ እንዘ ሀሎ ምድረ፥ ኀቤነ ነገረነ ዛናከ። ወማርያምሰ ተንከተመ እግዙአብሔር፥ ኮነት ለነ። ዚቲ ይእቲ ትምክህትነ። ስምዓ ግዕዛንነ። ተወልደ መድኃኒነ፥ ፍሥሐነ ወክብርነ።

[The Son was not diminished from the existence of the Father. While on earth, He told us about Your news. And Mary has become the ladder of God for us. She is our pride, the emblem of our deliverance. Our Savior, Who is our joy and glory was born. Lastly, the prophet Daniel saw an image of the divine maternity of the Holy Virgin in the form of a high mountain from which is found a stone which crushed the great image into dust whose remnants are carried away by the wind and saved the people: "But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan 2:34-35). Remarkably, the stone came forth from the mountain without being pushed with human hand. Referring to this, the Anaphora of St. Mary aptly says, "Thou was the first giving birth without intercourse of which Daniel (also spoke)." The coming down of the stone from the mountain without the aid of a human hand symbolizes the virgin birth of the Savior from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

• Thus, this prophetic vision is meant to assert the divine maternity of the Holy Virgin Mother of God. In highlighting the stereological significance of this remarkable vision, the Marian hymn of Ethiopian Church articulates: "This is the stone which Daniel the prophet saw, which was hewn from a high mountain without hands, that is to say the Word going forth from the Father. He came and became incarnate of the Virgin without seed of man, and delivered us.

• As Ethiopian exegetes allegorized the stereological implication of this image, the stone symbolizes the divine word of God; its coming from a high mountain shows the humble descent of the Son of God from the heavenly bosom of His Father; and the coming of the stone down from the mountain without the aid of human hands elucidates the incarnation of the Word from a Virgin mother without a human father. Besides, it is quite interesting to note how this Marian hymn particularly emphasizes the salvation of humanity as the ultimate purpose of the incarnation. Most importantly, in this remarkable vision Daniel reveals that the stone, cut out from a high mountain without human hand, struck the great image and became like a mountain. Soteriologically, this seems to have foreshadowed the divinization of the flesh by virtue of the incarnation,

After cursing the Evil Dragon for misguiding Adam and Eve, God promised to send a woman whose offspring would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). According to Orthodox theologians, this "woman" is the Virgin Mary and her "offspring" is Christ. For this reason,

Christ used the Biblical term "woman" to refer to His beloved Mother (Jn.2:4; 19:26), indicating that the Virgin Mary is the New Eve and the fulfillment of the prophecy. Rather than dishonoring St. Mary, the term "woman" exalts her status in the Church and in the history of salvation. The Virgin Mary is, indeed, the victorious woman who destroyed the head of the serpent and who, through her son, emancipated humankind from satanic slavery. As the woman predicted to give birth to the Son of God, St. Mary was prophetically expressed in many symbolical representations.

She is associated with the heavenly ladder Jacob dreamed of during his flight to Haran (Gen. 28:10) and is believed to be a bridge between the Old and the New Testaments, because she was predetermined to reunite man with God through her Son, Jesus Christ. On account of her nativity, the fountain of sin was dried; man reconciled with God, and was granted access to paradise and eternal salvation. St. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 A.D) was reported by Vassall-Phillips to be one of the Church fathers who identified St. Mary with Eve and considered the former to be the gate of salivation (Ez. 44:2; Gen.28:17) and the predestined means of restoration for the life of the corrupted human generation. As St. Ephrem explains, "Those two innocent, those two simple ones, Mary and Eve, had been indeed quite equal the one to the other: but, afterwards, one became the cause of our death, the other of our life."[4]

According to Richard Brennan, St. Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403 AD) asserts the position of the Virgin Mary in the Orthodox context and pronounces, "The Blessed Virgin surpasses in glory the first of the heavenly powers. Only God is above her. All that is not God she sees beneath her feet."[5] He also details the role she plays in human salvation and the grounds for her glorification through thee, O Blessed Virgin, has celestial peace been given to the world. Through thee have men been made like to the angels; through thee have they received the honorable titles of servants, friends, and children of God. Through has death been overthrown and hell conquered. Thou hast destroyed the Idols, and brought back to men the knowledge of heavenly things. Through thee have we known the Son of God, Whom thou, O holy virgin, hast borne?[6]

[4] O. R, Vassall-Phillips, *The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion* (London: Bums, Oates &Washboume, 1922), p. 39.
[5] Richard Brennan, The means of Grace: A complete exposition of seven sacrametns (new York: Benziger Brothers, 1894), pp.517-518
[6] Ibid.

The patristic writer St. Irenaeus (202 A.D) further explains the relation between Eve and Mary:

As Eve was deceived by the word of the Angel of darkness, and fell from her obedience to God, so through Mary was proclaimed the word of an Angel, that if she obeyed she would carry God in her body; and as the devil had induced the former to abandon God, the latter would be moved to follow and obey him, and thus become a mediator. Again, as the whole human family was made subject to death by a virgin, so was it delivered from the same death by a virgin, inasmuch as the obedience of the latter cancelled and made good the disobedience of the former. Finally, as the sin of the first man was obliterated by the sufferings of the Son of God, so did the simplicity of the dove win a victory over the cunning of the serpent, in order that we might be loosed from the chains that bound us.[7]

Abba Heryacos encapsulates the dynamic role the Holy Virgin Mary plays in the salvation of the world: "You were the hope of Adam when he was driven out from paradise, the meekness of Abel who was killed through unrighteousness, the kindness of Seth, the works of Enoch, the ark of Noah through which he was saved from evil's destruction."[8]

The Orthodox Church of Ethiopia exalts the Holy Virgin Mary because of her contribution to human salvation, placing her above all saints but below God. The faithful regard the Theotokos as an interceder and invoke her name during Divine Liturgy and private prayers, saying, "O Holy one Pray for us." We can see some verses of the Ethiopic Anaphora and haimanot Abew about Her purity and Theotokos

Abba Heryacos: "When God the Father saw your purity He sent you his radiant angel, named Gabriel, and he told you: The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you/[9]

The Mariological manuscript of Archbishop Heraclius (died c. 580) translated into Geez read: “ኢያእመረ ዮሴፍ እስመ ዘተፈጥረት እምነ ጽቡር ጽሩይ ትከውን መቅደሱ ለእግዚአብሔር ” St. Josepha had no clue if the virgin created out of pure dust would be a dwelling house to God“[10]

[7] Ibid.,517.
[8] Marcos Daoud & Bilata Marsie Hazen, trans., The liturgy of the Ethiopian Church (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Kingston,1991),p.76.
[9] Marcos daoud & marise Hazen, Bilata, trans, The liturgy of the Ethiopian church (Jamaica : the Ethiopian orthodox Church Kingston, 1991)p,77.
[10] Ethiopian orthodox Tewahedo Church, Haimanote Abew (Addis Ababa: Tensaea Zegubaea Printing press, 1951),p.157

- Theodous bishop of Ancyra (died c.446) writes of the virgin: ወኢረኩለት በምንትኒ እምዘፈጠራ”[11]
- St. John Chrysostom:“ከመዝ እግዚእነ ሶበ ረከበ ሥጋሃ ቅዱስ ለዛቲ ድንግል ወነፍላ ቅድስተ ፈጠረ ሎቱ መቅደሰ ዘቦቱ ነፍስ”(For God found the body and the soul)of the virgin spotless, he created him a sanctuary (His body) consisting of a soul.[12]

CHAPTER TWO

COVENANT OF PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

A woman of extraordinary gifts chosen by the Holy Spirit to be the throne of God, St. Mary vowed to remain ever virgin. Her own words to the Angel of the Lord demonstrate that she had no intention of ever marrying because she knew what the plan of God was about her. When St. Gabriel said to her, "behold, thou shalt conceive," her answer was, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Lk. 1:34 St. Mary was described in Old Testament prophecy as an exceptional woman who would give birth miraculously to an everlasting God. This Divine plan was evidently revealed to the Prophets. Isaiah points out, "Therefore the lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and SHALL bring forth a son" (Is. 7:14).

- The Virgin Birth was necessary for the incarnation of God. If he had not been conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus would never have been accepted as the son of the Living God. Christ, the Son of God, could never have originated in the reproductive system of the corrupted generation. Solomon's description of "a Unrein enclosed," "a fountain sealed," and "a well of living waters" sheds light On St. Mary's virginity. The Living Water that issued from the fountain was Jesus Christ, who Himself said, "Let him that is thirst come...take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Being the secured fountain of the Living Water and the bridegroom of the Holy Spirit, the mother of God could not be espoused to an earthly husband. As Solomon said, she is sealed forever. God also uncovered the mystery of St. Mary's chastity to the prophet Ezekiel, who writes, "The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter

[11] Ibid., 174.

[12] Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Churuch, Haimanote Abew (Addis Ababa: Tensaea Zegubaea Printing Press, 1951),p.237

by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut" (Ezek. 44:2).

- A further purpose of the Virgin Birth was to impress upon humankind that the expected Messiah would be spotless, free of ancestral sin, and capable of redeeming those who live in condemnation. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ is called the Second Adam. The first man was brought into existence out of untouched earth. Similarly, St. Mary gave birth to the Second Adam without a human father, for ancestral sin was assumed to be transmitted only by means of a man/woman relationship. St. Mary's Virgin Birth, on the other hand, was accomplished by the intervention of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:20).
- Almost all Post-Nicene Church Fathers have articulated the perpetual chastity of the Holy Virgin Mary in light of the Holy Scriptures. Some of these affirmations are stated below, as quoted by Vassall-Phillips. St. Epiphanies harshly blasts opponents of St. Mary's Virginity in the following terms: "Some men [the new heretics] have ventured to outrage with insult that Holy and Blessed Virgin, saying that after the wondrous and virgin mystery of the Lord's Incarnation she suffered the loss of virginity--a thing which surpasses all other wickedness and impiety."[13]
- Jerome writes, "The garden which was enclosed, the fountain that wan sealed up, is a figure of the Mother of the Lord, Mother and virgin. Hence in the Savior's new sepulcher which was hewn in most hard rock, no one was laid either before or after. Yet, this perpetual Virgin is the mother of many virgins. And according to St. Proclus, the disciple of St. John Chrysostom: "Unless His Mother had remained a virgin, her offspring would have been but man, and the mystery of the Birth would have been lost. But if after her childbearing she remained a virgin, how shall not He be God and a Mystery which is unutterable?[14]

[13] O. R, Vassall-Phillips, *The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion* (London: Bums, Oates &Washboume, 1922), p. 58.

[14] O.R, vassal- Phillips, The mother of Christ or the blessed virgin mary in Catholic Tradition, theology and devotion (London: Burns, Oates & washbourne,1992),p.57

2.1 TITLES AND SYMBOLS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Patristic fathers and scholars who pay homage to the Holy Virgin Mary as the mother of God employ various symbolic expressions and titles offered to St. Mary in the Bible associated with her Divine maternity and human redemption. Among the manifold titles Orthodox theologians use in their invocations are the Theotokos and the Mother of Mercy. The Greek word Theotokos (bearer of God) was attributed St. Mary at the third Ecumenical Council to proclaim the Divinity of Jesus Christ and her station as the mother of God. The Council was summoned by St. Cyril of Alexandria at Ephesus in 431 A.D. to investigate the heresy of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople (428-431), who refused to accept the Godhead of Christ and preferred to call the Virgin Mary Anthropotokos (Bearer of a man).

Patriarch Nestorius was strongly exhorted by the assembly of the saintly fathers not to breach the universally accepted apostolic doctrine. Nevertheless, instead of being responsive to the pleadings of the fathers, he insisted on referring to the Virgin Mary as Gpamlokoc Anthropotokos (Bearer of a man)or Tololkoc Christotokos, "the mother of Christ" because he believed that Christ is a mere man. Finally, the council accepted St. Cyril's reasoning, reaffirmed the deity of Christ, and approved the title) 0 eotokc Theotokos for the Holy Virgin Mary. The council also unanimously passed a canonical resolution which anathematized Nestorius and his erroneous teachings, stating: "If any one does not profess that Emmanuel is truly God, and that consequently the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God--inasmuch as she gave birth in the flesh to the Word of God made flesh, according to what is written: The Word was made flesh'-lei him be anathema."[15]

Most Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church echoed the council's position. For example, St. Gregory Nazianzen wrote, "Let him who will not accept Mary as the mother of God be excluded from God."[16] The Virgin Mary has been given additional designations such as the Blessed Mother, the Star of the Sea, the Queen of Heaven, and the Cause of Our Joy.

[15] *Joseph Pohle,* Mariology, A Dogmatic Treaties on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God *(ST. Louis: Herder 17 South Broadway, Mo., 1914), p. 5.*

[16] *Ibid., 9.*

2.2 THE PARADISE AND UNTILLED GROUND

The Mother of God has been demonstrated in patristic writings with the following expressions corresponding in meaning to Untilled Ground: the Paradise of Eden, the Virginal Soil, and the Earth that produced Adam. These symbolic titles reflect her moral excellence of saintliness, Motherhood, and Perpetual Virginity. The Virgin can be mystically thought of as a golden purse wherein we treasure the medicine of our life (the Eucharist,) and as a guide to the lost generation who moved away from the darkness of transgression, developing self-awareness by means of the Gospel, and returned to its ancestral home through Christ.

A passage taken by Vassall-Phillips from St. John Chrysostom provides a detail account of this topic. Chrysostom writes, "The word Eden signifies virgin land. Now, such was the region in which God planted Paradise. For it is written that God planted a Paradise in Eden towards the East, that thou mayest understand that Paradise was not a work of human hands; since the earth was virgin, and had known no ploughshare, nor was it cut up by furrows; but without tillage - at the Divine command alone it put forth its vegetation and trees. For this reason He called it Eden, which means virgin soil. This virgin earth is a type of the Virgin. For as that land, without having received any seed, blossomed forth for us Paradise; so too Mary, without having conceived of man, blossomed forth for us Christ. When then a Jew says to thee: How did a Virgin bring forth? Say to him: How did the virgin earth put forth those marvelous trees?"[17]

2.3 THE ARK OF NOAH

The ark of Noah allegorically represents the apostolic church in general and the Holy Virgin Mary in particular. The Ark was built with the Divine guidance of the Holy Spirit to carry Noah and his family and thereby save the human race him total annihilation (Gen. 6-10; 1 Peter 3:20). The Holy Virgin Mary was despondingly protected from Adamic sin by God's divine providence and was illuminated by the Holy Spirit to be aware of herself as a predestined woman and to prepare herself for the mission of God. Indeed, Mary is the Ark of Noah, because she played a dynamic role in human redemption, bringing forth fuel, the Savior of the world. For this reason, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church recognizes the Virgin Mary as an Adamic seed miraculously saved from ancestral corruption. In the words of the Prophet: "And if the Lord of

[17] *O. R, Vassall-Phillips,* The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion *(London: Bums, Oates & Washboume, 1922), p. 377.*

babaoth had not left us a seed, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been made like Gomorrha" (Is 1: 9).

2.4 THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Ark of the Covenant presented to Moses was the Tablet of Law consisting of Clod's commandments. Holding the Ark of the Covenant on the way to the Land of Hope, Israel crossed the River Jordan and destroyed the wall of Jericho. In the Ark of the Covenant, God addressed His message to Moses and the people of Israel. To Moses he said, "I will speak to thee above the propitiatory between the two cherubs, who are upon the ark of testimony" (Ex 25:22).

Typologically, the Holy Virgin Mary is an Ark of the New Testament, a Tablet of the Law carrying the Lawgiver and the Word of God for our redemption. For this reason St. Ephrem says, "O Mary, sacred ark, whereby we are saved from the deluge of sin."[18]. The children of Israel were able to gain power and defeat their adversaries during their sojourn in the wilderness in part because they carried the Ark of the Covenant (Zion) received from their religious fathers. We, the Orthodox, place our hopes in St. Mary to help us defeat our adversary, Satan, cross the river of sin and enter the kingdom of God.

• 2.5 THE LADDER OF JACOB

On the way to Haran where his uncle Laban was residing, one of the three Hebrew Patriarchs, Jacob, was tired from his long journey and lay down at a place to sleep for the night. In his sleep, he had a vision of a shining ladder. It was "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold tin* angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it" (Gen 28: 13). This was the predestined mystery of incarnation revealed to the man of God. In this mystical revelation, the ladder symbolizes Theotokos, the cause of our reconciliation. Essentially, because St. Mary was united to Divinity within her womb, man was reconciled to God and earth to heaven.

Jacob continues to describe his dream of the ladder: "And the Lord stood upon it, and said, I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the God of Isaac...How fearful is this place! This is none

[18] *O. R, Vassall-Phillips,* The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology and Devotion *(London: Bums, Oates & Washboume, 1922), p. 383.*

other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:13-17). Orthodox Tewahedo Church scholars teach that God reveals Himself to His beloved children in one way or another. In this context, Jacob was able to experience God and His celestial Angels through his dream of the ladder. The dream prognosticated that the invisible God would assume human flesh from the Virgin Mary and become visible in the fullness of time. When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he became aware that the place where he had been resting during the night was the "house of God" and he called it "Bethel." This symbolized that the actual New Testament Church would be established after the incarnation of the Logos from the Virgin Mary. Thus, both the Church and St. Mary represent the dwelling place of God. The Son of God receives worship and glorification both in the Church and in the womb of His beloved mother.

The ascending and descending of Angels demonstrates their ministry to Saint Mary. Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and announced to her the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ (Lk.l:26). Saint Joseph received an Angelic message encouraging him not to be afraid to take Saint Mary, the bride of the Holy Spirit (Mt.l:18). In a dream, an angel told St. Joseph to flee to the wilderness and continued providing help to the Holy Family during their flight to Egypt (Mt. 2:13).

A ladder can serve as a bridge to unite people separated by deep valleys. St. Mary is a bridge that unites the old and the new generations through Christ. Abba Heryacos says, "How marvelous and wonderful is this thing! O bridge over which the ancient fathers crossed from death unto life! O ladder from earth to heaven, through you the first creation was renewed."[19]

2.6 THE BURNING BUSH

The day, while Moses was watching over his father-in-law's flock on Mount, he saw a burning bush and the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in the of fire. The bush burned but was never consumed, and Moses drew nigh to higher loose thy sandals from off thy feet for the place where on thou stadest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father, the god of Abraham, and the God of

[19] Marcos Daoud & Bilata Marsie Hazen, trans., *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Kingston, 1991), p. 76.

lodge and the God of Jacob “Moses turned away his face, for he was afraid to zaze at God” (Ex. 3:1-5).

The burning bush in the Orthodox Traditional exegesis symbolizes St. mary, who conceived the Word of God in her womb without being ravaged by the consuming fire" of Divinity (Heb. 12:29) and gave birth to Jesus Christ without losing her Virginity. St. Ephrem the Syrian writes, "In the fire Moses saw thy beauty in shadow, O daughter of David, in whose bosom dwelt that Flame, and thou wert not consumed, O Mother of God who art fall of grace."[20] This mystical symbolization should be soundly elaborated using allegorical exegesis. The sanctity of the scene reflects the sanctity and righteousness of the Virgin, and The taking off of sandals represents avoiding ambiguity about the Godhead of Jesus Christ who assumed human flesh from the Virgin Mary (The Unconsumed Bush).

- **2.7 THE ROD OF AARON**

Early on in Biblical history, God sought to end the grumbling of Israelites by nominating a religious leader. He commanded Moses to collect a rod from each tribe and put them in the tabernacle of witness. When Moses took all the rods out in the morning, it was found that the rod of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi, had miraculously blossomed and produced almonds (Num. 17:1-8).

According to the Church fathers, Aaron's lifeless rod, which blossomed without planting or watering, symbolizes the Holy Virgin Mary who gave birth to the Lord without receiving human seed. Christ is the Fruit of life that was given to Christians in the form of Holy Eucharist. There were other young women serving at the temple at the time St. Mary was presented to God. Yet the Virgin Mary's immaculate life drew the attention of God. Abba Heryacos considers that God's choice of the Virgin Mary was based on her spotlessness: "When God the Father saw your purity He sent you his radiant angel, name shall also the coming of the Son of man be" Mt. 24:27)."And his feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" Zach .14:4).

[20] *O. R, Vassall-Phillips,* The Mother of Christ or The Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholic Tradition, Theology

On account of her saintliness and divine maternity, the Virgin Mary the "Innocent Dove" who brought good news to Noah concerning the receding Of the Great Flood (Gen. 8:11). She is referred to as a dove by virtue of her • meekness and for having given birth to the Son of God. She is the "Golden | Censer" which contains incense and fire, symbolizing humanity and divinity respectively and attesting to her patience and endurance in giving birth to Son of God called a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Abba Heriacos was astonished at the marvelousness of this endurance and says, "O Virgin, when there abode in your womb the fire of the Godhead, Whose face is fire, whose clothes are fire, whose covering is fire, how did it not bum you?"[21]

Church fathers also refer to Mary as the "Second Heaven," the abode of God (Zion), or the "City of God" (Ps 87:3-5). She is the "Golden Lamp" which contains the light of the world (Jesus Christ) (Jn. 8:12), and the "Pot of the Manna" which carried the bread of life (the Eucharist) to the hungry world (John 6:32).

2.8 VENERATION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY

The Holy Virgin Mary has a central role in human salvation. Biblical and patristic writings substantiate Mary's Divine Maternity. The Theotokos was mystically envisioned in the minds of many Old and New Testament writers illuminated by the Spirit of God. The veneration of the Virgin Mary is associated to her divine maternity. One of the Major Prophets, Isaiah, foresaw that a Virgin would give birth to a Son, Emmanuel. According to Isaiah, her miraculous birth established that she was the Mother of God (Is.7:14) and her Son's name, Emmanuel, signifies "God is with us." Emmanuel, who came to us through a Virgin Birth, should never be assumed to be a mere man. As depicted by the same prophet, He is the "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6).

At the fulfillment of the prophecy, celestial beings were able to recognize St. Mary as the Mother of God. For example, an Angel of the Lord referred to as St. Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and said, "You will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High....He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end"

[21] *Marcos Daoud & Bilata Marsie Hazen, trans.,* The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church *(Jamaica: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Kingston, 1991), p. 79.*

(Lk 1:31).Among Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Joseph Pohle cites St. Athanasius and St. Gregory Nazianzen. St. Athanasius wrote, "We confess that the Son of God became man by the assumption of flesh from the Virgin mother of God."[22] And St. Gregory Nazianzen asserts, "Let him who will not accept Mary as the mother of God be excluded from God."[23]

As mentioned earlier, any homage, veneration or glorification offered to the Theotokos should focus on her unique intercessional grace and, specifically, what she has contributed to the world as the Mother of God. The Psalmist describes St. Mary as an immaculate Queen who shall be praised everlastingly by all subsiding generations, standing at the right hand of God: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him....I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee forever and ever" (Ps. 45:10- 17). The wise man, King Solomon, seeing the same woman in a divine vision, described her spotlessness and her wonderful nature, predicting that all queens and concubines shall praise and call her the "blessed one." He expresses her taintlessness with the phrase "my undefiled is but one." He also admires the grace of her beauty and the power of her spirituality, attesting that she is brighter than the sun and the moon (Son of Song 6:10).

As an Ark of the Covenant and the Divine Throne of God, St. Mary merits supreme glorification, indeed, second only to the Divine worship we offer to God. The Prophet Isaiah transcribes God's words to the Mother of God: Kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with fheir face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Is 49:23).

When God sent St. Gabriel to announce the Holy Virgin Mary, he proclaimed: "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"(Lk.l:28).When she was visited by Holy Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth wondered, "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Lk. l:43).The adoration of St. Gabriel and St. Elizabeth offered to the Virgin Mary were the direct result of her Divine Maternity. According to

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[22] *Joseph Pohle,* Mariology, A Dogmatic Treatise on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God *(ST. Louis: Herder 17 South Broadway, Mo., 1914), p. 9.*

[23] *Ibid.*

Joseph Pohle, St. Athanasius confirms that ih«* Virgin Mary is full of grace because, as he says, "Being filled with the 1 loly (IIlost, she overflowed with all graces, and was overshadowed by the power of the Most High."[24]

The Orthodox Church of Ethiopia refers to St. Mary as the "Tabernacle of Moses," the "Second Heaven," the "City of God or Zion," and the "Pot of Manna."[25] We find Mariological treatises in the writings of Joseph Pohle validating St. Mary's Divine Motherhood in three fundamental senses: "(1) that it confers upon her a rank vastly superior to that of any other creature; (2) that it constitutes her the very center of the hierarchy of rational creatures, and (3) that it makes her an intermediary between God and the universe."[26]

Most essentially, St. Mary views herself as the Mother of God and is certain that she will be venerated by subsequent generations:"For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed"(Lk.l:48). When we venerate the Theotokos as the Mother of God, we express our love and due respect to her, and invoke her name not only for eternal salvation but also for aid in the miscellaneous needs of our temporal life. As Pope Shenouda III says, "Whoever venerates the Virgin is in effect venerating Christ Himself."[27]

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[24] *Joseph Pohle, Mariology,* A Dogmatic Treaties on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God *(ST. Louis: Herder 17 South Broadway, Mo., 1914), p. 26.*

[25] *H.H. Pope Shenouda III,* Comparative Theology *(London: Coptic Orthodox Publishers Association, 1988), p, 112.*

[26] *Joseph Pohle, Mariology,* A Dogmatic Treaties on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God *(ST. Louis: Herder 17 South Broadway, Mo., 1914), p. 16.*

[27] *H.H. Pope Shenouda III,* Comparative Theology (London: Coptic Orthodox Publishers Association, *1988), p, 111.*

CHAPTER THREE

SOTERIOLOGY/ SALVATION

The Christian doctrine of Soteriology comes from the Greek work σωτηριολογία "sõtëria," meaning "salvation." accomplishment of human salvation, the central point of dogmatic Theology.

Therefore, the theology of salvation deals with the ultimate mission of the incarnated God which involves the redemption of mankind from the bondage of sin and the curse of the law through the blood of Christ. This spiritual approach expounds the patristic meaning of some theological terminologies such as redemption, regeneration, reunification, inheriting the Kingdom of God, and eternal judgment, for these words are interconnected or interdependent one another.

3.1 INTRODUCTION OF SIN INTO THE WORLD: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

The corruption of the universe and the personification of God should be analytically examined in terms of God's overall plan for creation and mankind. Orthodox theologians make salvation history evident in light of the Holy Scriptures that God created man in His own image and likeness out of His infinite goodness and granted him undivided freedom and full authority to control the whole cosmos. However, man misused his freedom and transgressed the Commandments of God by disdaining the divine counsels he was given. The effect of this transgression followed a divine punishment of various kinds that was spread and imputed in all Adam's offspring. The first was natural death, which is the separation of the immaterial soul from the natural body. God said to Adam, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3:19). Secondly, God condemned Adam and cast him out of the Garden of Eden and placed cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the paradise (Gen. 3:24).

Thirdly, Adam was separated from God and lost communion with Him, this separation being referred to as the second death (Rev 20:14; 21:8). What this means is that Adam lost the exclusive Godlikeness he had in the natural order of creation, and his nature was corrupted. His inclinations have shifted towards sin. He became subject to the Devil's will and died a mortal death. Through the corruption of Adam and Eve, the whole Adamic generation and the Earth he inhabited had become unclean, as stated in the Holy Scriptures, "Wherefore, as by one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom 5:12).

According to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, since the fall of Adam and Eve, God had a plan to rebuild the broken relationship between man and God, release man from condemnation, and restore him to his original state of life through Christ, St. Paul says, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gala. 4:4). Christ's crucifixion completed God's plan of Salvation. Christ has received a vicarious suffering to save us and paid atonement on the Cross for our sins to make us right before God. He redeemed us through His priceless blood. He trampled down death by His death. Therefore, He was surnamed as the "Savior."

Athanasius asserts that God the Word Himself, who created the world, became flesh to save man: Being life, He died that He might make us alive, being the Word, He became flesh, that He might instruct the flesh in the Word. So, the Bishop stresses the ontological Godhead of the Son because he believed that only God could redeem man. Therefore, Christ, as the Redeemer, must be God: For He is the Word and the power and the Wisdom of God, as Solomon testifies concerning Wisdom, that, 'being one, it can do all things, and remaining in itself, it makes all things new; and passing upon holy souls, fashions the friends of God and prophets' (Wisdom 7:27)

As the Son is one with the Father, He can be an acceptable offering to the Father on our behalf: (21) FL Syr. 14:4, p. 543; Cf. De Inc. 1:4, p. 36; 20:1, p. 47; Con. Gen. 1:5, p. 4. (22)FL Syr. 10:4, p. 528; cf. 1:1, p. 506.

'I am in the Father, and the Father in me' (John 14:11). This is the Lord Who is manifested in the Father, and in Whom also the Father is manifested; Who, being truly the Son of the Father, at last became incarnate for our sakes, that he might offer Himself to the Father in our stead .

That is why each of the blessed Evangelists, before recording the words and deeds of the Lord, placed at the beginning of his Gospel those things concerning Christ to be known as God. For example, John said explicitly that in the beginning was God the Word (John 1:1); and Matthew wrote that Christ is Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23), the Son of the living God.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 THE ORTHODOX VIEW OF SALVATION AS OPPOSED TO THAT OF THE PROTESTANTS

The Orthodox Concept of Salvation

In Orthodoxy, the whole life of Christ is viewed as an act of salvation. The Word of God became incarnate to fulfill the original divine plan which is the transfiguration of the cosmos. Through the incarnation, the Logos became part of his creation and recapitulated the whole of creation in his body. The baptism of Christ, the Logos incarnate, renewed the entire cosmos, whereas his crucifixion on the Cross offered redemption from sin. Through his death, Christ destroyed death (the cosmic disease) and defeated the devil, triumphantly rising from the dead. Therefore, "the whole life of Christ is the medium of our salvation, not just the Cross. The Incarnation, the life of Christ, the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Pentecost in the mystery of salvation in Christ form a whole and cannot be separated from each other." The whole Christ event "forms an undivided unity" that "we are saved through the total work of Christ, not just by one particular event in his life." Various liturgical texts of the EOTC demonstrate that we were saved through the whole life of Christ's incarnate dispensation. The Təməhrətä Ḫəbu'at – ትምህርተ ሃቡኣት [Mystagogia], a dogmatic-liturgical text, speaks of the incarnation of the Logos as a means of saving the fallen humanity: "[The Logos] who clothed Himself with the dead Adam, [made] him to live [alive]." The devil deceived Adam and Eve by hiding himself in the body of the serpent; likewise, by hiding his divinity in human flesh, the Logos defeated the devil. A hymn for the feast of Epiphany refers to the baptism of Christ as a redeeming act: "The Son of God was baptized in the river Jordan to redeem us." Another hymn of the Epiphany states the purpose of Christ's crucifixion: "The Son of God, who sits on the Cherubim and the one whom the heavenly hosts praise, was crucified on the Cross to redeem human beings." We were redeemed from sin by the sacrifice of the Son of God, who "took our death and gave us his life." As the commentary on the Ethiopian Liturgy attests, "by his burial, the Lord abolished corruptibility from our flesh once for all," and his salvific act was finalized when he rose from the dead, trampling death and destroying all the evil works of the adversary. Thus, in accordance with the soteriology of the Eastern

Orthodox Church, Ethiopian liturgical texts present the whole life of Christ as a means of salvation. A close look to these texts, however, reveals that emphasis is given to the incarnation. As discussed below most of the liturgical texts contain contemplations on the mystery of the incarnation that are elaborately nuanced in the commentaries of the texts. While the texts also signify the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ on the Cross, his death is presented as a means of destroying death and defeating the devil – Christ Victor, the typical Orthodox concept of redemption. Besides, the various Ethiopic hymns on the joy of the whole of creation at the birth of Christ and on the cosmic dimension of his crucifixion demonstrate that the main purpose of the Christ event was the transformation of the entire cosmos. The following sections will deal with these soteriological themes.

4.2 THE CENTRALITY OF THE INCARNATION

The soteriological nuance of the fathers of the EOTC highlights the significance of the incarnation of the Logos for the economy of salvation. As stated in the official publication of the EOTC, the church teaches that "The Incarnation of God the Son is primarily for the salvation of the world; [and] salvation means the restoration of the world to its direct and unimpeded relation with God." George Florovsky notes that the incarnation of the Logos was the fundamental motive of the early church's theology. In the early church the whole Christological thought was based on the teaching that envisions "the incarnation of the Word as Redemption." Thus as the Ethiopian liturgical texts highlight the centrality of the incarnation for salvation, they maintain the early church's soteriology. In fact, Eastern Orthodoxy in general "places great emphasis on the incarnation," considering it as "the pivotal event in the salvation of the cosmos." Most of the Ethiopic liturgical texts expound the mystery of the incarnation in poetic imagery, often accompanied by contemplations. The Ethiopic anaphora, named after St. James of Serugh, figuratively speaks of the incarnation of the Logos: "Thou [the Son of God] are the long cord which will not be severed from the Father…The womb of the Virgin contained thee." This is to say that, the Son of God assumed human flesh without being separated from his Father in his divinity as explained in the anaphora of St. Mary: "The Word came to thee [St. Mary] without being separated from the bosom of his Father; thou did conceive him without his

being limited, and he stayed in thy womb without making subtraction from above or addition beneath." Moreover, the Haymanotä Abäw (ሃይማኖተ አበው) marvels at the incomprehensible aspect of the incarnation: "As the angel said that the Holy Spirit would overshadow St. Mary, the Word was conceived by the work of the Holy Spirit in a way unknown to human mind. The one, who forms the fetus in the womb, was conceived as a babe in the womb of St. Mary." All this is meant to emphasize the unfathomable mystery of the incarnation of the Logos. This mystery was initially hidden from the celestial beings. The Ethiopic Mystagogia [Təməhrətä Ḫəbu'at – ትምህርተ ኅቡኣት] asserts that "the Logos abode in the womb of the virgin, being hidden from all the celestial powers." As illustrated in Anəqäṣä Bərhan (አንቀጸ ብርሃን), the Ethiopic Theotokia attributed to St. Yared the hymnologist, when the great multitude of angels learnt about the birth of the Son of God at Bethlehem they stood around the baby and his mother in fear and trembling, and praised him with his mother. When they saw "the one who holds the whole of creation [Pantocrator] in the bosom of Mary, suckling her breast like babies, they searched for him in the heavens and they found him with his Father and the Holy Spirit [in his divine honour]." Being amazed at the humility of the Son of God, they chanted: "Glory be to God on high." Referring to his great love for humans, they also sang: "He loved humans; let peace be upon earth." The Ethiopian tradition upholds that while both creation and redemption are the works of the same triune God, the wisdom that God showed in the incarnation of the Logos to save the world is more wonderful than the divine wisdom of creating the world. With this sense of owe and wonder, at the feast of the Nativity of Christ the following hymn is chanted: "We greet the birth of Emmanuel, the Word of God incarnate. O Word of God eternal, how could the virgin carry you [in her womb]? …He [The Word of God incarnate] slept in a manger; was wrapped by swaddling clothes; and he was suckled like babes." It is extraordinarily marvelous that the one, who had made the heavens and the earth, was born of St. Mary and slept in a manger, suckling from the breasts of his virgin mother. Likewise, the author of the Ethiopic anaphora of St. Athanasius expresses a great sense of amazement at the incarnation of the Son of God: "This is a wonderful, admirable and marvelous thing. Which shall I think and about which shall I marvel? Your existence with your Father in silence and holiness or

your [presence] in the bosom of your mother like babies?" Indeed, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16).

At the heart of the Ethiopian incarnational theology lies the deification of the human person (theōsis or deificatio). In the hypostatic union of the divinity and humanity in Christ, humanity was exalted to the level of divinity. As a second Adam, Christ the incarnate Word, in his humanity made us partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1: 4). The Ethiopian fathers teach that the deification of the human person in Christ fulfills the prophecy foretold by the triune God: "See the man has become like one of us" (Gen. 3: 22). In the humanity of Christ, which is consubstantial with us, we were brought into fullness of communion with God in order that we may be transfigured from glory to glory. The incarnation of the Logos is mainly significant because the concept of redemption and the renewal of creation are centered in it. The incarnation had two main purposes: the first one, which may be considered as a negative purpose, is redeeming creation from sin and its consequences (death, corruption), whereas the positive aspect is bringing all of creation to transfiguration, its original destiny. In his treatise, On the Incarnation, St. Athanasius reflects on these dual purposes of the incarnation. According to Athanasius, "the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning." However, putting death and corruption to an end was the necessary step for the renewal and re-creation of the universe: "In order to effect this re-creation, He (the Word of God incarnate) had first to do away with death and corruption." As the Word of God incarnate, Christ was able to redeem creation by his suffering and create it anew: "For He (the Word of God) alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to recreate all, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all." Having redeemed the whole of creation from sin and its adverse consequences, the Lord Christ offered the possibility of bringing creation to its consummation. "In Christ the providence of God is revealed as a plan and a real activity for the salvation and deification of creation in him." These two purposes of the incarnation of the Logos:

1. Redemption from sin and its consequences, and the deification (transfiguration) of creation are manifested in the liturgical texts of the EOTC as discussed below.

Redemption from Sin the first humans did not only violate the commandment of God, but also introduced sin to the whole of creation. As a result of the primordial fall, sin and the "cosmic disease of death" disintegrated the created order. Thus salvation was given as "a divine answer to the evil which exist[ed] parasitically in the whole of creation." Since the transgression of the first humans subjected creation to the slavery of sin, Christ suffered to "break the bonds of sin" once for all. As descendants of Adam and Eve, humans inherited inclination to sin, and thus the entire human nature was deteriorated. While Christ is sinless, "he took our sins, and redeemed us" from all the effects of sin. The redemption of the world from sin and corruption was achieved through the death of Christ which is a sacrificial offering. Bearing the sin of humanity on his body, "Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring [us] to God" (I Pet. 3:18). He gave his life as a ransom for us, and "bought us by the [shedding] of his precious blood."608 Underlining the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ and its sacramental efficacy, in the Ethiopian Divine Liturgy, shortly before partaking of the Holy Communion the celebrant prays: Lord my God, behold the sacrifice of thy Son's body which pleases thee. Through it blot out all my sins because thy only-begotten Son died for me. And behold the pure blood of thy Messiah, which was shed for me upon Calvary, cries aloud in my stead. Grant that this speaking blood may be the forgiver of me, thy servant. Christ's offering of himself for our sins was a ransom made on the basis of love, for "the effective power of sacrifice is love." Highlighting the unconditional love of Christ revealed in his death, the Ethiopian anaphora of St. Mary says: "Love drew the mighty Son [of God] down from His throne, and led him to death." In the same anaphora the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ is symbolically explained. The Lord Christ is symbolized by a lamb who does not speak in front of those who drag him for slaughter. While Christ is the sacrifice offered for our sins, at the same time he is also the High Priest who offered the redemptive sacrifice and received the sacrifice together with his Father and the Holy Spirit. In line with the Eastern Orthodox soteriology, the Ethiopian liturgical texts speak of the death of Christ as a victory over death and the devil. His death was not meant for the satisfaction of divine justice, but to "destroy death and break the bonds of Satan; …to tread down hell; open the gates of life; and to remove [the power of]

darkness." Orthodoxy mainly looks at the death of Christ on the basis of the cosmic reality of death. As death had held humanity and the entire cosmos under "its usurped control and pushed it into the vicious circle of sin and corruption," Christ died to overcome mortality and corruption. While suffering on the Cross, therefore, "Christ was not a passive victim, but the Conqueror, even in His uttermost humiliation." For Orthodoxy "the Cross is an emblem of victory," through which we were given authority to tread upon all the power of the enemy. As chanted in matins of the EOTC, suffering on the Cross, Christ severed the chain of death and thus we were given "freedom from the bondage of sin, death, and that of the devil." The Təməhrətä Ḫəbu'at [Mystagogia] dramatically presents the defeat of the devil by the death of Christ. Though the text does not dare to say that God deceived the devil, it reflects Gregory of Nyssa's thought of redemption as the "deception" of the devil. Gregory teaches that concealing his divinity, Christ offered his body to the devil. Greedily focused only on the humanity of Christ, the devil rushed on this "bait," Christ's humanity, but was caught on the "hook," Christ's divinity. Since the devil himself is a deceiver, he was rightly deceived. According to the Təməhrətä Ḫəbu'at [Mystagogia] as the devil "was accustomed to devouring the souls" of the Old Testament people, while Christ was suffering on the Cross he approached him to do the same. But he was trapped by Christ's divine power, and was scared of the "divine beauty (Śənä Mäläkot – ሥነ መለኮት) that he saw in Christ." Having vanquished the "venomous power of the devil" on the Cross, after his death Christ descended to Hell in his soul. He descended into hell as "Christus Victor, as the Master of Life." Defeated and losing his grip on the souls whom he had taken captive, as Təməhrətä Ḫəbu'at [Mystagogia] interestingly illustrates, the devil cried: Who is this Who [that] has conquered me, having clothed Himself with a body which is under my power? Who is this (Who) snatches away from me the body given him for destruction? Who is this (Who) has clothed Himself of the earth, but is heavenly? Who is this (Who) was born in corruption and Who is incorruptible? Who is this (Who) is a stranger to my law? Who is this Who will take captive (those) who are mine? Who is this Who by the power of the flame of fire will contend with Death? Who is this Who has conquered darkness? What is this new glory which in this similitude has hindered me from doing that which I will? Who is this

without sin Who has died? Who is this Who by His great light has made blind the darkness, and Who has not left me those who are mine, over (whom) I rule, but draws all (to) the heavens, the souls which have been given [to] me? What is this glory which will not refuse the body (which) is not corrupted? Who is this Whom it is not possible to touch? Who is this Whom a glory which is unsearchable encircles? I have been destroyed by this One and by those whose [sic] are His; I am not able to work harm against them. The devil, symbolized by death and darkness in the above text, was unable to understand the mystery of the incarnation of the Logos. He was shocked to realize that the immortal and eternal divine nature assumed the fallen human nature so as to end his dominion over humanity. The radiant divine light of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, blinded the darkness of hell, and the devil could not approach that divine light. As a result, the devil had no option but to release all the souls whom he had taken captive by his deceit.635 As sung in the Ethiopian matins, "using his Cross as an oar, Christ took all the souls out of the sea of Hades" − he made "captivity itself a captive" (Eph. 4:8). Indeed, "The descent of Christ into hell is the manifestation of Life amid the hopelessness of death; it is victory over death." The redemption and victory achieved by the death of Christ was culminated when Christ rose from the dead. "For since death came through a human being," writes St. Paul, "the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (I Cor. 15:21-22). Death that had reigned over human beings due to the Adamic sin was mocked by the resurrection of Christ: "Where, O death is your victory? Where O death is your sting?" (I Cor. 15:55). By his resurrection, Christ "trampled death under [his] foot, and gave the life of eternal rest to those who were in the grave."638 For Orthodoxy, therefore, the resurrection of Christ is the summit of the salvific work of the whole Christ event. As Payton notes: "What is assured in Christ's incarnation, pursued in his life and reached for in his death ─ namely, eternal life, communion with God and victory over our enemies ─ is only achieved fully and completely when Christ rises from the grave." Rising from the dead as the "first fruits of those who have died," (I Cor. 15:20) Christ has given us the hope that our corruptible bodies will be raised putting on incorruptibility. In the resurrection of Christ, the new creation that is the eschatological destiny of matter is already inaugurated.

The Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia employs the term theosis (Oewois), which was first used by St. Clement of Alexandria to explore human salvation. Theosis carries the meaning of deification or divinization and demonstrates the Orthodox concept of salvation as a continuous process of becoming God in grace. It is characterized by purification and illumination that are manifestations of spinelessness and continues upwards until the person become completely defied or divinized through participation in Christ. These expositions concur with St. Athanasius's theology of incarnation. He says, "God became man so that man might become God.[28]" This process of reunification or Godlikeness starts on earth inasmuch as the person actively participates in redemptive sacraments and continues after death, according to God's mercifulness. The Orthodox Churches pray for the dead that He may extend His boundless love to them. An Alexandrian proponent of the Orthodox salvation, Fr. Tadros apprehends deification as the renewal of human nature by the Holy Spirit.[29]

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church confession of salvation is inapproachably different from that of the Protestants in terms of implementations. The Church renounces the Protestants' soteriological doctrine of "saved only by grace," and "personal Salvation."

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 SALVATION BY GRACE - PROTESTANT VERSUS ORTHODOX

The Protestant theological doctrine of "salvation by grace," holds that man was saved only by the unmerited favor of the gracious God. Although none of us deserve salvation because of our wretchedness, God made the right decision to liberate us from the bondage of sin. When acknowledging Protestantism, a candidate will be taught that his salvation is completed once he has accepted Jesus as his own personal savior. They profess that they are justified by faith upon their admission to Christianity, meaning their sins are removed by the sacrifice of the Lord Christ

[28] Fr. Tadros Malaty, The Divine Grace (Alexandria: St. George Mary Coptic Orthodox Church SportingE 1992), p.7
[29] Ibid., 20.

and they are granted righteousness at the same time. Unfortunately, however, these teachings are completely alien to Orthodox Churches.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church strongly repudiates the "Saved only by Grace" doctrine, for such a protestant proposition rules out the role man might play in his own salvation. According to the Orthodox, "Saved only by Grace" refers only to redemption that was indistinguishably granted to all humans. We all are uniformly redeemed by the blood of Christ and are granted general or objective salvation with freedom from the bondage of sin and diabolic slavery. Yet, we are not all granted complete righteousness alike.

Accepting the Orthodox soteriological doctrine instituted by Christ, we need to actively cooperate in our own personal or subjective salvation through our efforts. Over and above adhering to the "faith only" doctrine, the Protestants consider the Son of God to be their own "Personal Savior." The Orthodox Churches rule out this statement of so called faith. Once the gate of freedom was open, as we shall explore in detail further on, man can save himself through his individual efforts. We are not to assume that God is a savior of only chosen people or individuals, for everyone and every nation is called to salvation. St. Paul demonstrates that God wills all men and women to be saved. He says, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

"But in every nation he that feared him, and worked righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35). Christ "died for all" (2 Cor.5:15) and called His disciples both from the Jews who have faith and the gentiles who do not acknowledge God's existence (Gala 3:28). Therefore, from the Orthodox point of view, personal salvation is a continued individual process that requires a sustained effort, and its essence is deification (Theosis).

Although we are longing for salvation with meekness, we do not hypothetically refer to our salvation as "saved," as the Protestants do. For the orthodox, salvation is a "'Synergetic Process" that can be successfully completed through two dynamics: by grace as well as by work. The word synergism comes from the Greek word synerg (ós), which means working together. The doctrine of synergism, therefore, reflects that the human will cooperates with the Holy Spirit in the act of human regeneration or salvation. That implies accepting God's redemptive grace (Titus 3:6)

while working out one's own salvation (Phil.2:12). Through transgression and misuse of personal freedom, man was irrevocably corrupted, being unable to bear the fruit of righteousness and attain salvation by himself. The Prophet of God, Isaiah recapitulates how much mankind was poorly damaged by sin: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness's are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is. 64:6).

Owing to His compassion, nevertheless, God responded to the unceasing invocation of the fallen creature, with He Himself initiating salvation for humankind. He verbalizes the desire for everyone to be saved: "I have n0 pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Eze.33:11). On account of His mercifulness, He sent His own only begotten Son, assumed the human flesh, and accomplished the task of redemption as Christ. Voluntarily suffered and died on the Cross for our sins. Subsequently, man was liberated from the bondage of original sin through God's grace and granted freedom to facilitate his own salvation, to return to his original state of life, and be reunited with God through his works. The following Scriptural references portray the theological truth which holds that we have attained freedom by God's grace:

- For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).
- Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law" (Rom. 3:20, 28).
- Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

The concept of salvation by grace can be considered "unmerited favor, for the act of reconciliation between the unblemished creator and His creation, corrupted by sin, was not initiated on account of man's worthiness of such mercy. As stated above, God Himself planned and sent His only begotten Son to have us out of the abundance of His mercifulness and loving kindness. St. Paul, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death to his Son

(Rom 5:10). Moreover, God graciously granted salvation to all humankind universally, regardless of race, age, color, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

This essentially is the concept of saved by Grace. Yet, it is up to each individual to willingly accomplish his own salvation following ecclesiastical orders of the universal Church. St. Clement of Alexandria (215 AD) says, "While a man strives and labors by himself to subdue his vicious affections, he can do nothing; but if he manifest an earnest vehement desire to do so, he is enabled by the divine power to accomplish his purpose; for God favors and cO-operates with the willing minds."[30]

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 THE ORTHODOX POSITION OF SALVATION BY WORK, FAITH, AND WILLINGNESS

As a progressive process, salvation requires a person not only to accept the Godhead of Jesus Christ but he must also participate in the redemptive sacraments that are officiated in the Orthodox Church. For example, a candidate wishing to attain salvation has to be primarily reborn of the Holy Trinity through baptism to be freed from ancestral guilt or become empowered and deified by the Holy Spirit according to the Orthodox Church. He also has to confess his own personal sins as instructed adherently by St. Paul. The Apostle exhorts, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Moreover, participating in the Holy Communion makes him worthy of the eternal Kingdom of God. Whether we identify it as an attaining eternal lite or inheriting the Kingdom of God, salvation cannot be accomplished outside of compliance with the definitive commandments of Christ as He charges us saying, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" John 6:54). God does not impose salvation upon people against their will. He requires a person's acceptance, readiness and participation:

[30] Fr. Tadros Malaty, The Divine Grace (Alexandria: St. George Mary Coptic Orthodox Church Sporting 1992), p. 21.

- "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and G0 repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10).
- "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3).
- "Him that over cometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12).
- "Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?" (Jn.5:6).

We need to contemplate how complex the language of soteriology is before disregarding the redemptive teachings of the Orthodox Church. Should we take the Biblical message, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31) literally and assume that our salivation is unconditionally complete, then, we are moving in the wrong direction. If we are unconditionally saved, should we then cease preaching Christian ethics to the world or admonishing sinners for being disobedient to the words of God? Orthodox Christians must be aware of the western view of the doctrine of soteriology which portrays salvation as a court of law where God is the Judge and Christ a defend ant's attorney. This unreasonable approach subordinates Christ to the hierarchy of an attorney while He Himself is a perfect judge and a forgiver of sins. "For the Father Judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" Jn. 5:22). "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mk 2:5).

The Orthodox Church, in contrast, likens salvation to the recovery of a hospitalized patient who undergoes treatment. This analogy demonstrates the individual's willingness towards participation in his own treatment. Here is what the Holy Bible says about individual efforts required for salvation:

- "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12).

- You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" Jam 2:24).
- "And behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life and He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but it you Wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mat. 19:16).

In dealing with the doctrinal theology of soteriology, we should convey Hot only how to attain salvation but also its explicit meaning. As an Orthodox church, we examine the following soteriological concepts Christ taught to the Word and strive to overcome demonic challenges and fleshly thoughts that contradict this divine truth. For us, soteriology signifies that:

6.2 CHRIST RENEWED OUR CORRUPTED HUMANITY AND UNITED US WITH HIM

God's predestined plan and procedure of redemption is the "renewal of relation," corrupted through sin, by assuming uncorrupted human flesh to Himself. The renewal of creation specifically refers to humankind. With this plan, man has been granted an opportunity to pass through a deification process in which he might be united with God through participating in redemptive Sacraments such as baptism and the Eucharist. That was the motive of Christ when He says, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23).

St. Athanasius and St. Clement of Alexandria have set forth closely related conclusions referring to the divinization of humanity. St. Athanasius said, "And thus he, the incorruptible Son of God, being conjoined with all by a like nature, naturally clothed all with incorruption by the promise of the resurrection. For the actual corruption in death has no longer holding-ground against men, by reason of the Word, which by his one body has come to dwell among them."[31]

Clement of Alexandria: "For this He came down, for this He assumed human nature, for this He willingly endured the sufferings of man, that by being reduced to the measure of our weakness He might raise us to the measure of His power."[32]

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[31] Archibald Robertson, Trans.,. Amanasius On the licarnation (London: D. NUTT, 270-271 STRAND, 1891), p. 16

[32] Fr. Tadros Malaty, The Divne Grace (Alexandria: St. George Mary Coptic

6.3 CHRIST CONQUERED DEATH AND GAVE US ETERNAL LIFE

Christ conquered sin on the cross, Overcame death through His resurrection, restored true humanity, empowered lire through the Gospel, and offered hope of salvation through faith and good work. That is what granting eternal life means. Thus, in Christianity, our carnal death is a rest or a sleeping state that prepares us for a new lite of eternity through resurrection. Christ's analogy expounds that concept. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat wall in the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much full Jn.12:24). He reopened the Paradise and stretched a golden ladder containin the stairway (the sacraments) where we might be joined with the righteous and celestial beings. With this understanding, henceforth, we proclaim, "O deati where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cho.15:55). "And you being dead in your sins and the circumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colo.2:13).

St. Athanasius teaches, "And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death He gave it over to death in the stead of all...He might turn them again toward incorruption, and quicken them from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them like straw from the fire."[33] St. Clement of Alexandria adds, "He has changed sunset into sunrise, and through the cross turned death into life; and having wrenched man from destruction, He has raised him to heaven, transplanting mortality into immortality and translating earth to heaven."[34]

6.4 CHRIST DEFEATED SATAN AND GRANTED US AUTHORITY TO GAIN FULL CONTROL OVER OUR ENEMY

Christ overcame the Devil through being passionless. He succeeded in prevailing against his tempting pressures and his sadistic string of physical and emotional attacks and declared freedom

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Orthodox Church Sporting 1992), p. 15.

[33] Philip Schaff & Henry Wage, 1rans., A elected Lu0rary of Vicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of The Christian Church, Vol. IV: St.. Athanastus: Setectea works and Letters (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1892), p. 40.

[34] Fr. Tadros Malaty, The Divine Grace (Alexanaria: st. George Mary Coptic Orthodox Church Sporting, 1992), p. 12.

to the captives he enslaved them. The Lord said, "The prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in Me" Jn.14:30).

Nominating His own disciples as ambassadors of the Holy Church, He also bestowed His own defeating spiritual authority upon them through ordination. The disciples were so contended with this power that they expressed their delight to Christ saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Christ encouraged the Apostles for the upcoming battle against the Devil, acknowledging the spiritual power He granted them: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any jneans hurt you" (Lk.10:17).

St. Athanasius Patriarch of Alexandria pronounces, "For as when Adam had transgressed, his sin reached unto all men, so when the Lord had become man and had overthrown the Serpent, His great strength was extended through to all men so that each one of us may say: "for we are ignorant of his devices."[35]

Humanity has been Granted Divine Glory to Sit at the Right Hand of God Out of His love-kindness, God assumed the very same human flesh which was cast out of the Paradise and deprived of spiritual excitement or ecstasies. Humanity was then empowered participating in Divinity through Christ and gained the ability to ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven and sit at the right hand of God. St. Cyprian of Carthage says, "The Kingdom of God, beloved brethren, is beginning to be at hand; the reward of life, and the rejoicing of eternal salvation, and the perpetual. gladness and possession lately lost of paradise, are now coming, with the passing away of the world; already heavenly things are taking the place of earthly, and great things of small, and eternal things of things that fade away. What room is there here for anxiety and solitude? Who, in the midst of these things, is trembling and sad, except he who is without hope and faith?."[36]

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[35] Fr. Tadros Malaty, The Divine Grace (Alexandria: St. George Mary Coptic Orthodox Church Sporting 1992), P. 12.

[36] Robert Willis, Trans., The Wriings of Ypriun B1Shop of Carthage, Vol. I. (London: Hamilton & Co., 1868), p. 454.

6.5 WE ARE SPIRITUALLY ILLUMINATED THROUGH CHRIST

Spiritual illumination is the condition of pure transcendental knowledge. That is to be aligned with the highest consciousness of the spiritual realms. Following Adam's transgression, our spiritual perception and rationality were taken away and we were thereby led astray towards idolatry and sinfulness of all varieties.

Since the image of God in which man was created was damaged as a result of sin, men lost their divine knowledge and their souls were tainted. As St. Athanasius remarks: "Since then human beings had become so irrational and demonic deceit was thus overshadowing every place and hiding the knowledge of the true God, what was God to do? Be silent before such things and let human beings be deceived by the demons and be ignorant of God?" [37] "He took pity on them, therefore," St. Athanasius continues, "and did not leave them destitute of the knowledge of Himself, lest their very existence should prove purposeless. of what use is existence to the creature if it cannot know its Maker? How could men be reasonable beings if they had no knowledge of the Word and Reason of the Father, through whom they had received their being?" [38]

God illuminated our humanity and bestowed wisdom and true knowledge "Gnosis" upon us through Jesus Christ so that we could apprehend His Godhead, worship him in Spirit, and work hard for the Everlasting Kingdom of God. When St. Elizabeth gave birth to her son predestined by God, her husband Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and stated the following predications: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Lk. 1:77).

St. Paul contends that divine knowledge cannot be given to whoever wishes to obtain it (1 Cori 8:6). In addition, he mentions the specific source of this wisdom when he says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the

[37] Archibald Robertson, Trans. St. Aanastuson the lncarnation (London: D. Nutt, 270-271 Strand,1891), p.25

[38] Archibald Robertson, Trans.St. Ptusttbdn tic lcArtton (London: D. Nutt, 270-271 Strand1891), p. 19.

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cho. 4:6). For the Orthodox, spiritual illumination may not be perceived just as a grace but a powerful instrument that enables Christians to see God in His glory, understand our own nakedness, and come to perfection by participating in the holy sacraments. Such is the meaning of individual salvation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 SALVATION AND THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY

From the Orthodox perspective, overcoming sin and attaining the kingdom of God as an ultimate reward should be the objective or ideal of salvation. Yet, it should be noted that, in terms to life after death, the final destiny of humans, and the procedures through which salvation could be effected, the Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia relies on Biblical and patristic testimonies demonstrated by Christ and His predecessors.

Accordingly, the souls of departed men and women stand before the Son of God for judgment as He sits upon the throne of His glory at the doomsday.

They have two undetermined fortunes. Each one may receive a reward of an everlasting life in the Kingdom of God or everlasting judgment in the Hell according to what he has done in his lite (Mt. 25:46). The Apostle Paul pronounces, "For we must all appear Derore tne judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cori. 5:10).

ST. Cyprian of Carthage denotes that both the righteous and unrighteous will Similarly die, but each receives judgment according to his deeds. FHe stales, The fact that, without any difference made between one and another, the righteous die as well as the unrighteous, is no reason for you to suppose that it is a common death for the good and evil alike. The righteous are called to their Place of refreshing, the unrighteous are snatched away to punishment; safety is the more speedily given to the faithful, penalty to the unbelieving."[39]

[39] Robert Willis, Trans., The Writings of Cyprian Bishop of Carthage, Vol. I. (London: Hamilton & Co., 1868), p. 461.

The Roman Catholic Church has, unfortunately, inserted an imperceptible doctrine of soteriology referred to as purgatory. The word purgatory comes from the Latin work "purgare," which means to make clean or to purify. It is defined as a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who are departing this life in God's grace but are not entirely free from venial tauits, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.[40] Associated with the new doctrine of Purgatory, the Roman Catholic Church categorizes the destiny of departed souls into three classifications:

- The souls of taintless saints immediately enter the regions of great joy.
- The souls of those who died with original sin go straight to eternal punishment.
- The souls of Christians who have confessed their sins, but were unable to bring forth fruits of repentance sufficient to atone for their sins, are purified by the purgatory fire some sooner, others slower, according to their sins. After their purification, they transfer to the land of eternal bliss. Liturgical prayers, sacrifices, and deeds of charities help them attain their purification.

According to exclusive remarks made by William Hall, the Roman doctrine of Purgatory is a place or a state containing real fire, situated in close proximity to the area of Hell. The temporary punishment of purgatory fire, where sinners compensate for their faults by material tlames, will be more intolerable than anyone can pressume. This temporary punishment includes deprivation of the beatific vision of God. The punishment was instituted by God Himself for the satisfaction of His justice. Souls willingly suffer to attain eternal salvation and experience implausible consolations while in purgatory. The writer explores, "The duration of punishment varies according to the number of Sins to De expiated or according to the plentitude of prayers, alms, and massen offered for the liberation of suffering souls."[41]

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[40] William Hall, The Doctrine of Furga aa tne FTactice of Praying for the Dead (London: Henry Wix, 41, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, 1843), p. 4.

[41] William Hall, The Doctrine of Purgatory and a the Fractice of Praying for the Dead (London: Henry Wix, 41, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, 1843), p. 4.

Purgatory was derived from Plato's philosophy of the heathenic tradition,[42] as Hall's scrutiny of the subject reveals. However, Koman theologians recount the following Biblical references as a foremost foundation for their dogmatic expositions.

- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13).
- "And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebukes you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" (Zech. 3:2).
- "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" (Mt. 12:32).
- That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"(1 Pet 1:6).

Before presenting the Orthodox position, it would seem productive to elaborate the ideal patristic interpretation of St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, as this message has been erroneously contused as a primary source for the Purgatory doctrine to the koman Catholic Church. St. Paul says, "Every man's work shall be made manitest.it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor.3:13). Essentially, what is supposed to be tested by fire is a man's work, not the person himself, and the consuming fire stated here is not a material tlame, but the righteous Lord. St. Paul says, "Our God is a consuming fire" Heb. 12:29). As He comes back with His Heavenly Angels for judgment, the Lord sits on the throne of fire and his glory kindles like the radiance of the sun (2 Thess. 1:6). Everyone's biography shall be exposed before Him, and everyone s earthly work shall be tested in the process of Divine Judgment.

7.2 THE ORTHODOX VIEW OF PURGATORY FIRE

1) Purgatory Discredits the Redemption of Christ and Contradicts the Doctrine of Salvation:

[42] Ibid. 6.

The Orthodox Churches comprehend Purgatory as a misdirected teaching which Opposes the doctrine of Atonement and Redemption. Man was so incapable to atone for his own sins and pay for Divine Justice that God sent His own only begotten Son to suffer for us on the Cross. Atonement and Redemption is therefore the work of our Savior. Should human sufferings have been capable or Satistying the Divine Justice, Christ would have not suffered on the Cross for our redemption. Christians should attain purification for their souls only by the blood of Jesus Christ, not by material fire. St. John claims, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). Furthermore, St. Paul remarks, "But with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).

- Purgatory disdains the suffering of Christ, and discredits His love which saved the world. Scripture says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16).
- "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Rom. 3:24-25)
- "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:1-2)
- "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10).

2. PURGATORY MARGINALIZES THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS

As previously detailed, some of the Seven Sacraments officiated in the Orthodox Church such as Confession, the Eucharist, and Confirmation have absolute redemptive values. Repentance, for example, persists in being the key spiritual means of salvation where a sinner attains purification from his iniquities. God forgives penitents who have commtted all sorts of sins and never remembers their transgressions. There is no sin that could not be blotted through the sacrament of repentance. Thus, there is no reason fora Christian to have to suffer from the purgatory fire to

temporal punishment while participating in redemptive sacraments, for there 15 no sin which remains unremitted after Confession and partaking in the Holy Communion.

- Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)
- And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you al trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:13,14).
- "I, even l, am He Who blots out transgressions for My own sake and I will not remember your sins" (Isa 43:25).
- If a wicked man turns from all his sins.. none of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him (Eze.18:21).

3. PURGATORY CONTRADICTS GOD'S MERCY AND HIS DIVINE JUSTICE

God has redeemed the human race with His mercifulness and loving kindness, irrespective of our disobedience and rebellion. He did not demand from man any preconditions to be satisfied for his own salvation other than participating in the Redemptive Sacraments such as Confession and Baptism. He who has got washed with water remains clean and needs no bath anymore unless he becomes dirty once again. Scriptures present testimony to this perception:

- "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps 51:7).
- "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18)
- "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (Eze. 36:25).

Throughout all God's ministerial ofices of redemptive purification, we do not observe any punishment wrought against man or any contribution man has made towards his own salvation. Moreover, the ministry of purification takes place on this earth -not after death, and the process should be carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit through immersion in clean water not through the torme of fiery flames. Therefore, for the Orthodox, accepting purgatory as a doctrine discredits God's mercy.

Furthermore, the Orthodox has no doubt that the price of our wages has already been paid by Christ as He received a vicarious suffering for our sins. St. Danl has said, "We are bought with a price (1 Cori.6:20). Whereas, the suffering humans would receive in the purgatory tire implies that two persons have paid the prices of our sins - Christ and the sinning individual himself. This notion clearly contradicts God's Divine Justice. Another point contrary to Divine Justice lies within a scenario that the departed immaterial souls suffer with corporeal fire while the human material bodies which were directly involved in sin are yetyngn graves (Gal.5:17). Essentially, how the human soul, purified by fire, shall De united with unpurified flesh and what God's end time judgment could be upon such a condition remains unexplained

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1 SALVATION AND THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

Another western philosophy of the Christian doctrine which contradicts the Orthodox true concept of salvation is Predestination. Divine Predestination, oftentimes called religious determinism, is a Roman Catholic doctrine which inculcates that from eternity God unconditionally elects certain people for salvation out of all corrupted creatures. The doctrinal concepts of Predestination and salvation "By Grace only" are inextricably interwoven. St. Augustine and his later predecessors claim that, since humanity was gravely corrupted, only Divine grace emancipates mankind from the bondage of sin and that such Divine grace cannot be endowed to everyone. Thus, God unconditionally elects and foreordains some people for salvation.

This doctrine was taught by Augustine in response to the heresy of Pelagius. Pelagius (390-418 A.D), a well-educated Romano-British monk, denied original sin and believed that man has no need for Divine grace. He persisted in his opinion that man should be accountable for his own deeds, and attain salvation through free will alone. He purported that God does not foreordain certain people while denying others but wills salvation to all souls uniformly.

Certainly, the heresy of Pelagius discredits the power of Divine grace and the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Pelagius was ultimately condemned and excommunicated from the Church at the Council of Carthage in 418 A.D. Nevertheless, St. Augustine obstinately proceeded

to defend the doctrine of Predestination and became increasingly hardened. His apologetics became inextricable and deviated from the teaching of the Alexandrian and Cappadocian Church fathers.

While zealously defending what he considered the true religious position, St. Augustine unfortunately missed the point and became the fountainhead of subsequent Roman and Protestant heterodoxies. Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) are two prominent figures who expanded on St. Augustine's doctrine of justification by faith alone. Calvin, specifically, was known as a pioneer of reformed faith and the tather of "double predestination" teaching as he did that God predestines some people for salvation and others for amnation. He did not recognize the etticacy of holy sacraments, specifically hantism and Eucharist, and believed that Jesus Christ died only for elected ones. (Put references)

Despite the fact that predestination remains essentially philosophical exponents still believe that it is posited on the basis of God's omniscience omnipotence, and Divine providence doctrines. They also quote limited Biblical references such as St. Paul's epistle, wherein he states "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29). The Orthodox interpretation of this scripture is entirely different.

8.2 THE ORTHODOX POSITION OF PREDESTINATION

The Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia renounces the doctrine of predestination and presents a comprehensive analysis of the Christian dogmatic exposition of salvation, as we shall discuss as follows. At the outset, we must emphasize that St. Paul's letter to the Romans 8:29 refers to God's foreknowledge. God knows beforehand people who fight against carnal temptations, making an effort for righteousness through hard work and those who come to condemnation through disobeying His commandments. Yet, He does not intervene in their freedom of choices although He wants everyone to be saved. Therefore, the predestination of individuals' salvation depends upon their participation in the redemptive plan of God.

Salvation is not exclusively dependent either on man or God. Essentially, both parties have roles to play. God has already unlocked His door through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son and calls for everyone to enter into His Kingdom. Yet, man still stumbles and walks behind. Thus,

salvation is not about how much God loves us but how much we respond to God's law of love. From St. Paul's epistle to the Romans referenced above, we have determining points to deal with. He says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28-30).

St. Paul has made it unwaveringly clear that some people are predestined for salvation not because God had some unconditional favor towards them, but because they "love God" and work hard for righteousness "according to His purpose." The Apostle reasserts his position to the Church of Corinthians indicating that God rewards those who respond to His love, being compliant with His commandments as he writes, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have come into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cori. 2:9).

Adherents of predestination theology must sensibly explore the distinction between God's will and his foreknowledge. God predestining a person's fortune means He knows what actions the person will take. The Apostles Paul and Peter have similar opinions in terms of what is stated above.

Paul says, "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined" (Rom 8:29) and St Teter adds, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Pet 1:2). we have some other controversial orientations that put the evenhandedness of God in question for the minds of confounded Biblical readers. These scriptural concepts need a thoughtful analysis. For example, before Jacob and Esau were born, God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom.9:13). Moreover, the apostle symbolizes God by a potter to indicate that He has the right and authority to do whatever He wants. These passages, however, do not appropriately define the perfect attributes of God and His Divine will. God is not a sadist, one who seeks pleasure from painful humiliation and detestation of His own people, or one who loves some irrationally and hates others out of any practical reason. A potter dreaming to make a vessel of honor ruins his hand work reasonably as he finds it displeasing or ugly. Similarly, God loves Jacob and hates Esau because He knows the mind of Jacob and the intention of Esau beforehand. That is where His decision comes from. As St. Paul detailed in his account to the second letter to Timothy (2 Tim 2:20), we can attain the favor of God and prepare ourselves to make a vessel of honor through practicing righteousness and maintaining faith or otherwise dishonor ourselves by doing the opposite.

Should people change their mind from wickedness to righteousness, God changes His position about them. According to St. Paul, God says, "Those who were not my people I will call "my people", and her who was not beloved I will call "beloved". "'And in the very place where it was said to them, "You are not my people", there they shall be called children of the living God" (Rom 9:25). He also revealed His considerate nature by the mouth of Jeremiah and said, "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned, And it at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it" Jer. 18:7).

Two evidential points, that man can work out his own salvation and that God wills universal salvation for all people alike, may suffice to conclusively identify the incongruity of the predestination philosophy.

8.3 GOD WILLS ALL PEOPLE TO BE UNIVERSALLY SAVED:

- This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desire all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," (1 Tim 2:4).
- I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezek 33:11).
- "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins and not ours only but also for the whole world." (1 Jn. 2:2).
- "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Jn. 3:16)
- "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk 16:15).

8.4 HUMANS HAVE UNLIMITED FREE WILL:

- "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2: 12).

- "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life,that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut 30:19)
- "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword" (Is 1:19- 20).
- "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." (Mt 19:17)
- The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come." (Mt 22:2-3).
- "Behold, I stand on the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me." (Rev 3:20)
- "O Jerusalem.. how often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Mt 23:37)
- Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you." (Jn. 5:40).

8.5 ADVERSE EFFECTS OF PREDESTINATION DOCTRINE

The Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia decline to acknowledge the doctrine of predestination based on some considerable determining Justifications.

First, scriptural hints we find both in the Old and the New Testaments do not precisely provide a basis for the formulation of predestination. Second, none of the patristic writers of the early Church mentioned this belief. It simply remains untraditional. Thirdly, the teaching in which a person's ultimate destiny, whether it be salvation or damnation, is determined by God alone has the following adverse effects in Christian doctrine:

- Predestining certain people makes the Christian God unjust and imperfect in His love, for He calls some for salvation and others for condemnation.
- Predestination causes moral lapses and laziness, for people would not want to pray and be subject to the Christian code of Ethics once they come to know they are unconditionally predestined for salvation.

- Should we not proclaim that all humans are emancipated from original sin and are universally called for salvation, then the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ are worthless.
- Should we accept predestination instead of universal salvation, then we are aimlessly preaching the Gospel and aimlessly officiating redemptive sacraments.

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