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TIPS FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN PAPER ONE

Learners are required to use only "**Should**" especially when giving the lessons and relevance.

E.g. "*What do modern leaders learn from the reign of King Ahab?*"

Answer; *Modern leaders **should** be contented with what they have unlike King Ahab who admired Naboth's vineyard which eventually led to Naboth's death.*

The lessons should be **positive** and therefore phrases **like** *should not, Learn not to, learn that, and should know that.*" should never be used while stating your points/lessons.

Your points should be very brief and clear;

Points should be accompanied with **relevant examples/evidence** for you to qualify for a **tick**.

E.g. *Examine the ways in which King David violated the covenant faith.*

Answer; *King David committed adultery. He had sexual intercourse with Batsheba-Uriah's wife which was against the covenant way of life.*

QUESTIONING TERMS;

Account for **means** give reasons why. E.g. *Account for the call of Abram.*

Comment **means** talk about (biblical facts) E.g. *Comment on the use of symbolism during the ministry of Jeremiah.*

Give an account **means** narrate a story (biblical facts) E.g. *Give an account on the call of Samuel as a prophet in Israel.*

Justify **means** give reasons to confirm. E.g. *Justify the view that Exodus is the beginning of Israel.*

Examine **means** critically write about. E.g. *Examine the origin and purpose of Psalms to the Israelite's community.*

Assess **means** give detailed explanations which are both positive and negative. E.g. *Assess the impact of the construction of the Jerusalem Temple by King Solomon.*

Analyze **means** critical argument about something (biblical facts). E.g. *Analyze the significance of the offering of the first harvest to God in Deut 26.*

Compare **means** give both similarities and differences (backed by facts). E.g. *Compare the calls of Moses and Ezekiel.*

To what extent; **means** giving your opinion, giving a larger or smaller extent for the contribution of a given factor in question. E.g. *To what extent were religious leaders responsible for the disobedience of the Israelites?*

Discuss **means** explain with facts e.g. *Discuss the factors that hinder people from responding to God's call.*

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

*The book of Genesis is one of the 5 books of the Pentateuch (believed to have been written by Moses). It highlights the creation of the universe and man, the beginning of the marriage institution, the rib story, the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3**) and the call of Abraham by God to restore the lost relationship between man and God (**Genesis 12**)*

THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND GOD'S PLAN IN GENESIS 1 AND 2

Genesis 1 and 2 present the creation of the world and everything in it inclusive of man. After God creating man from his image (in **Genesis 1:26**) and molding man from soil (in **Genesis 2:7**). God had intentions for mankind which may include the following;

Man was supposed to live forever without dying and that is why God since he was created from God's image.

Man was to have power over other creatures; the fish, the birds and all other animals because he was put in charge of them. (**Gen 1:28**).

Human beings were to live in harmony, good relationship with other creatures that had had been created by God. For example God had even given Man power to name other creatures.

Man was to live happily and in harmony with God and God was in position to bless them to have children and fill the universe.

Originally man and woman were to live equally as intended by God because He created them from His own Image. (**Gen 1:26**)

God had made man's work as a blessing through pro-creation and co-creation without any difficult.

Man to man relationship was intended to be in harmony, peace and joy without hatred and conflicts amidst them.

Pro-creation had been blessed and the woman was to produce without feeling pain and difficult.

Man was to cultivate and guard the Garden of Eden and eat the fruits in the garden except the fruit from the tree in the middle of the Garden that gives Knowledge of what is good and bad.

Man was to have many children with a purpose of fulfilling the earth and to control it. (**Genesis 1:28**)

Man was to leave his father and mother to be united with his father and become one peacefully. (**Gen 2:24**)

COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE TWO CREATION STORIES/ACCOUNTS

Similarities

Both creation stories address the beginning of the universe; **Gen 1** and **2** talks about the beginning when God created the universe it was empty. **Gen 1:1**

In both stories monogamy is the ideal form of marriage and a divine institution i.e. God created one man for one woman.

Both show God as the provider; **Gen 1:29** showed God had provided all kinds of grain and fruit for man. **Gen 2:16**, God said, you may eat all the fruit of any tree except the tree that gives knowledge of good and bad.

Both show that God created man and woman; **Gen 1:27** shows how God created male and female just like **Gen 2:18** shows God creating man a suitable companion to help him.

Both stories assert the pro-creating ability of man; for instance Gen1 God said, "Have many children" and in **Gen 2** man is commanded to leave his father to live together.

Both creation accounts show the pre-existence of God. This is because he was behind all the creations.

The character and nature of God is also given in the two creation stories. I.e. both stories show God as the creator of the universe. **Gen 1:3, Gen 2:7**

The two accounts show that man was given authority over all that God had created; Gen, says let us create human beings, they will resemble us and will have power over the fish, birds and all other animals just as **Gen 2:15** shows how God placed man in the garden of Eden to guard it.

Both creation accounts emphasize the omnipotent, omnipresence of God; for instance in Gen1 God created by a mere command. Let there be and it was" similarly in **Gen 2** God breathed in man.

Both creation stories present God as the source of life; in **Gen 2:7** God breathed life giving breathe into man`s nostrils and he began to live and in **Gen 1:26** God created man that resembled him.

Both show that prior there was harmony, good relationship, peace between God, man and other creatures; for instance in **Gen2**, God created the animals and brought them to man for naming similarly in **Gen 1**, God blessed man and gave him power over other creatures.

In both accounts, God was happy with what he had created; in Gen1 after every creation God was pleased with what he had created and in **Gen 2:24** he says, "that's why a man leaves his father and mother to be united as one.

God is the creator of everything in the universe; for instance in **Gen 1** God created the universe in six days similarly in Gen2 he got soil and created everything.

DIFFERENCES

1 ST CREATION ACCOUNT (Genesis 1)	2 ND CREATION ACCOUNT (Genesis 2)
The idea of trinity seems to be evident showing that God was not alone by the time of creation. Gen 1:26 "let us..."	God seems to have been alone during the creation. I.e. Gen 2:18 "I will make for him a suitable companion to help him."
Gen 1 is poetic in language i.e. the first day, second day, 3 rd day....	Gen 2 is symbolic i.e. Garden of Eden meaning paradise, tree of life meaning ending life.
God made man from his own image, Gen 1:26 God said "let us make human beings and they will resemble us."	God created man from soil and thus the idea of image is left out.
Man had the freedom over all that was created by God. He was the summit of God`s creation	Man was commanded not to eat the fruits of the tree in the middle that gave knowledge of what is good and bad.
God named all the creatures that He had created	Man was given the mandate of naming all the creatures.

More emphasis is put on the observance of the Sabbath	Emphasis is more on man's attitude towards work and his subsequent fall.
The 1 st creation account, the language is plural "let us..."	It uses the first person singular "I will..."
There is constant appreciation of whatever was created by God.	The idea of appreciation is lacking in the 2 nd account
Both man and woman were created at the same time Gen 1:28	Man was created first and the woman later.
Man is created by a divine command and the substance through which man was created is not mentioned	Man is molded from soil and later breathed in him a life giving breathe.

Always Use only "while" in all your paragraphs

REASONS FOR THE INCONSISTENCIES/DIFFERENCES IN THE TWO ACCOUNTS

The two creation stories are different because of the differences in the background of the two writers and thus had different desires to address.

The 1st account author majored to show the power of God while the 2nd account author wished to encourage people to work hard to rebuild the temple hence a difference.

The two accounts were written at different times for example it took 400 years to write the first account after the second creation account.

The two accounts writers had different versions/sources from where information was extracted.

The oral tradition where information was passed from one generation to another by mouth and eventually written down made people to write the accounts with a difference because they had different memories.

Difference in periods of writing; the 1st account was written before the Babylonian exile while the 2nd was written after the exile hence the inconsistency in the two creation stories.

The difference in the aims of the writers, the 1st writer aimed at instilling faith by emphasizing the importance of the Sabbath while the 2nd writer wished to develop people's attitude towards work.

The difference in the writers; the 1st creation account is believed to have been written by dedicated people like the priests while the 2nd account is in the Yahewist source with a relaxed belief about the super natural powers.

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM GOD'S IMAGE GEN 1:26

Then God said "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And this had hidden meaning which include the following;

Creating of man in God's image showed that he is a co-creator with God. God did his work and gave the responsibility of creation to man. Man is to subdue the world so as to create alongside what God created.

It showed that man is the representative of God on earth. That is he reflects God's presence on earth and acts as God's servant on earth.

It showed that man is beyond other creatures. That is he is transcendent in reasoning and judgment.

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The creating of man in God`s image implied that mankind has been given a gift of pro-creation, since God is a creator; therefore man has to subdue the world.

Man being created in the image of God means that there is equality among people. Since they were a man is beyond other creatures. That is he is transcendent in reasoning and judgment.

The creating of man in God`s image implied that mankind has been given a gift of pro-creation, since God is a creator; therefore man has to subdue the world.

Man being created in the image of God means that there is equality among people. Since they were all created in God`s image i.e. man and woman are equal before God since they share God`s characters.

The creation of man in God's image meant that man is the summit of all creation; He is above all creature in matters of reasoning and character.

It implied that man is unique from the rest of the creation since his the only one who shares a special relationship with God.

It meant that man should worship God because he was created in a special way.

It meant that man has to develop in God`s likeness, for example he should be holy just as God is holy. Since he shares in this holiness by the fact that he was created in the image of God

It also showed the loving nature of God towards mankind and man has to love God and his fellow mankind.

It shows that man is unequal to God. He is just a mere reflection with qualities like reasons, intelligence and judgment of good and bad.

It means that man shares God`s quality of living forever unlike other creature. He was created to live forever though death came in after man`s disobedience in Gen 3.

It means that man has a close relationship with God since man looks like God; therefore man should fellowship with him.

HOW HAS MAN LIVED TO HONOR GOD`S IMAGE

Man has upheld God`s image (doing good) in the following ways;

Giving respect to God the Almighty

Answering God`s call of co-creation

Answering God`s appeal of pro-creation

Confessing and repenting

Total respect for fellow man and leaders and those in authority

Ability to work hard and creativity

Spreading of the word of God

Respecting the Sabbath day

HOW HAS MAN FAILED TO HONOR GOD'S IMAGE (Summary)

On the other hand, man has lost the original trend under which he was created and this has manifested itself in the following;

Man has carried out murder

Rampant sex abuses

Dubious ways of acquiring wealth like corruption, robbery and cheating

Pollution of the environment

The tendency of under looking women, the poor, weak and the vulnerable groups

Manufacture of deadly weapons and chemicals such as atomic bombs, missiles.

The practice of syncretism and divination

Lack of respect for elders

Loss of interest in Godly activities

WHAT GENESIS 1-2 TEACH ABOUT MARRIAGE

God is the author of marriage. He created Adam and Eve, put them together, blessed them and told them to multiply and fill the universe.

It teaches about companionship in marriage. Man and woman cannot do without each other. God therefore created a woman and a man such that they satisfy their desires to each other.

There should be procreation in marriage. The married people should produce children and fill the universe as Adam and Eve were instructed.

There should be equality in marriage and that's why God created the two from his own image and woman being created from man's rib respectively.

The man and woman should enjoy sex since it a gift from God to the married people.

Monogamy is the ideal type of marriage. One woman was created for one man.

Marriage should be permanent. Therefore acts like divorce and separation should be avoided.

There should be mutual understanding in marriage. The two have to be united and agree on whatever to be done.

Love and respect are the key components in marriage. The husband and wife get united and they decided to stay together as a result of love.

Trust and faithfulness have to prevail in marriage in order to sustain marriage.

Marriage is for companionship. God realized that Adam was lonely and He decided to create for him a suitable companion Eve.

Marriage is a necessity of life. Eve was created because Adam was unhappy without her and when God created Eve, he became happy.

MEANING OF GOD'S COMMAND TO MAN TO BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

It implied that man had to undertake marriage as a divine institution from God. God created Adam and Eve as male and female for marriage purposes.

It meant that marriage had to be accompanied by production of children. Gen 1:28 God told them to multiply and fill the universe.

It implied that marriage had to be between male and female in order to make it productive.

It implied that sex in marriage was a gift from God given to man and woman to produce and multiply.

It meant that God is the source of fertility and so man has to pray to God to bless him with fertility. **Gen 1:28** blessed them and told them to subdue the world.

It meant that children are additional blessings from God. After initiating their marriage, He blessed them and told them to multiply and fill the universe.

The command of multiplying and subduing the universe is against abortion and other forms of killing children.

The divine command implied that all forms of sex abuse for example homosexuality, lesbianism that are against production of children are not recommended by God.

It meant that marriage partners should satisfy themselves sexually so as to produce children and subdue the world.

It teaches against the use of contraceptives and any other measures which limit production of children.

NATURE OF MAN ACCORDING TO GENESIS 1-2

Man is the summit of God's creation. God created no other creature above man.

Man is the representative of God on earth and therefore is the right creature to represent God.

Man is a co-creator. He was expected to improve on what was put in place by the creator in order to make the world a better place to live in.

Man is seen as a pro-creator. He was supposed to produce with his wife and fill the universe as they were blessed by God.

Man and woman are equal before God. He created them from his own image.

Man was given powers to control the rest of the creatures because he was created above them.

Man shares a special relationship with God. He shares some qualities with God like he was given wisdom above the rest of other creatures.

Both man and woman were blessed by God and told them to multiply and fill the universe.

NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO GENESIS 1-2

Genesis 1-2 presents God as a unique being different from creatures in Gen 1-2.

God is seen as a pre-existent being. He existed before the world took its present form.

God is omnipotent. He is so powerful that his word brought the world into existence.

God is a perfect worker. After his creation exercise, he was pleased with what he saw because it was good.

He is omniscient. He is all knowing. He knew that Adam needed a companion and that's why He formed Eve from his ribs.

He is reflected as a spirit. He is untouchable and unseen. His physical identity is still a mystery to man.

He is a hardworking God. He worked for 6 days while creating the universe and he gave himself the seventh day for resting.

He is recognized as a source of life. He created all creatures and breathe life into man for survival.

God is a lovely God. He loved man so much that He made him from his own image, gave him the Garden of Eden and gave man a suitable companion.

He is designer. He designed the universe so well with valleys, hills, mountains and flat areas.

He placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave him all things to make him enjoy the fruits of life.

He is omnipresent. He always visited Man in the Garden of Eden in the evening.

He is the author of marriage to mankind. He created male and female an indication of a marriage relationship.

THE RIB STORY GENESIS 2:21-22

"The lord God made man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the ribs of man and clothed up the flesh." He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

Then, the man said; "at last, here is one of my own kind, bone taken from my bone and fresh from my fresh, woman is her name because she was taken out of man".

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE MIS-INTERPRETATION OF THE RIB STORY TODAY (Summary)

There is a lot of sexual harassment of women.

There is women battering in some societies

Widow inheritance

Women are considered to be of low status (inferior)

Lots of inferiority complex of women and men take themselves as superior.

Women are denied certain opportunities and men taken as priorities

There is social inequality between men and women.

Women are taken as sex objects by some men in some societies.

Women are considered to be assets to some parents during marriage/payment of bride wealth.

Women are denied certain food stuffs. Forced marriage to young girls to old men

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LESSONS CHRISTIANS LEARN FROM THE CREATION STORIES

Christians should worship God the Almighty. He created the universe.

They should show love to one another since God also showed love to man to the extent of creating Man from his own image.

They should work since God also worked for six days by creating the universe and molding man from soil.

They should try to live a righteous life since God is holy and He does not associate with unrighteousness.

They should have faith in God the creator. Therefore trusting other gods is forbidden.

They should enjoy leisure. They should rest after a day's work. God rested on the 7th day after creation.

They should practice monogamy. God created one woman for one man and thus people should marry only one wife.

They should respect the Sabbath and treat it holy as a special day set aside by God.

They should promote equal treatment to all people. God created man from his own image and thus all people are equal before God.

They should co-create since God instructed man to continue with his work of creation.

They should pro-create since Adam and Eve were instructed to multiply and fill the universe.

THE FALL OF MAN IN GENESIS 3

This presents the beginning of sin, disobedience and the effects of sin. God had created the Universe placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave man instruction to make him enjoy his life. However man disobeyed God's instructions.

".....you may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and bad. You must not eat the fruit of the tree, if you do, you will die the same day".

Satan appeared in a more cunning and mysterious manner in order to lure man into his trap (Gen 3:1-5)

Man listened to the serpent and usurped God's powers. They attempted to lack trust in their God and failed to obey his laws.

MEANING/IMPLICATIONS OF EATING THE FRUIT IN GEN 3

(The act of eating the fruit was also more than eating the fruit (more than rebellion), because it implied that man committed several sins against God which may include the following ;)

It meant that man was disobedient to God. In **Gen 2:15-17** God instructed Adam and Eve not to eat the forbidden fruit in the middle of the Garden of Eden, but they instead ignored his command and ate the fruit.

Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit meant that man was greedy; they took more than what God had provided. God provided them with all the fruits except that in the middle of the Garden.

It meant that man and woman were repentant. This is seen when they failed to ask for forgiveness after sin and instead blamed each other.

It meant man had failed to master creation having allowed the snake and woman to deceive him. Man was given a responsibility of controlling all the creatures but instead he succumbed to the snake.

Adam and Eve eating the fruit meant they had lacked trust in God as the provider and instead trusted the snake.

It meant that they had refused to accept responsibility of sin; they continued blaming each other for instance Adam blamed Eve and Eve shifted the blame to the snake.

They were trying to equate themselves to God because the snake told them that God did not want to be like him. So they ate thinking that they will be like God.

Eve eating the fruit meant that she accepted to be tempted by a mere creature (snake) yet she was aware of the truth.

It meant that they had lost faith in God as the provider and instead trusted in the snake. They would have told the snake that God refused to eat fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden.

It meant that Adam and Eve acted independent of God when they refused to follow his instructions and wanted to be their own bosses.

It meant that Eve took the responsibility which was not hers; of giving the fruit to the man.

It meant that man had missed the wisdom God had given him to decide between good and bad i.e. by choosing the bad thing of eating the forbidden fruit.

The giving of the fruit to Eve by Eve meant that the serpent assumed the responsibility that was not its own. It there wanted to compete with God.

It meant that the snake distorted God's message which led mankind into sin. For instance in **Genesis 3:4**, the snake said, "you will not die".

N.B; (These points clearly explains why Adam and Eve deserved the punishment in Gen 3)

NATURE OF GOD IN RELATION TO THE FALL OF MAN GEN 3

According to the fall of man, God can be described in the following ways;

God is merciful to mankind; He dressed Adam and Eve which signified forgiveness.

He is a holy God who does not associate with ungodliness. Therefore, Adam and Eve were punished because of being unholy.

He is a loving God; out of his love he made clothes for Adam and Eve and dressed them.

He is all-knowing (omniscient). He knew that Adam had committed evil and that's why he looked for them and knew that they need clothes to cover themselves.

He is a sympathetic God. He acted with a lot of sympathy and decided to dress Adam and Eve after realizing their nakedness.

He is omnipresent. He is found everywhere and cannot be found in only one place. He was walking in the Garden of Eden.

He is a jealousy God. He punished Adam and Eve who had trusted and believed the serpent yet they were meant to believe in God only.

He is a source of all providence. He provided Adam and Eve with clothes after eating the forbidden fruit.

He is a punishing God. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, he pronounced judgment upon them for example He chased man out of the Garden of Eden.

He is the creator, when Adam and Eve realized their nakedness; He made clothes from animal skin and dressed them.

He is a spirit. After man`s disobedience, it is said that God was walking in the Garden of Eden but not physically because He does not possess a physical body.

NATURE/FEATURES OF SIN ACCORDING TO GEN 3

Sin is disobedience of man to God; Adam and Eve disobeyed even after warning them against the eating of the fruit.

Sin is attractive and persuasive; for instance Eve ate the fruit because she believed that they were fresh and good.

Sin is punishable. After Adam and eve eating the forbidden fruit they were punished by God when God sent them out of the garden.

Sin destroys relationships; Adam and eve lost their relationship with God which existed before and relationship between man and other creatures worsened. In **Gen 3:10-12**, God started accusing man and man accused one another.

Sin leads to guilt and shame. That is after sinning Adam and Eve hid from God. **Gen 3:18**.

Sin brings about suffering. After Adam and eve sinning they lost joy happiness and freedom which was given to them and they were expelled out of the Garden of Eden.

Sin leads to loss of confidence. After Adam and Eve realizing that they were in wrong they went into hiding. **Gen 3:18**.

Sin make man`s life hard for example it was after sinning that the suffering in form of work, pain while giving birth came to existence.

Sin degrades mankind; Adam lost his responsibility of mastering other creatures. God`s intention for man was for him to be above all other creatures but man accepted to be mastered by the snake.

Sin is tempting. Eve was tempted by a snake and she tempted Adam.

Sin is abusing God`s trust entrusted in man. Adam and Eve abused God`s trust which he had put in them to the extent of being created in his image.

Sin is mockery; Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in a view of getting better but they ended up being worse.

Sin comes in any way. Eve saw how beautiful the fruit was and how good it would be to share with Adam.

Sin results into death. **Gen 3:19** says, you were made from soil and you will go back to soil again". I.e. man lost his eternal life as a way of punishment from God.

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Sin is social; it shifted from the snake to Eve and finally to Adam. This means that man can influence his fellow man into sin since Eve led Adam into sinning.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN ACCORDING TO GENESIS 3

The impact of sin (punishments) on man, woman and snake

Mankind was chased from the Garden of Eden. **Gen 3:23-24**. He lost all the benefits of peace, joy and happiness that had been given to him by God.

Death as a punishment set in **Gen 3:19** says, you were made from soil and you will become soil again". This meant that man's possibility of living forever was terminated.

The original equality between man and woman faded and was replaced with man's superiority over the woman and so the man has a lot of authority over the woman.

The original peace and harmony between man and other creatures was lost. The snake became an enemy of man and since then so are the other creatures.

Work which had been given to man as a blessing became a curse, it became harder and difficult. I.e. man was to toil and till the soil throughout his life.

Land was cursed to produce thorns, thistles and weeds.

The snake was cursed to crawl on its belly and to eat dust.

As a result of sin the woman was to suffer from labor pains. This meant that pro-creation which was originally a source of blessings became a painful exercise to the woman.

The woman was to have great desire for the man despite the troubles and the pains she would pass through.

Man to man relationship became sour. There was hatred between man for instance in Gen 4, Cain killed Abel because of jealousy and greed which came as a result of sin.

Sin resulted into shame. On seeing their nakedness man hid away from another and from God.

The relationship between God and man became sour after man's disobedience, because of sin, man started to hide away from God.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IN GEN 3 TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

The snake always bite people and some people even die of snake bites i.e. the off springs of the woman are great enemies with the offspring of the snake.

Women have troubles in pregnancy and pain at giving birth even up to date as a result of man's disobedience in **Genesis 3**.

Women today are subordinates to men i.e. they are mistreated by husbands and some even are battered to the point of death.

Man everywhere has to work hard before he can get what to eat i.e. work which was a blessing became a curse and man toils before getting what to eat.

Death is experienced today; today man goes back to the soil since he lost the gift of living for ever.

The soil is very infertile, unproductive and produces weeds and thorns due to the curse passed on it after man`s disobedience in **Gen 3**.

The relationship between man and man is sour that man goes ahead to cause pain on fellow man. It is full anger, hatred, murder, theft, robbery, wars in the society.

Today man has limited communication with God and instead he runs away from God to the extent of consulting witchdoctors and magicians.

Man is still born with the original sin i.e. born a sinner and needs salvation through Jesus Christ.

Today man works very hard to make the soil productive through application of fertilizers and manure.

There are many accidents, coups, strikes, earthquakes, storms and landslides.

Man has to struggle to be in good terms with God because he worsened the relationship between him by eating the forbidden fruit.

RELEVANCE OF THE TEACHINGS IN GENESIS 3 TO CHRISTIANS

Christians should always obey God and his laws. Adam and Eve disobeyed God`s command and they were punished.

Christians should be conscious when listening to advices from friends and other people. Adam listened to Eve which led him into sin.

Christians should be content with what they have because greed leads to punishment. Adam and Eve were punished for being greedy for the fruit.

Christians should depend on God for everything they desire. Adam and Eve would have depended on God by consulting him but instead they depended on the snake and ate the fruit.

Christians should control and master creation. They should control all the other animals since they were given authority over them unlike Adam and Eve who failed to control the snake.

Christians should be confident for God`s providence. We should acknowledge God as the source of everything unlike Adam who provided for himself.

Christians should accept their mistakes and repent off their sin instead of being unrepentant like Adam and Eve who just went into hiding after eating the fruit.

Christians should worship only one God because He is the master of heaven and earth.

Christians should always seek God`s forgiveness everyday unlike Adam and Eve who just went into hiding without seeking God`s forgiveness.

They should have faith and trust in God because he is above on earth unlike Adam and Eve who put their trust in the serpent.

DRESSING OF MANKIND IN GEN 3:21

"And the lord God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them"
Gen 3:21. This event implied the following;

It was a sign of forgiveness to mankind.

It implied that God is the source of providence. He provided clothes to Adam and Eve.

It was a sign of reconciliation. God decided to dress man because he wanted to bring back mankind to him.

It was a sign of concern towards mankind. God dressed mankind to avoid the embarrassment that he had caused to himself.

It was a sign of sympathy to mankind. God acted with a lot of sympathy and mercy towards mankind despite his sinfulness.

It showed that God wanted to bring man closer to himself, therefore rescuing him from the embarrassment.

It confirmed God as a creator. He was in position to create clothes for Adam and Eve out of animal skin.

It showed God`s love, and it was out of His love that Adam and Eve were dressed.

Abram was a son of Terah who was a native of Haran in Babylon. At the age of 75, Abram was called by God to leave his home country, relatives, and his father's house to go to the new land which he would show him.

Before the call of Abram, he lived in a polytheistic community (where people worshipped many gods including gods of the moon, mountains, fertility and stars)

Abram was very rich and had many relatives and slaves. He had no child with his wife Sarai because she was barren.

God made a number of promises; many descendants who would be transformed into a nation, making him great and famous among nations extra.

*Under the direction of God, Abram left Haran with his wife and nephew Lot to Canaan "this is the country that I am going to give to your descendants" **Genesis 12:7.***

FACTORS THAT LED TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (WHY)

God wanted to bridge the gap between mankind and him caused by disobedience of man in Gen 3. God called Abraham to be a means through which God would reconcile with mankind.

God called Abraham to pave way for the reconciliation between God and the sinful mankind. God wanted to save man and restore his lost dignity.

He was called to be an instrument of salvation. It was through Abraham that mankind would receive salvation i.e. mankind would be prepared to receive the messiah who would bring salvation.

It was an attempt to restore the fallen man who had sinned against God. The restoration was through the making of the new covenant.

God wanted to establish a Godly kingdom on earth through which the whole world comes to worship him forever and ever.

God called Abraham so as to give him the land of Canaan. This is evidenced in the promise "...I will give you land..." **Gen 12:1 and 15:7**

God called Abraham to give him many descendants; as many as the stars. **Gen 12:1 and 15:5.**

God wanted to promote monotheism i.e. worship him alone since the people were polytheistic in nature.

God wanted a person through whom to reach mankind.

Desire to establish an obedient community (chosen people) through whom people would take as their example i.e. God wanted to make a model person to act as an example to the rest of the world.

God wanted to restore joy, peace and harmony he had intended for man i.e. man's disobedience in **Gen 3** led to loss of joy and peace so God intended to restore them.

God intended to remove curses imposed on mankind by man's disobedience in **Gen 3.**

God wanted to reveal his name and nature i.e. holy God different from other gods.

God wanted someone whom he would fellowship with; the fellowship between man and God had been destroyed following man's disobedience.

God also wanted to extend his blessing to mankind and Abraham was purposely called to be a source of blessing to human race. **Gen 12:3** says "and through you, I will bless all the nations." As a result all the nations were blessed through Abraham.

God wanted Abraham because he wanted him to show mankind that one's background does not matter in serving God for example Abraham was polytheistic but God called him.

God called Abraham because he wanted him to be the father of the great nation-Israel that was to be exemplary to the rest of the nations.

God wanted to enter into a new communion with mankind through Abraham. Such covenant bond would be reflected in the life of the descendants of Abraham.

GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Abraham was required by God to leave his ancestral land for a new place which God would show him. In the process, God made the following promises to his servant Abraham.

God promised many blessings that he would even bless whoever will bless Abraham. **Gen 12:2-3**

He was promised a son through whom the great nation would be got. **Gen 15:4**. Abraham was to get a child out of his official wife Sarah to inherit his property.

Abraham was further promised the land of Canaan which is described as the land flowing with milk and honey. **Gen 12:7**

Abraham was promised to be the grandfather of the great nation Israel. It was Abraham to be traced as the founding ancestor of Israel

He promised to have an honourable death due to his cooperation and positive attitude towards God.

He was promised many descendants as many as the stars in the sky. **Gen 15:5**. Therefore Abraham was to evolve into a powerful nation.

He was promised that his name would be made great and famous and he would be a blessing to all.

He was promised that his descendants would go to a strange land where they would suffer from slavery, but after 400 years they would come out with a lot of treasures. **Gen 15:13**

Abraham was promised to stay for a long time; he was to live up to a ripe age. This was because of his generous faith in God.

God promised Abraham to curse whoever would curse him and this was realized later on.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE ABOVE PROMISES

The promise of a son and many descendants came to pass. Abraham at an old age got a child whom he named Isaac. **Gen 21:1-4**

The promise of having very many descendants as stars in the sky came to pass. Out of Isaac, there was Jacob who produced the 12 sons whom evolved into the 12 tribes of Israel.

The promise of living for long and having a peaceful and honorable death was fulfilled. Abraham died at the age of 175 and had a honorable burial in a special field. **Gen 25:7-8**

The promise of exiling his descendants for 400 years was fulfilled. The Israelites went in Egypt where they stayed for 430 years and left that place with many treasures **Exodus 12:40**

Abraham was promised that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan, this promise was fulfilled to Abraham and then to the children of Israel as a nation.

The promise of blessing all nations was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ who was a descendant of Abraham. By believing in him, all people are blessed.

The promise of blessing whoever bless Abraham and curse all those who cursed him came to pass. E.g. the Amalekites were punished because they tried to fight against the descendants of Abraham during the exodus event. **1Samuel 15**.

The promise of having a great nation came to pass. The descendants of Abraham multiplied and turned out to be great hence the nation of Israel.

The promise of making Abraham a grandfather of a great nation was fulfilled. Abraham came to be recognized as the ancestor of the Israelites.

The promise of making Abraham's name great and famous was fulfilled. Abraham is known in the world as the ancestor of all believers.

THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF ABRAHAM'S PROMISES

Some promises to Abraham were fulfilled during his life time while the rest during the time of his descendants and many of them have been carried forward in the life Christians today.

Therefore this make Abraham's promises universal as reflected below;

Abraham was promised the land of Canaan. This was fulfilled to Abraham and occupied by his descendants while Christians today have been promised the heaven as a place of their last destination.

God promised Abraham as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Jacob's sons evolved into a great nation while Christians today are counted as Abraham's descendants.

He was promised that his name was to be made great and famous. Abraham throughout the Old Testament was referred to as the ancestor of all believers and even today by the Christians due spread of the faith.

His name was to change from Abram to Abraham. This is a direct reflection of his descendants' names after baptism.

He was promised a peaceful and honorable death. Likewise many faithful Christians are assured of honorable and decent burials after their service to God and the Christian community.

The promise of a son was fulfilled through the birth of Isaac and Christians today were promised Christ who is a direct descendant of Abraham.

God promised Abraham that his descendants would suffer from Egypt but would be delivered likewise Christians today suffer because of Satan's influence but on the day of the lord. God would defeat Satan and they would be declared free.

The promise of having a great nation out of Abraham was fulfilled and the world wide Christians population today is reflected as the nation which came out of Abraham because of faith.

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Abraham was to have an everlasting covenant with God and in the new testament Jesus who is Abraham`s descendant established an everlasting covenant which brought Christians into communion with God.

NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

He is a loving God. Out of his love He called Abraham and gave him the land of Canaan and also promised him a son.

He is a forgiving God. The call of Abraham revealed that God had forgiven mankind who had sinned against Him in **Genesis 3**

God can call upon anyone regardless of the background. Abraham was a moon worshipper but he was called by God.

He is an invisible God. He can't be seen compared to the gods worshipped by Abraham and his ancestors/fathers.

He is omnipotent i.e. powerful, because of His powers, Abraham accepted to leave his homeland and also to abandon the visible gods.

He restores the broken relationships. When he called Abraham, the relationship between him and mankind was restored.

He is a source of providence. He provided Abraham with the land of Canaan which he occupied together with his descendants.

He is omniscient. I.e. He is all-knowing. He was aware of Abraham`s problem and he was in position to promise him a son during his call.

He is a holy God. He asked Abraham to worship Him alone and abandon the pagan gods which means that He doesn't associate with unholy people.

He is omnipresent i.e. He is everywhere. He was in position to go to Babylon Abraham`s homeland and later moved all the way from Babylon to Canaan together with Abraham.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM GEN 15 & 17

(ABRAHAMIC COVENANT)

*A **covenant** is an agreement between two or more parties. There are two types of covenants (i.e. Parity and vassal) the parity covenant is between equal parties while a vassal covenant is between two unequal parties.*

Therefore the covenant between God and Abraham was vassal in nature.

During the covenant God told Abraham not to be afraid because he would shield him from danger and give him a great reward. **Gen 15:1**

But Abraham protested by saying it would do him no good since he would not have a child to inherit his property. **Gen 15:2**

Then God promised him that his servant Eliezer would not inherit his property but his own son would be his heir. **Gen 15:4**

It was characterized by promises i.e. Abraham was promised to have as many descendants as the stars in the sky, a son, land and protection. **Gen 15:5**

It was characterized by sacrifices i.e. Abraham offered a cow, goat and a ram, each of them three years old, a dove and a pigeon which was a sign to seal the covenant. **Gen 15:9**

Abraham brought the animals to God, cut them in half, and placed the halves opposite each other in two rows; but he didn't cut the birds. **Gen 15:10**

Vultures came down on the bodies, Abraham drove them off. **Gen 15:11**

When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and fear and terror came over him. **Gen 15:12**

The lord told Abram, "your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land; they will be slaves, treated cruelly for 400 years. **Gen 15:13**

When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the pieces of the animals which portrayed God's presence. **Gen. 15:17**

Then God made a covenant with Abraham and He said that "I promise to give your n

The covenant was characterized by circumcision i.e. God told Abraham to circumcise all the male descendants and himself as a seal of the covenant and a mark of membership of God's nation.

The covenant was unconditional in that God made promises to Abraham which were absolute i.e. without any conditions attached.

The covenant was characterized by faith, obedience and trust in that Abraham accepted everything he was told by God.

It was between two unequal parties i.e. God the omnipotent and Abraham who was inferior and dependent on God.

It characterized change of names i.e. Abram to Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah which meant a new beginning of his life. **Gen 17:15**

It was characterized by direct communication between God and Abraham.

FEATURES OF THE RELIGION FOLLOWED BY ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

It was a religion of monotheism where Abraham and his descendants were expected to worship God the almighty alone.

It was characterized by offering sacrifices; Abraham sacrificed to God and on many occasions the Israelites sacrifices to God.

It was based on faith, for example faith was reflected when he underwent circumcision, followed an invisible God.

It was characterized by covenant making, for example God made a covenant with Abraham and made a covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Sinaic covenant).

It was characterized by building altars, for example when Abraham reached Canaan, he built altars and worshipped God and also the Israelites did the same.

It was characterized by circumcision, for example Abraham and all his descendants were circumcised as members of the covenant relationship.

It was characterized by change of name, for example Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah.

Prayers were important among the Israelites and their ancestor Abraham. Through prayers, they communicated with their God.

It was characterized by blessings to the people. God promised to bless all the people and indeed they were blessed especially those who lived according to God's expectations.

The prophets were acting as God's messengers who used to deliver God's message to the people. They used to emerge during the period of covenant betrayal.

It was characterized by celebration of festivals for example the Passover festival which was supposed to be celebrated year after year by the Israelites in remembrance of their liberation from slavery.

The priests were important among the Israelites because of the roles they played for example sacrificing to God, praying to God...

Holiness was also emphasized where People were supposed to be holy and approach God in holiness.

Laws and commandments were part of their religion for example they were given laws concerning treatment of slaves, food prohibitions, Decalogue.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM TO THE ISRAELITES

The Israelites continued to worship Yahweh and maintained the worshipping centers like Bethel and Gilgal, where Abraham had prayed to God.

Sacrifices as a way of worship became part of the rituals of the Israelites which was initiated by their great ancestor Abraham.

The Israelites received God's chosen race because of their ancestor Abraham. I.e. he was promised a great nation which later was fulfilled.

The Israelites received God's divine protection in the wilderness. Through the promises God made to Abraham, the Jews experienced protection of God all through their life.

The Israelite culture had the practice of circumcision as an outward symbol of identification which was started by Abraham. Circumcision which started with Abraham continued being a very significant ritual through the Old Testament.

Because of Abraham's loyalty the Israelites enjoyed privileges of occupying the promised land which God had promised to Abraham.

God fulfilled Abraham's promise of a son (Isaac) from whom the Israelite descend. I.e. Isaac produced Jacob who in turn produced the 12 sons who made up the 12 tribes of Israel.

The response of Abraham institutionalized the practice of monotheism (worship of one God) because Abraham changed from polytheism to monotheism.

The Abrahamic covenant was a reference covenant and basis of all other covenants God made with the Israelites for example Sinai and Davidic covenants which were central in the salvation history.

The call of Abraham opened a way for future divine calls in Israel for example true prophets such as Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and priests received God's divine call just like Abraham.

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They acknowledged the characters of their God such as caring and loving through Abraham.

Abraham's call had a connection in the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The God who appeared to Moses in Exodus 3 identified himself as a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who had come to rescue his people.

Abraham's response portrayed the importance of obedience in relating with their God Yahweh; therefore the Israelites learnt how to be obedient to God imitating the example of their ancestor Abraham.

Abraham led to the salvation of the Israelites; the salvation history of the Israelites started with the call of Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant.

Abraham's call made him exemplary (he became a theological figure in Israel). The Old Testament prophets used him as reference to teach the Israelites.

The Israelites enjoyed blessings because of descending from Abraham for example they were always victorious over their enemies because of the promises made to Abraham.

It showed Israelites that Abraham's faithful response won him favor from God, therefore the faith of the Israelites in God originate from Abraham.

To the descendants, the salvation history for mankind began with the call of Abraham i.e. they were liberated from slavery and the messiah came from Abraham's lineage.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the gospel of Mathew Abraham is presented as a very important person through whom Jesus descended. **Mathew 1:1ff.**

St. Paul in his letter to the Romans says that Abraham's faith is honored and praised because it helped to bring blessings.

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans he says that Abrahams righteousness before God did not depend on his deeds and action but on faith.

Paul's letter to the Galatians, He points out that people of faith are the true children of Abraham.

In **Hebrews 11:8-10** Abraham's faith is said to have been responsible for the Israelites going to the promised land.

St. James in his letter **2:14-26** says that Abraham accompanied his faith with action and that's why he received salvation hence faith without action is dead.

In **Galatians 3:6-10** Paul gives an example of Abraham to show the importance of faith i.e. faith and not the law that puts a person right with God.

In **Galatians** Paul uses the example of Sarah to portray faith as opposed to Hagar who portrayed the law.

The greatest religion promised to Abraham got to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus who came as a true revelation of God to cement monotheism

ABRAHAM AS A MAN OF FAITH

Abraham, one of the Patriarchs of the Israelites is unique because of the faith he displayed which made him to be identified as a faithful man.

His faith was reflected in the following ways;

Abraham is known as a man of faith because of his trust and obedience to God.

Abraham accepted God's call even when he was not aware of God before but because of his faith, he accepted which showed his faith in God.

When he was called by God to leave his homeland, people and culture to go to unknown land, he accepted which showed his faith in God.

Abraham was a worshipper of many gods (polytheist) and a moon worshipper but accepted to leave all of them, and started worshipping only one God hence a man of faith.

He accepted to change his name from Abram to Abraham and that of his wife from Sarai to Sarah which showed that he was a man of faith.

Abraham accepted to make a covenant with God whom he had never seen before in the shortest period hence reflecting his faith in God.

When he reached Bethel and she/he, he built altars to worship Him as it's indicated in Gen 12:6-8 which showed him as a man of faith.

Abraham believed God in everything for example he believed all the promises God made to him such as having a child at an old age, having many descendants as many as stars and it was reckoned upon him as righteous.

He allowed circumcision and also circumcised his descendants as an acceptance of his call and covenant with God. **Gen 17:1ff**

He always worshipped God at the altar he built which showed him as a man of faith.

He always offered sacrifices to God where he built altars like she/he and Bethel and offered the best to God. **Gen 12:10**

Abraham always prayed to God in difficult circumstances for example as a man of faith he prayed to God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

As a man of faith Abraham accepted to send away his slave wife (Hagar) and his son Ishmael at God's command.

After he had received a son (Isaac), God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice and he was ready to sacrifice him. **Gen 22**

Though at an old age of 75 years, Abraham moved for long distances from his homeland to the land which God gave him without excuse and endured all the difficulties hence a reflection of faith.

Abraham abandoned his visible gods to follow an invisible God which was a manifestation of Abraham's true faith.

He always trusted God in all conditions for example even in famine that forced him to Egypt, Abraham had faith in God. **Gen 12:10**

LESSONS CHRISTIANS LEARN FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

Christians should respond positively to God`s call like Abraham responded positively by leaving his homeland to an unknown land.

They should have faith in God like Abraham had a lot of faith in God and that's why he is referred to as a man of faith.

They should be patient especially when they are praying to God like Abraham prayed to God with a lot of patience that's why he was granted everything he prayed for.

They should have commitment to their God like Abraham accepted an external symbol of circumcision to prove that he was a believer of monotheism.

They should always worship God like Abraham abandoned the pagan gods/polytheism (he gods of the moon) and began worshipping God the almighty.

Christians should have confidence in God like Abraham had trust and confidence in God and that's why he decided to leave the gods of his fathers and follow the invisible God.

They should seek for God`s guidance. Abraham was guided by God and that's why he was able to live up to Gods` expectations.

They should be ready to change when they are called by God. Abraham changed from moon worshipping to the worship of one God.

They should believe in the promises of God. Abraham believed in God`s promises which God to live faithful to Abraham.

They should build worshipping places for God. Abraham built altars for God at places like Bethel and she/he for the sacrifice of God.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

*The term **Exodus** means the departure, and in the context of the subject. It therefore refers to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt where they had been subjected to slavery to the Promised Land.*

This is the most important event in the history of the Israelites which marked their deliverance from the Egyptian slavery.

The main figure in this book is the personality of Moses, the man whom God chose to lead his people from Egypt.

The Israelites were in bondage for 430 years, however through Moses God organized their liberation from this house of bondage.

HISTORY OF THE JEWS BEFORE THEIR LIBERATION (Not examinable)

God had blessed Abraham with a son called Isaac, while Isaac produced Jacob whom produced 12 sons, these eventually evolved into the 12 tribes of Israel.

Among the 12 sons of Jacob, there was Joseph who was very much loved by his father Jacob. Because of that, however Joseph was hated by his brothers and on several occasions they conspired against him, until he was sold into Egypt.

While in Egypt Joseph was imprisoned on the allegations that he had raped his master's wife-Potiphar. (**Gen 39**). However, while Joseph was in prison he identified himself as a man with a unique attribute of analyzing and interpreting dreams. This made him influential in Egypt. **Gen 40**.

Joseph was appointed to be the governor all over Egypt **Gen 41:37** and as he was serving as governor of this land; Joseph received his brothers who had come to buy food because of famine which had hit Canaan. Joseph settled his brothers in the land of Goshen in Egypt. **Gen 42**.

He stayed with his family and by the time he died **Gen 50**, the number of the Israelites had greatly increased in Egypt. This made the Egyptians politicians furious that their land would be taken away by the Israelites. They consequently pursued the following measures in order to contain the number of the ever increasing Israelites;

The Israelites were forced to work by force on different projects under very harsh conditions with the intentions of; discouraging them from producing many children and reducing their life span such that they die off before the actual time, however, the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and thus this strategy failed.

Pharaoh (king of Egypt) instructed the midwives, to kill all baby boys and spare the baby girls, so that the Hebrew race would reduce and to have the Hebrew girls married to the Egyptians. **Exodus 1:15**

This also failed because the Hebrew women were so active during delivery and so it was hard to have their children killed. Unlike the their counterparts the Egyptians who were even assisted by midwives on delivery

However, when these two harsh measures failed, the pharaoh instructed that every baby boy of the Jews should be thrown into the Nile. It was during that moment that Moses was born. However, Moses managed to escape that infanticide and this was because of God's intervention.

THE BIRTH OF MOSES EXODUS 2

Moses was born at the period when the Israelites were being persecuted in Egypt. They were subjected to severe oppression, however, the more they were mistreated, the more they increased in numbers and further they spread in Egypt.

When Moses was born, his mother tried to hide him for 3 months because the king had instructed that all male babies of the Jews should be put to death.

*After the 3 months when the mother could hardly hide Moses, she had to hide the boy at the banks of river Nile. However, Moses happened to be blessed that he was picked by the pharaoh's daughter who took him to the palace for nursing. **Exodus 2:1ff.***

THE CALL OF MOSES (Burning Bush Incident) EXODUS 3

One day as Moses was looking after the sheep and goats for Metro his father in law around Mount Sinai, the lord appeared to him.

God appeared in form of a flame in the middle of the bush, but the bush never burned up...

As Moses drew closer to the burning bush, God called out his name, "Moses, Moses"...and he instructed Moses not to go any closer, but to put off his sandals because he was standing on a holy ground. **Exodus 3:5**

God identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When Moses heard that it was God, he got frightened and he covered his face.

God informed Moses as he had seen how badly the Egyptians were treating his people and so he wanted to liberate them from that cruel environment and take them to the land of Canaan.

God therefore sent Moses to the king of Egypt so that he could lead his people out of that country.

However, Moses refused the responsibility saying that he was no body to confront the king and to lead the Israelites.

God assured him of his presence and protection but Moses still demanded to know the name of God so that he could introduce it to the Israelites and God responded that "Aim who Aim" as his name **Exodus 3:13**

After knowing God's name, Moses still hesitated and feared that people may not believe in him and whatever he could say.

At this moment God changed Moses' stick into a snake and later a stick again. And also Moses's hand was diseased and became clean again. This was to show God's miraculous power.

Still Moses refused to go to Egypt and gave an excuse that he was not a good speaker.

Then the lord gave him his brother Aaron to speak on his behalf. At this moment Moses allowed to go to Egypt.

God assured Moses all his assistance that all the people would listen to what he would tell them even the Egyptians would respect him.

NATURE OF GOD IN RELATION TO THE CALL OF MOSES

The call reflected the power of God (God is omnipotent) as evidenced by the way the bush was burning. I.e. the bush was burning but it was not getting consumed up.

It showed God's omnipresence. God is always present; he was there when Moses was looking after his father-in-law's flock.

Moses' call showed holiness and purity as evidenced by the removal of sandals by Moses and burning bush.

It showed that God full of justice; he was determined to help his people in Egypt because they were oppressed and exploited in the foreign land.

The call of Moses showed that God was the only God. This evidenced when God's powers protected the bush from burning and defeated the gods of Egypt.

The call showed that God is a God of history, a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When God appeared to Moses, He said, "...Aim the God of your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob".

God is portrayed as a loving God; he cared for those in distress that's why He sent Moses to go and liberate the Israelites from the foreign land.

It showed the sovereignty of God. God is the overall ruler of the universe evidenced when the bush was burning but was not getting consumed up hence has power over nature.

The call showed that God was beyond human understanding, evidenced when he said "Aim who Aim."

God is seen as a liberator and redeemer and that's why he sent Moses to the pharaoh of Egypt to let the Israelites free.

God is showed as all knowing (omniscient); he knew the problems and suffering of his people wherever they were even in the Egyptian slavery.

The call showed the universal nature of God i.e. he is not only the God of the Israelites but also other nations as seen when he controlled the Egyptians.

God is transcendent in nature. He is beyond and power evidenced by the way the bush was burning but was not getting consumed.

It showed that God fulfills his promises, the promise he made to Abraham were being fulfilled in the call of Moses. He promised Abraham that his descendants would be liberated from the foreign land.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BURNING BUSH INCIDENT TO THE ISRAELITES

It changed Moses' life from being shepherd to a leader of people. He felt God's power and this changed the whole of his life.

The incident showed the divine election of the Israelites. The Israelites became a chosen nation of God since then.

The incident increased the Jewish and Moses' awareness of God. Moses got to know God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It marked the end of the Israelites slavery. As God appeared to Moses, he instructed him to go and deliver his people from the Egyptian slavery

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It was a way through which the Israelites started experiencing God's love. The incident assured them of God's love and commitment to protect them against any problems.

It established the idea of monotheism among the Israelites, for example the belief in one God started being practiced by the Israelites.

The event manifested God's willingness to call upon anybody irrespective of one's background. God often calls upon different people for his different divine purposes.

The event gave rise to the idea of theocracy, absolute dependence on God for all their social, religious and physiological needs and so from then on, the Israelites started depending on God.

It stimulated the idea of oneness among the Israelites who before were divided along tribal and other grounds. So unity was brought about by the incident.

It showed God as a just God. He had seen the Israelites suffering and so he had to punish the Egyptians and liberated the Israelites.

WHY GOD CHOSE MOSES TO LEAD THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT

Moses was prepared by God right from his childhood to become a liberator for the Israelites. God saved him from the infanticide and later he called for a special mission.

Moses' personality qualified him for the appointment. He hated injustices when he killed an Egyptian who was mistreating a fellow Hebrew. This attitude made God to choose him.

They had situation he underwent which involved walking in too much sunshine and walking long distances, all enabled Moses to be seen as the most capable man who would liberate the Israelites.

Moses' nationality made God to choose him as his messenger. Moses never wanted to be identified as an Egyptian despite all the privileges he preferred to be called a Jew.

Moses was a man from the Levite tribe. He was therefore the most capable man to work with God since Levites were a special tribe supposed to work with God as priests.

Moses grew from the king's palace, and this was a good experience for him over leadership. He got administrative skills which were to be a necessary component for his future career.

Moses knew Egypt so well and the people of Midian and thus the delivering of the Israelites required a person like Moses who knew where the Israelites were and easily they would be delivered.

His stay with Jethro the practicing priest of Midian also qualified him for God's call. Moses learnt a lot about priesthood and religious life which equipped him with the knowledge to take on religious leadership in guiding the Israelites.

Moses' ability to kill an Egyptian exhibited the spirit of courage and nationalism he was endowed with, which however was essential in administering a nation like Israel.

Moses' going to Mt. Sinai-the Mt of God prepared him for the call which led to the liberation of the Israelites.

Moses' encounter with desert conditions and wild animals prepared him for future hardships. Such hardships equipped him with master skills of guarding his people.

WHY MOSES AT FIRST HESITATED TO GOD'S CALL (Why he demanded for the name)

Moses objected God's call in the first place because of the following reasons;

He wanted to get an answer which he would give to the Israelites who were in slavery in Egypt in case they asked the name of God who had sent him. **Exodus 3:13**

He had never had any experience with God before. He wanted to know exactly the nature of God he had never seen before.

It was a long time since God had talked to Abraham. So Moses knew that the Israelites had already forgotten him in their exile life of about 400 years. This therefore made Moses to doubt God's call for the liberation of the Israelites.

Moses considered himself a sinner for he had killed an Egyptian. So he never expected God to send him back to Egypt hence his rejection. **Exodus 2:12**

He wanted to get a true picture of God so as to be able to explain the answers of God if the Israelites demanded to know.

Moses objected because he knew that the enslaved Israelites would test him if he was God's mediator.

The nature of God's appearance, Moses was terrified with God's mysterious appearance. Moses saw a burning bush which was not being consumed up. So his objection was needed to seek the proper identity of God. **Exodus 3:6**

Moses objected because he was a poor speaker i.e. stammered. So his objection was in need of a spokes person who would explain to the pharaoh and finally he was given his brother Aaron.

Moses objected God's call because he seemed to know the strength of the Egyptian army since he had lived in Egypt so he was not sure whether he could accomplish God's task.

Egypt was a polytheistic nation with many gods and even during Moses' revelation there were many gods. So Moses wanted a clarification of who that God was.

Moses objected God's call because he was a nobody compared to the king; in **Exodus 3:11** Moses said, "Aim nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt."

Moses may have wanted to evade God's task of going to Egypt to liberate the Israelites because it seemed to be very big for him.

RELEVANCE OF THE CALL OF MOSES (burning bush) TO CHRISTIANS

Christians should be holy just as God is holy. Moses was commanded to remove his sandals because he was standing on a holy ground.

Christians should love one another just as Yahweh loved his people so much that he liberated them from exile.

Christians should respect God because he is almighty and above all gods as evidenced in the phrase: Aim who Aim".

They should worship only one God who liberated us from sin.

Christians should undertake and accept missionary journeys to do God's work. Moses had killed an Egyptian, but still accepted to go back in Egypt at God's command.

Christians should show justice to others because God is just. When the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the Egyptians were punished.

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Christians should have faith in God for He is able in all circumstances just as he was able to liberate the Israelites from oppression.

Christians should accept God's call however strange it is just like Moses eventually accepted God's call and task of liberating the Israelites.

Christians should always intervene and help those who suffer. God intervened because he heard the Israelites suffering in Egypt.

They should show great love and mercy to those in problems just as God had pity for the suffering Israelites in Egyptian slavery for 430 years.

Christians should be ready for God's call. God calls through various experiences just as Moses' call came in form of a burning bush.

They should accept to take up different vocations in life. Moses was a shepherd but changed to a leader when called by God.

They should always search and try to know God more. Moses asked to know God's name and God told him that "Aim who Aim".

THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER EXODUS 12

The term **Passover** refers to the time when God's angel of death "passed over or jumped over" the houses of the Israelites who were enslaved in Egypt and killed the Egyptians and their animals.

The Israelites were instructed to celebrate the Passover on the 14th day which was to mark the first month of the Jewish calendar.

On the 10th day of that month, each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household. **Exodus 12:3**

If a family was too to eat the whole animal, he and his next-door neighbor may share the animal such that no part of the animal remains. **Exodus 12:4**

The animal must be a one-year-old male without any defects. **Exodus 12:5**

On the evening of the 14th day of the month, the whole community of Israel will kill the animals and the people were to smear blood on the door posts and above the doors of their houses.

That night the meat was supposed to be roasted, and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread without yeast.

The meat was to be eaten roasted not raw neither boiled, eaten on the same day and nothing was to remain. In case it remained, it was burnt to ashes.

They were to eat in a hurry while dressed for travel, with their walking sticks in their hands and their sandals on their feet.

Nobody was supposed to move out of his house that Passover night until the following morning. Anybody who defiled this instruction was killed.

On that night I will go through the land of Egypt, killing every firstborn male, both human and animal, and punishing all the gods of Egypt. The lord said.

The blood on the door posts was to mark the houses of the Israelites and so the angel of God would harm them while punishing the Egyptians. **Exodus 12:13**

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The Israelites were to celebrate the Passover as a religious festival to remind them of what the lord had done from time to time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PASSOVER TO THE ISRAELITES

The event promoted monotheism and the Israelites started worshipping God and abandoned the Egyptian powerless gods.

It broke the arrogance of the Egyptian pharaoh who had refused to set free the Israelites. It was this event that forced him to send them away as soon as his first born son was killed. **Exodus 12:31**

The event showed the Israelites that faith and obedience in God pays. They trusted in God's instructions of putting blood on their door posts which saved them from death.

The Israelites learnt that God is a liberator. It was solely out of his divine intervention that they were liberated.

It led to the divine election of Israel as a nation of God. Many Egyptians were killed and all the Israelites were saved.

It showed to the Israelites that God fights for his people. It therefore became an assurance to them that God would continue protecting them from any oppression.

It was a confirmation to the Israelites that God is faithful and trustworthy. This is because all the promises he made to Abraham came to pass.

It showed God's divine love for the children of Israel. He loved them so much and that's why he punished the Egyptians and saved the Israelites.

The event prepared the Israelites to meet God at Mount Sinai. After the event the Israelites went straight to Mt. Sinai to meet God.

The event ushered in an era of peace, joy and happiness among the Israelites. It relieved them of the suffering and oppression they faced in the land of the Egyptians.

The event reflected to both the Jews and Egyptians the true characters of God. He was seen as kind, caring, patient and violent.

The event stimulated the element of unity among the Israelites whom had been divided along tribal lines. The event therefore brought them together as believers of one God.

It led to the birth of religious festivals in the Jewish society. The Passover festival and the day of unleavened bread which became more pronounced in the Jewish society.

The event marked the beginning of the Jewish calendar. They were meant to celebrate this day from time to time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLY COMMUNION TO THE CHRISTIANS

It reminds Christians of Jesus' life here on earth. Do this in memory of me" therefore Christians come together to remember Jesus as one who is present with them.

The holy communion renews man's relationship with God and so it should be practiced regularly.

It reminds believers of Jesus' death which death brought about life after death to many believers.

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It further reminds about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore Christians are required to remain pure by practicing it until he comes back.

The Holy Communion enables believers to renew their faith in Jesus Christ. Whenever they participate in it, they are consolidating their faith in Jesus.

It promoted a spirit of unity among Christians and thus it should be encouraged.

It further enhances love and cooperation among believers. This is because Christ castigated fellowship without love.

It is an avenue of transmitting the good news to those who had not yet received it.

It stimulates the belief in one God-God the almighty and so Christians are encouraged to make use of it.

Holy Communion gives believers a chance to repent for their sins and also seek for forgiveness from God, and so Christians always partake the bread and cup.

COMPARISON BETWEEN JESUS AND MOSES

Academicians regard Jesus as the new Moses simply because of some characteristics that the two have in common. And the Israelites regarded Jesus as the new Moses.

SIMILARITIES

Both performed miracles during their ministry. For example Moses changed the stick into snake and Jesus fed the 5000 and 4000 and healed the paralyzed man

Both survived death during their infancy. They were born at a time when baby boys were being killed. For example Pharaoh ordered the killing of baby boys just as Herod during Jesus' time.

Both of them initiated important religious celebrations i.e. Moses began the Passover and Jesus initiated the Lord's supper.

Both liberated the people for instance Jesus liberated the people from Sin through his death on the cross and Moses liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Both started their work at an old age. For example Jesus began his work at the age of 30, and Moses is also said to have been an old man. **Exodus 2:11**

Both were considered as prophets by the people. **Exodus 34:10**, states that there had never been a prophet like Moses, just like Jesus was confirmed by the Samaritan woman that he was a prophet. **John 4:19**

The Israelites under Moses spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness at the foot of Mt. Sinai **Exodus 24:16** similarly Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the desert. **Mark 1:12**

They were both called at a time when the Israelites lacked political independence; during Jesus' time the Jews were under the Romans and during Moses' time, they were under the Egyptians.

Both were law givers; Jesus gave the greatest commandment of love, Moses gave the Ten Commandments.

Both identified themselves to the suffering people. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Jesus as a son of God changed into a human being.

They both interceded on behalf of the e.g. Moses prayed for water and Manna while in the wilderness and he pleaded with the lord to forgive the Israelites after making a golden calf, Jesus fed the thirsty and hungry.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOSES AND JESUS

Jesus is the son of God who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. While Moses was a son of the Levite parents

Moses was a political leader while Jesus was a spiritual leader contrary to the expectations of the Jews.

Jesus Christ died, and on the third day he resurrected from the dead while Moses never resurrected.

Jesus Christ was a carpenter while Moses was a shepherd before he was called.

Jesus Christ never married while Moses married Ziporah the daughter of Metro.

Jesus' coming and mission was prepared and foretold by John the Baptist and other prophets in the Old Testament like Isaiah while there were no preparations for Moses' coming.

Moses at the beginning hesitated to take up his ministry while Jesus took the ministry immediately.

Jesus physically reached the promised destination which is heaven while Moses never reached the Promised Land. He instead died shortly before reaching.

COMPARISON BETWEEN MOSES AND ABRAHAM

Moses and Abraham are important personalities in the history of the Israelites whose calls and roles played are similar and different.

SIMILARITIES

Both calls were initiated by God the almighty. It was God the almighty who saw the need of saving mankind and so called Abraham and Moses.

In both situations, there was no mediator. God called them directly without going through a third party.

Both of them had never been called by God before, so they received their calls for the first time.

Both calls were vassal in nature, that is to say they were between God the superior party and inferior party a sinful man.

Both personalities responded positively to God's call eventually. Even though Moses at first hesitated, he eventually took up the mission given to him by God.

Both calls reflected God's love and concern for mankind. So He called them to save from suffering.

Both calls were aimed at establishing the kingdom on earth.

They were called to commit themselves in the covenants God was yet to enter into with them and the people they represented. Through these covenants God too wanted to declare his position of saving mankind if they heeded his demands.

In both Gods` omnipresence was revealed for example at Mt. Sinai. God`s presence was manifested.

God`s omnipotence was revealed, because of his powers Abraham left Haran, he was convinced to leave his homeland and in the call of Moses, the burning bush manifested God`s powers.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOSES AND ABRAHAM

Abraham was called when he was indeed an old man with his barren wife while Moses was relatively a young man with child Gersom.

Abraham was commanded by God to go to a place he did not know while Moses was required to go to Egypt a place he knew very well.

Abraham was more faithful during his call while Moses doubted God`s call until God revealed his name to him as "Aim who Aim"

Moses received God`s call while in a foreign land-Median while Abraham was in his homeland Haran.

Moses asked for a spokesman and he was given Aaron but Abraham was to speak by himself.

Moses was called to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery while Abraham was to be used as a basis of Israel nation.

Moses was given powers to perform miracles while Abraham never asked for any miracle because he was faithful to God.

God appeared to Moses inform of a burning bush while to Abraham just heard a voice

During the call of Moses, God described his background as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob while such a feature was missing because Abraham did not doubt God.

Moses was hesitant to deliver God`s message while Abraham responded positively without any hesitation.

THE ISRAELITES MEET GOD AT MOUNT SINAI

EXODUS 19

After moving for some time, the Israelites reached Mount Sinai, Moses left the people at the foot of the mountain where they had camped to meet God. God told Moses to inform the Israelites that after 3 days, he was going to meet them and they were expected to observe the following;

They were to purify themselves and wash their clothes, abstain from sexual intercourse for 3days.

*They were to mark a boundary around the mountain and none of them was to cross it and whoever attempted to cross it was to be killed. **Exodus 19:12***

*On the third day, God appeared in form of thunder and lightning. The smoke covered the mountain and there was a lot of thunder and lightning as God was speaking to Moses and thus caused a lot of fear among the people. At this very moment the Israelites entered into a covenant with God-**the Sinaic covenant.***

WHY GOD MADE THE COVENANT WITH THE ISRAELITES AT MT SINAI

God wanted to keep the holiness of the Israelites who had been set aside as God`s special nation. They therefore entered into a covenant which had to be maintained.

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God wanted to promote the moral righteousness of the Israelites the Israelites were expected to have a unique form of behavior different from other nations.

The covenant aimed at bringing the Israelites together as a divinely elected nation. They were expected to remain united after the Mount Sinai event.

The covenant was act as a guiding principle for God`s massagers especially the priests and prophets while performing their duties.

God wanted to bring social cohesion and peace in the Israelite society. They were expected to respect one another.

Through the covenant, love between one another could easily be promoted. Such covenant love was to be expressed daily in the life of the Israelites.

It was to serve as a standard measure of Israel`s religious life. The covenant was used to tell those who obeyed God`s law and those who failed.

God wanted to encourage the Israelites to develop love in Him (God) alone and such love was to be manifested in their faith in God.

The covenant aimed at creating Israel as God`s special nation. This made Israel to be referred to as a theocratic nation (a nation directly ruled by God).

God wanted to institute the element of monotheism. The covenant aimed at pulling them back from an apostate situation they had got used to while in Egypt.

The covenant also expressed God`s love for his divinely elected people of Israel. Because of his love, He wanted to use the covenant as a means of committing himself before the Israelites.

FEATURES OF THE SINAIC COVENANT

A covenant is a binding agreement that should never be broken. Therefore the Sinaic covenant was an agreement God made with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

This covenant was initiated by God and made between God and the people of Israel.

God talked to Moses and referred to what he had done for the Israelites; "you know what I, the lord did to the Egyptians and how I carried you as an eagle carries her young ones on her wings, and brought you here to me." **Exodus 19:4**

It was conditional i.e. if the Israelites obeyed God and kept the covenant they will be God`s own people. **Exodus 19:5.**

Moses then asked the people if they would accept to be God`s people to which the people accepted.

It was characterized by purification i.e. they were to wash their clothes and not to have sexual relations so as to make them holy before their God. **Exodus 19:10**

Moses was asked to make limits and boundaries on the foot of the mountain upon which people were not supposed to cross. **Exodus 19:12**

On the third day, the mountain was then covered with a thick cloud and smoke was a manifestation of the presence of God.

It was characterized by God`s presence inform of fire, thunder, lightning and a triumphant blast. **Exodus 19:16**

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It was characterized by mediator; Moses was the go between the Israelites and God.

God introduced and identified himself to the Israelites as the God who liberated them from slavery in Egypt.

The covenant featured by laws i.e. Moses went up the hill and received laws from God; he then read and gave the laws to the Israelites. **Exodus 19:20**

All the Israelites accepted to do what the lord had said i.e. they re-affirmed their faith and obedience to the lord and his laws.

Moses was then honored to build an altar and set it up with 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. **Exodus 20:24**

It involved sacrifices i.e. cattle and sheep were sacrificed as burnt and fellowship offering. **Exodus 20:24**

Blood was then collected in the bowl and then Moses threw it on the people. Exodus 24:8

Moses took half of the blood of the animals and put it in the bowls and the other half he threw it against the altar to show that the covenant was sealed. **Exodus 24:6**

Then the book of the law was read and the people promised to do everything that had been written.

This covenant was made between two unequal parties i.e. God the omnipotent with the people of Israel.

It was characterized by promises; God made several promises in form of blessings if they obeyed the covenant and curses if they disobeyed.

It was characterized by fear and terror; when the people heard the thunder, the trumpet blast and saw the lightening and the smoking mountain, they trembled with fear. Exodus 20:18

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SINAIC AND ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Both covenant involved sacrifices; Abraham offered a ram, a goat, a cow, a pigeon and a dove. Moses and the Israelites organized sacrifices including Cattle to God.

Both covenant involved promises. In the Abrahamic covenant, God promised Abraham a son, many descendants, in at Sinai, God promised to be with the Israelites as long as they obeyed him.

Both covenants were everlasting. They were meant to be permanent, no one was supposed to break them and they had to be passed on from one generation to another.

Both were out of God`s initiative. Neither Abraham nor the Israelites requested God to make a covenant with them.

In both God`s presence was manifested. In the Abrahamic covenant God appeared inform of a flaming torch and a smoking fire pot and in the Sinaic covenant He appeared inform of thunder and lightning.

Both involved faith. Abraham was faithful and believed whatever God told him and the Israelites were expected to be faithful to the Sinaic covenant.

Both covenants required obedience. Abraham was to be obedient and so the Israelites were to be obedient to the laws.

Both covenants were sealed. The Abrahamic covenant was sealed by circumcision and the Sinaic covenant was sealed by blood which was sprinkled on the people.

DIFFERENCES

Abrahamic covenant	Sinaic covenant
There was direct communication between God and Abraham	There was a mediator (Moses) between God and the Israelites
God appeared in form of a flaming torch and a smoking fire pot	God appeared in form of thunder, lightning and a dazzling light
There was fellowship between God and Abraham.	There was a boundary which was made around the mountain and none of them was to cross it.
The covenant took place in the promised land.	The covenant took place at Mount Sinai while in wilderness/desert
The covenant involved change of names from Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah	There was no change of names, they remained with their original names
The covenant was oral	The covenant was written on the stone tablets (ten commandments)
The Abrahamic covenant was sealed by circumcision of male members	It was sealed by the blood which was sprinkled on the people.
The Abrahamic covenant was between God and Abraham (one person)	It was between many people (Israelites) and God
It involved shedding of blood through circumcision	Involved sprinkling of blood on the people and on the altar

Note; use only **while** in all your paragraphs

THE OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JEWS AS OUTLINED IN THE SINAIC COVENANT

The Sinaic covenant which was between God and the Israelites outlined/embodied the responsibilities and obligations of the children of Israel as follows;

The Sinaic covenant was an agreement made between the people of Israel and their God at mountain Sinai where they were given commandments.

The Israelites were to be obedient and loyal to their God if they were to live long in the Promised Land (Canaan).

They had an obligation of living as a theocratic nation; they were to be guided by God in their political, religious, economic and social welfare i.e. they were to acknowledge and accept God as their leader.

The Israelites had an obligation to remain holy to God because God is holy; in this way they were to avoid sin and through it they would be blessed.

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They were obliged to respect all the laws of God given to them by Moses during the Sinaic covenant. **Exodus 20:1-17**. All their social, political and economic welfare was to be determined by the Decalogue.

The Israelites were supposed to make God known to all the people of the world. They were supposed to act as messengers of God to other nations.

They had an obligation to be exemplary and make other nations aware of their divine promise and their chosen nature.

They were obliged to serve God faithfully. They were to practice monotheism and avoid apostasy and idolatry in the Promised Land.

They were obliged to practice the act of Herem; they were to destroy their enemies completely during the war against pagan nations.

They were to practice monotheism; they had an obligation of worshipping only one God who delivered them from the Egyptian slavery.

They were expected to love their neighbours as their God loved them by showing love, care and mercy to the unprivileged.

They were to avoid marriage alliances with pagan nations i.e. they were not to marry non Israelites because if they did so they would be tempted to worship other gods which would retard the practice of monotheism.

They had the responsibility of maintaining their holiness just as God is holy; they were to avoid sin in order to approach their God.

The Israelites had a responsibility of serving as priests because they were chosen from other nations to serve him whole heartedly.

The covenant emphasized the relationship between God and man and man and fellow man. So they were to be responsible to their God and fellow man.

God had a responsibility of keeping his promises; leading his people and assist them in trouble so long as they were loyal to him.

The Israelites had a responsibility of making friends and not making enemies with the nations they would meet in the Promised Land.

The Israelites had an obligation of observing and celebrating the three feasts for example celebrating the feast of the unleavened bread.

The Israelites were obliged to put God at the centre of all their activities.

The covenant faith was to be passed on to their children through circumcision as a sign of identity and the traditional of the Passover.

The Israelites were to thank God for delivering them from Egyptian slavery and this was possible through fellowship with God and offering of sacrifices.

The Israelites had a responsibility of caring for the widows, orphans and the needy in the society thereby fulfilling their requirements of love.

God had a responsibility to care for the Israelites i.e. to feed them and lead them to the Promised Land.

God therefore had a responsibility of fulfilling his promises which depended on man`s obedience, and disobedience would lead to death and loss of the promised land.

THE DECALOGUE (TEN COMMANDMENTS) EXODUS 20:1-17

They include the following;

Worship no god but me; this advocated for complete monotheism among the Israelites

Do not take God`s name in vain; this called for respect for God`s name

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy; the Israelites were expected to work for 6 days and rest on the 7th day. They were to worship God on this day.

Honour your father and mother; the Israelites were meant to respect their parents as God`s representatives on earth.

Do not commit murder; the Israelites were expected to respect people`s live and none was to destroy human life. God is the giver and expected to take it away.

Do not commit adultery; they were expected to respect sex since it was a gift from God to the married people. They were meant to be faithful to one another.

Do not steal; this advocated for hard work among the Israelites and also they were supposed to pray to God for their needs other than stealing.

Do not bare false witness against your neighbors; this was against giving of false information about God. They were expected to tell the truth to promote harmony among them.

Do not admire another man's property; they expected to appreciate other than admiring.

Do not admire another man`s wife; this advocated for respect towards other people`s wives and also the Israelites were expected to appreciate the gift of marriage with contentment.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECALOGUE TO THE ISRAELITES

These commandments helped to guide the relationship among the people of Israel and their God.

They were laws that expressed the demands of God to the liberated people of Israelites at mountain Sinai.

They formed Israel`s constitution which guided them to respect themselves as a theocratic nation and also helped them to know the demands of God.

They helped the Israelites on how to relate with one another, for example love your neighbor as you love yourself. This helped them to glorify mankind and honor him as God`s representative on earth.

They promoted the practice of monotheism and respect and honor for God`s name. For example **exodus 20:1-6** called upon them to worship only one God.

They helped the Israelites to have respect for one another. For instance the 8th commandment stated not to give false witness against others hence strengthening their relationship with one another.
Exodus 20:16

They were a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham i.e. after the Israelites made the Sinai covenant they set off to the promised land from where they related with each other.

They helped the Israelites to respect their parents and realize that God is the source of life. For instance **Exodus 20:12** encourage them to respect their parents hence relating with them well.

They helped the Israelites to be united. That is it maintained law and order there by bringing harmony and social order in Israel.

The Decalogue showed that Israel is ruled by God and is guided by the God given law i.e. it's a theocratic nation which meant they had to relate well in order to keep their position which was to be done through following the laws.

The Decalogue showed God's revelation that is God's presence where he revealed himself through the laws.

The Decalogue helped the Israelites to realize that they were the divine elected nation having a special relationship with God which they had to maintain.

The Decalogue helped to morally edify the Israelites i.e. the 7th law **Exodus 20:15** discourages stealing and the forth law **Exodus 20:12** encourages respect of parent. This helped to strengthen their relationship with one another.

The Decalogue guided the Israelites with one another because it stipulated man's role, responsibility and obligation in the covenant union.

They helped the Israelites in a way that it became a basis for other covenant union which guided the Israelites for example Davidic covenant showed who was to build the temple for the lord.

They helped the Israelites to cooperate and work hard in order to attain the necessity that is why it condemned stealing.

The Decalogue helped the Israelites to respect the Sabbath as a day of resting and praising God. This helped them to share their religious views amongst themselves.

They promoted peace amongst the Israelites. For instance **Exodus 20:13** discourages killing hence strengthening their relationship with one another.

The Decalogue advocated for faithfulness in marriage among the Israelites as it condemns adultery which strengthened the bond between the married and helped in relating with one another.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW COVENANT THAT GOD MADE WITH MANKIND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

The coming of Jesus was to fulfill the need for a new covenant with mankind.

It showed that Christ came to die for the sins of man so that he can be forgiven on the judgment day.

The new covenant helps Christians to have belief in Jesus i.e. whoever believes in him shall not perish but gets everlasting life.

The new covenant helps Christians to have hope in Christ and therefore hope of a new life.

The new covenant calls for repentance as a preparation to the heavenly home.

There is need for circumcision of the heart, inner commitment to God as opposed to external laws.

The new covenant shows that, those who repent will have their sins forgiven.

The new covenant became a pillar of the church and the basis of Christian doctrines like resurrection.

It enabled Jesus to give the power of the Holy Spirit to his followers.

It helps Christians become the special nation and people of God chosen by Him to the extent of giving his only son to die for our sins.

The new covenant calls upon people to have faith so that they become a new Israel.

The new covenant has promise of a new heaven and better life which Christians have to work for.

It symbolizes God`s love for mankind and fulfillment of God`s salvation plan.

RELEVANCE OF THE DECALOGUE TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians should respect their parents as the source of life since they are called to do so in the Ten Commandments.

Christians should practice monotheism. They are called upon to worship only one God in the first commandment. Exodus 20:1-6, worship one God and avoid other gods and idols."

Christians should live in peace and harmony with other people just as it stressed in the Decalogue. I.e. do not steal and accuse one falsely.

Christians should be faithful in their marriages as adultery is against God`s commandments.

Christians should cooperate and work hard to attain basic needs of life since theft is discouraged in the Ten Commandments.

Christians should live morally upright in relation to one another.

Christians should have respect for one another because it's God`s command. Do not accuse someone falsely.

Christians should be contented with what they have since admiring is discouraged.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT THE LAW

Jesus called upon the entire community of believers to obey God because obedience is more important than the sacrifices they were offering.

Jesus said that He was a reformer of the Mosaic Law which segregated the Jews from the gentiles because Jesus always associated with the gentiles.

Jesus told his listeners that he did not come to do away with the Law of Moses or to destroy it but he came to fulfill it.

Jesus summarized the law and said that the greatest commandment was; love God with all your heart, your soul, and strength."

He also said that, love your neighbor as you love yourself" as the second commandment.

Jesus castigated some elements of the Mosaic Law for example an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and He called for reconciliation.

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Jesus called upon his listeners to commit themselves to God and to have total faith in Him other than being loyal to the law.

St. Paul says that, it is faith of a believer that reconciles him with God but not observance of the law.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he calls upon his readers to love one another and he says that whoever has love for his neighbor would have respected the whole set of laws given by God.

THE TREATMENT OF SLAVES EXODUS 21:1-11

The following guidelines were given to the master regarding the treatment of slaves;

The slaves were supposed to work for only 6 years and in the 7th year they would be set free without having to pay anything.

On releasing slaves, the masters were required to give them some property to make them begin new life; this was to show appreciation for the good work done by the slaves.

If one was unmarried when he became a slave, he was not supposed to go with his wife after serving for six years. Therefore the wife was supposed to be retained by the master.

In case the slave and his wife got children, the slave was supposed to leave the children with the master if at all he got the wife while serving the master.

If one was married when he became a slave, he was free to leave with his wife and children after serving for six years.

The slave never wanted to leave his master's home after serving for 6 years, he was supposed to be taken to a place of worship and his ear would be pierced from the door way. This meant that he was to be a slave for life.

Female slaves had to be treated justly by the masters. Therefore, if a man bought a slave girl for his son and the son happened not to like her as his wife, the father was supposed to sell her back to her father.

No one was supposed to sell a slave girl to a foreigner after failing to marry her, if he did so, he would have treated her unfairly.

If a man buys a female slave to give to his son, he is to treat her like a daughter.

If a man takes a second wife, he must continue giving his first wife the same amount of food, clothing and she must continue enjoying the same rights she had before.

In case the master beat up his slave and he got injured or died, the master was supposed to be punished.

In case the slave was not injured, the master was not supposed to be punished.

The Hebrew was not supposed to be sold to foreigners as slaves but only to their fellow Hebrews.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXODUS EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS

The exodus event marked the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and had the following significance;

Exodus is the massive outflow of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt across the red sea through the wilderness, to mountain Sinai and finally to the Promised Land.

The event exposed Israel as a special chosen nation and unique race. It's through this race that salvation to mankind was to be delivered.

It marked the end of suffering in Egypt for example while in Egypt the Israelites were oppressed and subjected to forced labor which reduced on their lifespan but after deliverance they lived longer as a nation.

The event led to the worship of only one God as a nation hence practice of monotheism by Israelites after acknowledging the omnipotence of God.

It was through the Exodus that the Israelites were able to possess Canaan as promised to them as a nation of God. After being released from Egypt they went and occupied the land which was promised to their ancestors of Abraham.

Exodus led to the beginning of the priestly and prophetic ministry in Israel. Moses was the first prophet in Israel and their leader.

It led to the birth of some Jewish cultures that had been abandoned; for example circumcision that had been put in place as a sign of covenant God made with people.

The event was a way of saving man who had sinned in the Garden of Eden. It was a way of reconciling Israel nation to God.

It became the basis of prophetic teaching in Israel; prophets based their teaching on what had happened during the exodus. For example Hosea referred to the exodus event.

The event led to divine election of Israelites by God. This was seen when the Lord protected them from the enemies meaning they had a special relationship with God as a nation.

The exodus event fulfilled God`s promises to Abraham that he would liberate his descendants from exile after 400 years and will occupy their land as a nation of God.

The event helped the Israelites to make a covenant with their God because it was after this journey that the Israelites assembled at Mount Sinai to make a covenant with God as a special chosen nation.

The event helped the Israelites to get a new constitution which governed them. At Mt. Sinai they got the Ten Commandments which guided their social, political and economic welfare as a nation.

The Israelites obedience, faithfulness and loyalty in God as a nation were traced from the exodus event.

Israel was made into a special unique nation of God because through the exodus the Israelites were set aside for a special cause.

The event helped the Israelites to become a theocratic nation i.e. kingdom ruled by God since they accepted the laws which were given to them at Mt. Sinai.

The Passover which led to the exodus became an important event in the history of the Israelites which was to be celebrated every year.

The exodus event helped the Israelites to know the nature of God as powerful, omnipresent, caring which enabled them to relate with God easily.

The many divine miracles in the life of the Israelites were based on the exodus event that they were to remember this all in their life.

The event enabled the Israelites to observe morality as it was outlined in the Ten Commandments. For instance it contained laws like do not steal which helped all of them to uphold good morals.

THE THEME OF DELIVERANCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The theme of deliverance in the New Testament is developed through the person of Jesus Christ as the paschal/ Passover lamb.

Jesus saved people from the powers of evil both spiritually and physically e.g. the healing of a paralyzed man lowered from the roof, raised Lazarus from death, healing the blind man...

Jesus came to save and deliver people from the bondage of sin just as the Jews were liberated from slavery

Jesus says in the gospel of John that he was the way, the truth and life which we get to God.

Through the lord's supper, Jesus started a new covenant by calling upon people to partake in his body and blood for purposes of redemption.

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of the new exodus, because we hope to resurrect and believe in unending life.

Many of the miracles Jesus performed were intended to deliver people from their various afflictions for example healing of the blind hence deliverance from evil.

Jesus says that, he did not come for the righteous but for the sinners. In saying so, he meant that he had come to deliver the troubled from evil.

In summarizing the Decalogue into love of God and neighbors, Jesus developed the theme of deliverance as being founded only in the two laws.

In marks gospel, John the Baptist proclaimed the coming of Jesus who would come to save the people from sin by baptizing them with the Holy Spirit hence deliverance from sin.

Jesus became the new Moses and brought spiritual liberation by perfecting whatever Moses did. For example he changed the Ten Commandments into two major laws.

Jesus and the New Testament teaching call people to repentance as the only way to heaven. It is through Jesus' baptism that we get deliverance from our sins.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

This book contains regulations concerning worship and religious ceremonies in Israel. The book was meant for the priests who were responsible for carrying out these instructions.

The book specifically deals with holiness of God and the ways in which God was meant to be approached during worship.

SACRIFICES

Sacrifices were offerings given to God. The Israelites used to sacrifice animals, birds, grain etc because of different reasons. The sacrifices (animals and birds) were expected to be clean (without defects)

They were supposed to be presented to God by the priests who belonged to the Levite tribe. The Levites were special people chosen by God to serve Him.

TYPES OF SACRIFICES

The burnt sacrifice/Holocaust (lev 1:1): *This was given to God as a token of appreciation. The animal was burnt and nothing was left behind for the people to eat. Thus people were not entitled to any share of this sacrifice.*

The grain sacrifice (lev 2:1): *This was in form of crops; the whole sacrifice had to be eaten by the priest. It was intended to thank God for the good harvest attained at the end of the season.*

The sin offering: *The meat of the animal was eaten by the priest alone. This was intended to do away with sins of the priest and the entire community.*

The peace offering: *This was shared by all the people present. It was a means of soliciting for peace from God*

The fellowship offering (lev 3): *All the parts of the animal were eaten by the people apart from the fatty parts which belonged to God. It was given to promote togetherness and communion between God and the people.*

The incense sacrifice: *This aimed at providing a pleasant smell to God and restored the relationship between man and God.*

The libation sacrifice: *This was in form of a liquid, such as wine, milk... and it was given to God to make him be part of the worshippers who happened to be enjoying a given drink.*

PURPOSE OF SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES

Sacrifices were given to God to thank Him for his providence. After the harvest they would offer grain offering to thank God for the good harvest for example the first harvest in Deut 26

They were given to mark anniversary celebrations of important religious and historical events in the life of the Israelites such as the celebration of the Passover.

They were used for fellowships with God and fellow men for instance through sharing the sacrificed meal which helped to strengthen the relationship between God and his people.

They were used as a way of seeking for peace from God for example Aaron's peace sacrifice.

Sacrifices were used to avert danger like during famine, drought to stop it from happening. If the Israelites detected danger they would sacrifice to avert the looming dangers.

Sacrifices were used to glorify and exalt God

They were used to cleansing of places of worship and purification of lepers (skin disease). The Israelites who had leprosy were to offer sacrifices in order to be cleansed off the skin disease.

They were used as payments to the high priest and his family. The priest had to depend on some items of sacrifices as a way of rewarding their work.

They were used to recognize God as the source of life for example blood contained life and therefore pouring blood around the altar, meant giving life back to God what belonged to Him.

They were used to obtain forgiveness from God for one's sins. Whenever the Israelites felt guilty of sin they offered sacrifices so that they could be forgiven.

Sacrifices were used to bless the people and their activities. The Israelites sacrificed while asking for rain, and fertility for their crops.

They were sacrificed because they wanted to maintain the religious traditions of their ancestors like Abraham who sacrificed to God, so they also used them to communicate to their God.

They were used to show God's presence for example the light or flame of fire that always appeared during sacrifice for instance during Abraham's sacrifice symbolized God's presence.

The Israelites performed sacrifices to show their love and care towards their God since he is loving.

They were used during the enthronement of kings and dedication of the temple e.g. Solomon sacrificed during the dedication of Jerusalem temple.

They were a sign of inner commitment to God. The Israelites indicated their guilty and sinners who rendered God's mercy through sacrifice.

They were used when seeking for victory in times of difficulty such as wars, for instance King David sacrificed while going for the battle and Samuel offered a burnt sacrifice to God at Mizpah for victory against the Philistines and the Lord answered him.

WHY WERE SACRIFICES CRITICIZED BY THE PROPHETS OF THE TIME

The prophets were critical of the sacrifices because the Israelites sacrificed extravagantly for example King Solomon offered 22,000 heads of cattle and 125,000 sheep during the temple dedication

The Israelites misused sacrifices in that they offered when they continued sinning against God.

They used to practice human sacrifice for example King Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their sons.

They offered against the regulations of sacrifices. For example they sacrificed defected animals e.g. King Saul sacrificed on behalf of priest Samuel which was against the Levitical law

The Israelites were practicing double standards that is offered to both God and the gods of the Canaanites.

The priests were cheats; they overcharged distant worshippers who bought sacrifices from them.

The Israelites sacrificed when their hearts were very far from God that is offered empty sacrifices.

They portrayed greed over Yahweh's sacrifices e.g. the sons of Eli Hophins used big forks to pick pieces of meat from the boiling pot before the meat was ready.

The Israelites lacked inner commitment, devotion for God during sacrifice.

The Israelites offered stolen animals for sacrifices especially from the poor.

They offered sacrifices as a way of advertising themselves and showing off.

The Israelites were offering worthless and the smallest items to God which was against the norms of sacrifice.

The committed sins on their way to worship for instance they told lies, murdered and committed adultery.

The Israelites lacked faith and trust when offering sacrifices to God yet the major aim for sacrificing was to show faithfulness and trust in God.

AARON'S FIRST SACRIFICE TO GOD LEVITICUS 9

Aaron gave this offering on the eighth day after his ordination i.e. anointing to priesthood by Moses. **Leviticus 9:1**

The sacrifice was presided over by Moses who instructed Aaron to take a young bull and a ram without any defects to offer. **Lev 9:2**

He brought the bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

He also told the people to bring a male goat for a sin offering, a one year old calf and a one year old lamb without any blemish for a burnt offering, a bull and a ram for a fellowship offering. **Lev 9:3**

They were to sacrifice them to the lord with grain offering mixed with oil. **Lev 9:4**

Then Moses told Aaron to go near the altar, and offer a young bull as a sin offering for him and a burnt offering for the sins of the people.

Then his sons brought blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the corners of the altar, and burnt the fatty parts to the lord.

Aaron then killed the ram for his own burnt offering and poured blood at the altar and burnt the rest of the parts to the lord.

Aaron also offered a peace offering for peace to prevail in the land of Israel.

Aaron then offered a He goat for sin offering for the people as a sign of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

He also brought grain offering and took a handful of honor of flour and burnt it at the altar.

He further killed the bull and the ram as a fellowship offering for the people and the blood brought to him by the sons was thrown on all sides of the altar.

Aaron put the fat parts of the bull and ram on top of the breasts of the animal and carried it to the altar where he burnt the fat on the altar and presented the breasts and the right behind legs as the special gift to the lord for the priests as Moses had commanded. **Leviticus 9:19-21**

When Aaron had finished all sacrifices he raised his hands over the people and blessed them, and then stepped down. **Lev 9:22**

Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the lord's presence and when they came out they blessed the people and the dazzling light of the lord's presence appeared to all people.

Suddenly the lord sent fire which consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. **Lev 9:24**

When all the people saw it, they shouted, and bowed down with their faces on the ground. **Lev 9:24.**

FOOD PROHIBITIONS LEVITICUS 11

Food prohibitions helped the Israelites approach God by emphasizing holy or unholy.

The Israelites were to eat any land animal that had divided hooves and that also chewed the cud because they were considered clean and could make one holy hence approaching God. **Lev 11:2ff**

The Israelites were prohibited from eating any animal that chews the cud, but did not have divided hoofs for example camels, rabbits because they were considered unclean and could make one unclean.

The Israelites were stopped from eating or even touch dead bodies of animals that had divided hoofs, but do not chew the cud like pigs because they were considered unclean.

Water creatures like fish that had fins and scales were regarded to be eaten for they were considered clean and could make one holy and approach God.

Any water creature without fins and scales were regarded unclean and they were not supposed to be eaten because they could make one unclean and unholy and fail to approach God.

The birds of the air such as vultures, eagles, owls, falcons, hawks and bats were not to be eaten because they were considered unclean and unholy and could make one fail approach God.

All winged insects were unclean, except those that hop such as locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers therefore eating them would make a person unclean.

All insects that have wings and also crawl were considered unclean and were not to be eaten because they could make one unclean and make him unable to approach God.

The Israelites were not to eat any animals that moved on paws because they were considered ritually unclean and could make one unholy and fail to approach God.

Moles, rats, mice and lizards were not to be eaten and even touch their dead bodies because they were considered unclean and fail one to approach God.

The Israelites were not to eat any small animal that move on the ground, whether they crawl or walk on four legs or have many legs because they were considered unclean and could make them unholy and fail to approach God.

The Israelites were to be careful to distinguish between what is ritually clean and unclean between animals that may be eaten and those not meant to be eaten.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT FOOD PROHIBITIONS

In the gospel of **mark 7:7-8**, Jesus challenged the Pharisees who wanted to make it compulsory for people to observe the food prohibitions.

His disciples failed to understand him and he emphasized that there is nothing that goes into a person from outside which can make him ritually unclean because it just goes into the stomach and comes out but does not go through a person's heart. **Mark 7:15**

In **mark 7:14** Jesus emphasized that it's only what out from inside mankind that makes the person unclean.

Jesus said that observing food laws was a form of hypocrisy i.e. it was upholding man made laws and disregarding those of the almighty God. **Mark 7:6**

To Jesus, what makes a person unclean are the evils thoughts which are responsible for such immorality like theft, murder, deceiving and not food. **Mark 7:20**

To Jesus cleanliness is about the heart and following the will of God and not external observance like the law.

To Jesus, foods do not make a person ritually unclean; rather it is his relationship with God and fellow man that makes a person clean or unclean.

Jesus therefore emphasized that all foods are fit to be eaten which was contrary to the expectations of the Pharisees. **Mark 7:19**

Jesus said that food is not important for spiritual growth of a person though it's vital for survival of a person.

Jesus emphasized on morality and not the law meaning that what matters is faith and not the law **mark 7:7**

St. Paul in his letter to the **Corinthians 8:8**, said that Food cannot harm a person even if it has been offered to idols.

However if a Christian is weak in faith its better for him not to eat such food for fear of causing others to backslide. **1cor 8:10-13**

Paul said that unless the eating of the food affects the spiritual life of a believer nothing is wrong with the food.

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul indicates that it is only faith in the risen Christ that puts man right with God therefore food prohibitions are meaningless.

In his 2ND letter to the **Thessalonians 3:10** Paul said that if one does not work, he should not be given food.

In **Acts 10:10-16**, St. Peter was commanded by God to eat any of the food stuffs whether clean or unclean shown to him in the vision. I.e. God said, "Don't consider anything unclean or clean"

TREATMENT OF LEPERS IN THE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY

LEV 14

A person suffering from leprosy was called a leper and could follow these steps in order to be cleansed;

Leprosy among the Israelites did not necessarily mean the disease called by the name today but is meant any serious skin disease.

The Israelites feared such a disease because they could cause unholliness and therefore failure to approach God.

The Israelites who were victims were therefore separated from the rest of the community and from the worship of God.

Such a person with leprosy could be restored to the community of God after his impurity was cleansed. The Israelites who had such a disease were supposed to wear a bell in order to warn others so that they do not come in contact with him to make them unclean.

A man who had leprosy was supposed to shout unclean, unclean in order to warn others so that they do not come in contact with him to make them unclean.

On the day the leper is to be pronounced clean, he shall be brought to the priest and the priest shall take him outside the camp and examine him. **Lev 14:2**

If the disease is healed, the priest shall order two ritually clean birds to be brought together with a piece of cedar wood, a red cord and a spring of hyssop. **Lev 14:4.**

Then the priest shall order one of the birds to be killed over a clay bowl containing fresh spring water. **Lev 14:5**

He shall take the other bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the red cord, and the hyssop, in the blood of the bird that was killed. **Lev 14:6**

He shall sprinkle the blood seven times on the person who is to be purified from his skin disease, and then he shall pronounce him clean.

The priest shall let the live bird fly away over the open field. **Lev 14:7**

Then the person shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and have a bath and will then be ritually clean. **Lev 14:8**

The person may enter the camp, but he must live outside his tent for seven days. **Lev14:8ff**

On the seventh day he shall again shave his head, his beard, his eyebrows and the rest of the hair on his body.

The person shall then wash his clothes and have a bath, and then he will be ritually clean.

On the eighth day, he shall bring two lambs and one female lamb each one year old, that is without any defects. There kilograms of flour mixed with oil and a third a litre of olive oil. **Lev 14:10**

The priest shall take the man and these offerings to the entrance of the tent of the lord's presence. **Leviticus 14:11.**

Then the priest shall take one of the male lambs and together with the one-third of a litre of oil and he shall offer it as a repayment offering.

He shall present them as a special gift to the lord for the priests.

NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF PURIFICATION

God is seen as powerful. The Jews believed that leprosy was caused by an evil spirit. Hence the killing of one bird and releasing of other meant that God had defeated the evil spirit.

God is holy; after cleansing the leper he was considered holy and able to approach God.

God is an orderly God. This is seen when the priest followed purification days that is 1st day upto 8th day.

God is seen as victorious for example letting the bird fly away symbolized that the evil spirit had left the victim hence defeat.

God is a social worker. This is portrayed when he worked with the priest to purify the lepers.

The rituals of worship portrays God`s nature and character as a forgiving God; that is the sick offered the sin offering which meant that God had forgiven their sins.

The rituals of worship portray God as a helper. He helped the diseased people cure of leprosy.

The rituals portray God as perfect and righteous; on the 8th day, the priest was to bring two male lambs and female each one year old without any defects.

God is loving; symbolically blood represented love, life and relationship between God and man with fellow man.

God is a judge; he judged the clean and un clean people; those with leprosy were considered unclean.

God is above man; during purification rituals in Leviticus 14 one had to approach him through a mediator who was the priest.

God is a provider; he provided for the priest through the sin offering and repayment offering. (lev 14:15)

God is omnipresent; he was there when the lepers were being cleansed.

God is a law giver; he gave the Israelites the laws of purification and instructions concerning purification to priests.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PURIFICATION RITUALS

The leper's purification rituals were used to instill and maintain the Israelites purity code where all the Israelites were supposed to keep pure.

The rituals were used in promoting the culture of the Israelites as a special nation of God.

Leper's purification rituals confirmed to the Israelites that they were the chosen people of God who were to be pure and different from other people.

They helped the Israelites to be restored in the community of holy people.

They helped to separate the Jews from the pagan gentiles who never cleansed.

The rituals were to cleanse the lepers and keep clean.

It was for hygiene purposes; some of the people who had leprosy were considered dirty, yet this would spoil one`s relationship with God.

It showed the Israelites that God is holy and therefore should be approachable in a holy way by keeping clean through cleansing.

Purification rituals helped the Israelites to strengthen the relationship with their God since they could keep pure and holy.

The purification rituals were developed to prevent the society from diseases like leprosy.

It was a source of unity and common identity as a covenant community.

It showed that God is powerful. It is evident when lepers were healed.

HOW CHRISTIANS PORTRAY RITUALS OF WORSHIP

Through baptism as the priest pours water in the person's head, and some immerse the person in water and comes out pointing at death and resurrection of Jesus.

Through Holy Communion as the priest distributes the Holy Communion to the worshippers as the body of Jesus.

Through prayers as one closes the eyes as a sign of reverence and respect to God.

Through giving tithe in the church. A basket is passed around where offertory is placed.

Through fasting; for the Catholics there is the lent period where they fast for 40 days as a sign of repentance.

Through celebrating the Eucharist which is presided over by the priest while repeating the words of Jesus.

Through dedication of children as it in Kampala Pentecostal Church Watoto.

Through feet washing/cleansing in a way of imitating Jesus Christ.

Through celebrating the birth, death and resurrection of Christ i.e. Easter day.

Through sprinkling water at the entrance of the temple for Christian believers to touch while others provide water for cure of disease.

Through kneeling, clapping and standing up at different intervals as a sign of respect to God.

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEPERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, Jesus was concerned about people who had serious problems like leprosy, poverty, blindness etc; therefore the NT has the following about physical uncleanness.

He felt sympathy for them forcing him to go beyond the societal boundaries e.g. he felt sympathy for the paralyzed man lowered from the top of the roof. **Mark 2**

Jesus touched people like the lepers and the blind yet such people were considered outcasts and social misfits. **Matthew 8**

Jesus even had friends with them i.e. Jesus went into Levi's house the tax collector who was considered an outcast to have a meal. **Mark 2:15**

He emphasized that physical impurity did not mean being spiritual unclean or that the person had sinned.

He accepted that those who had cured from physical uncleanness had to follow the laws of purification i.e. giving thanks, offering of sacrifices and going to the priest for examination.

He cured and healed the unclean for example he cured the woman from her constant bleeding that had taken 12 years, and also healed the lepers.

Jesus associated with those regarded as unclean such as gentiles, prostitutes, tax collectors, Samaritans for instance in John's gospel he was seen in a conversation with the Samaritan woman.
John 4

He allowed his disciples to eat with unclean hands and more so on the Sabbath

He taught that what goes into the mouth does not make a person ritually unclean but it's what comes out of man that makes one unclean like evil ideas of killing, greed. **Mark 7:20**

Jesus had love and compassion for those who were considered unclean such as prostitutes **John 8**

Jesus forgave the sins of those who were discriminated s sinners e.g. he forgave the sins of the paralyzed a man lowered from the hole in the roof. **Mark 2:5**

Jesus even cheered up with children, the disciples were stopping them but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me because the kingdom of God belongs to them" **mark 10:13ff**

Jesus further said he came for all and salvation was for all including the unclean.

End of The Topic

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

This book consists of a series of addresses given by Moses to the people of Israel in the land of Moab, where they had stopped at the end of the long wilderness journey and were about to occupy Canaan.

Moses emphasized reminded the Israelites of their position to God and reviewed the Ten Commandments and reminded them the events of their past years and how God led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness. They were called to be obedient and loyal to God.

THE THEME OF LOVE (DEUT 6)

Moses taught the following about the great commandment and what was expected of by the Israelites;

The main theme of the book of Deuteronomy is love and if the Israelites obeyed God's command they continued enjoying constant love from God in form of blessings.

Moses instructed the people about the theme of love and told them to regard it as a great commandment.

Moses emphasized that Yahweh loved his people of Israel so much that he liberated them from exile in Egypt.

In the book, it is indicated that the Sinai covenant was a symbol of God's love for Israel. Therefore there is need to strive for covenant love.

The Israelites were called upon to practice monotheism in order to get God's blessings and love. God's love was a call to absolute monotheism. **Deut 6:13**

The Israelites were urged to reflect this love in daily life and action i.e. socially, economically and politically. Moses further emphasized that God demands sincere love from the Israelites observed through following the commandments.

The Israelites had to show this love to their fellow men and even strangers in order to attain God's care and love.

As long as they obeyed God's commands he was to protect and extend his blessings to the Israelites.

The choice of Israel as a special nation in the whole world was out of God's love for them.

Moses calls upon the Israelites to extend this love even to the foreigners because they were also at one time foreigners in Egypt. **Deut 10:12-22**

The Israelites were supposed to teach the commandment of love to the future generations in order for them to fear the lord. **Deut 6:7**

In order to live as God's people and prosper as a chosen nation, the Israelites were to obey the great commandment of loving their Lord. **Duet 6:4**

The Israelites were supposed to love their God with their heart, practice monotheism and in case they turned to syncretism God's love would reduce.

Moses urged them to show their love for God through obedience and faithfulness even when they occupy the Promised Land. **Deut 11:8ff**

The promises God made to the Israelites such as protection was a manifestation of God's love to the Israelites.

Moses taught about love as the greatest commandment **Deut 6ff**.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT LOVE

To Jesus the greatest commandment is love of God. **Mark 12:28**

To Jesus the second greatest commandment is, loving your neighbor as you love yourself. **Mark 12:33**

By Jesus healing the sick and providing food to the unprivileged showed love to such people.

The death of Jesus on the cross was a manifestation of God's love for mankind. He gave his only one son as a sign of love for the people.

Jesus Christ taught the need to extend love to all people for example the disadvantaged and foreigners.

In **Luke 6:27-28**, Jesus commanded us to love our enemies just as we love our selves too.

During Jesus' crucifixion he requested God to forgive those people who crucified him. This portrayed Jesus' love for mankind.

In **John 15:12**, Jesus laid a foundation of his preaching on the greatest commandment of, "Love one another just as I loved you."

Jesus hated love based on hypocrisy and shows that love of God and neighbors is better than offering sacrifices. This was because the teachers of the law were practicing love based on hypocrisy. **Mark 12:33**

John 16:17 shows how the love between Jesus and the believers is similar to that between him and his father.

In Corinthians 13, St. Paul shows love as the greatest gift which is unique with no strings attached i.e. it is love which can forgive, love characterized by mercy, kindness and generosity.

St. Paul's letter in **Romans 8:38-39**, shows love as a divine glory which the Christians ought to reflect in their lives.

The new testament also emphasizes on how a believer has direct access to the father's blessing if he has the inner love.

Jesus looked at the people as sheep without a shepherd. So out of love he offered himself as the good shepherd.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD'S ELECTION OF THE ISREALITES (DEUT 11)

This presents the greatness of God and the greatness of the Israelites as God's chosen people. It outlines the Israelite nation as an elected divine race of God and as God's chosen people were charged with the duty of committing themselves to the Sinai covenant by Observing God's laws.

The Israelites were supposed to do the following as a chosen nation of God;

The Israelites as God's chosen people were to practice monotheism i.e. worship of only one God and not other gods.

The Israelites as elects of God were to always obey all God`s laws; they were to be fully committed to the Sinaic covenant.

The Israelites as a chosen nation were to speak and act on behalf of Yahweh as a community of his choice.

The Israelites were considered and promised blessings such as the occupation of Canaan and protection as God`s own people. Therefore their observance of the covenant would imply their love for Yahweh who made a covenant with them.

They were to live an exemplary life to other nations since they were the elects of God.

The idea of election of the Israelites is seen from the patriarch era who were elected by God that is emphasized the promise of Land.

As God`s elect they had to continue loving their God with all their heart just as God loved them to the extent of delivering them from slavery.

As God`s chosen people the Israelites were to serve God with all their heart.

As people of God, Moses informed them to choose between life and death with their actions; he gave them guidelines on how to conduct themselves in order to continue with their divine favours in the Promised Land.

As a nation of Yahweh the Israelites had a choice to make; to obey God and they are blessed or to disobey him and they are cursed.

As a chosen nation of God the Israelites were supposed to be successful as long as they maintained obedience and faithfulness to God.

Israel is seen as a divinely elected nation who had full attached and commitment to the Sinaic covenant for instance they had to love their neighbours.

As God`s chosen people the Israelites were given laws through Moses on how to conduct themselves in order to continue with their divine favours.

As God`s chosen people they made a covenant with God at Mount Sinai.

The election of the Israelites is seen when God declared that "I will be your God and you shall be my people."

CHRISTIANS AS ELECTS OF GOD

Christians are the elects of God since we are baptized in the name of God. I.e. God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit.

Christians are the elects of God since we receive salvation from the bondage of sin and suffering through his only one son Jesus Christ`s death on the cross.

They receive the Holy Spirit which enables them to speak in tongues, interpret scriptures and perform miracles.

They observe the Ten Commandments which guide them in the day to day living.

Christians are the elects of God because God forgive our sins after repentance.

We are the elects of God because of the belief in one God i.e. practice monotheism.

[Type here]

Christians are the elect of God because we are promised the eternal life i.e. resurrection after death just as Jesus resurrected.

Christians partake in Holy Communion and Eucharist as a proclamation of faith.

We are the elect of God since pray and have faith in God to the extent that our prayers are always answered.

Christians are the elects of God since we are given a sense of reason and judgment between good and bad.

We are the elects of God since were created in God's image and we are representative of God on earth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OFFERING OF THE FIRST HARVEST TO GOD DEUT. 26

Upon reaching the land of Canaan, the Israelites were instructed to offer their first harvest to God and it had the following importance.

It was an acknowledgement to Yahweh that it was through his power that they managed to enter the Promised Land after deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

It was a sign that God alone was the provider of the needs of all the Israelites as seen in their harvest.

The offering of the first harvest showed the faith of the Israelites. It was to show how much faith the Israelites as a chosen nation had in their God therefore, they could allow him to taste the first harvest.

The offering of the first harvest was to re-affirm that it was God who was responsible for their election as a special chosen nation indicated in the offering of the first harvest.

It was a mark of confidence that God would continue to fulfill his promises to the people of Israel.

The offering of the harvest was an acknowledgment by Israel of what Yahweh had done for them so far.

The offering showed that the Israelites descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they had also sacrificed to God.

It showed that Israel was God's first born and therefore had a unique relationship with God since they were the only ones given such instructions.

It was a way of remembering their first Passover and God's saving power at the time.

The offering of the harvest was a divine command of sharing amongst the people of Israel with their God. It was a command to be implemented when the Israelites reached Canaan.

The offering showed the role of God in multiplying the Israelites from small origin (Abraham) to a powerful nation of Israel.

The production of the crop from the land indicated that God is the owner of the land they had occupied and is the provider of their harvest.

The offering of the first harvest was an appreciation of Yahweh's blessings for the harvest.

Eth offering indicated how much the Israelites were to show total love and devotion to God by offering their first harvest.

RELEVANCE/LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

Christians should worship God through giving what they have just like the Israelites offered what they had as way of worshipping God.

Christians should give offertories in the church as a way of sharing with God as the Israelites shared with God their first harvest.

Christians should give a tenth of what they have to God as tithe just as the Israelites got the first harvest and gave it to God.

They should give thanks to God in whatever they do just like the Israelites offered to God the harvest in acknowledgment of what he had done for them.

Christians should share whatever they have with others especially the poor like the Israelites shared with their God.

They should practice self sacrifice and denial for the sake of God.

They should devote themselves to God for special purposes just like the Israelites offered to God because they occupied a special position to God.

They should be obedient to God`s commandment just as the Israelites did by giving the first harvest as commanded upon reaching Canaan.

They should pray for the new things that they get in life just as the Israelites offered to God in appreciation for what God had given them.

MOSES`S TEACHING ON BLESSINGS AND CURSES DEUT 28

Blessings; if they followed God`s commands

Moses taught that obedience to the law of God pleases God. So whoever obeys God`s laws would receive God`s blessings.

Moses said that their faithfulness to the covenant law would win for them many blessings such as defeating their enemies.

Moses said that if they obeyed God, he would make Israel honored and respected among her neighbours.

He said that Israel would be governed on the principle of monotheism. Whoever abides by it would receive God`s blessings.

He said that Israel would be blessed, their towns and fields, only if they obeyed God`s commands.

Moses promised that God would bless the Israelites with many children, abundant crops and many cattle and sheep once they obeyed.

Moses added that the Lord would bless their undertakings and fill their barns with grains.

He said that if they obeyed God and strictly followed his commands, Israel would be declared God`s children.

Moses said that the lord would defeat their enemies when they attacked the Israelites.

If they obeyed His instructions, God would make them rulers of other nations in the world but not followers of others.

He said that God would make them successful in the new land they were about to take if they remained obedient.

Curses; if they disobeyed God's instructions

If they disobeyed God, He would curse their towns and fields. And therefore they would be reduced to the level of savages.

They would be cursed and produce few children, and would have few cattle and sheep.

Moses said that God would curse their undertakings, their crops and animals in case they disobeyed Him.

If they abandoned God, disaster would befall them and be completely destroyed.

If they rejected God, they would be cursed and they would not receive rain at the right time. Their land would become as hard as iron.

He said that as long as they remained disobedient to God, foreigners would gain control or more power over them and the Israelites would lose

Because of their wickedness, God would take them in a foreign and worship other gods.

He said that once they disobey God, their riches would be enjoyed by other people.

He said that because of rebelling, instead of rain they would receive sand storms which would leave majority of them dead.

If they forsake God, their wars would leave many of them dead, and their dead bodies would be eaten by wild birds and animals.

If they disobey God, the lord would curse their corn crops and the food they prepare from them.

If they reject God, he would cause trouble, confusion in everything they do until they are destroyed.

If they reject the lord, God would give victory to their enemies and be defeated and would be attacked from all directions.

End of the Topic

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE PROMISED LAND

Moses who led the Israelites from Egypt had by this time died and is the one who begun military struggle for their occupation in the Promised Land had died and therefore the Israelites were under Joshua who led them to the Promised Land.

The Israelites settled in Canaan amidst difficulty and thus the Israelites had to fight and many parts of Israel suffered violent destruction during the attacks. Many Israelites lost their lives during these attacks.

Before the conquest, Joshua called for a meeting at Shechem for the Israelite to renew the covenant they made with God at mountain Sinai.

During the covenant renewal, Joshua reminded the Israelites to stick on the covenant faith and remain faithful to God despite the challenges they were to face in the newly acquired land.

THE ACT OF HEREM

The act of Herem was one of the obligations to be fulfilled by the Israelites upon reaching Canaan. This was a holy command/instruction from God to completely destroy the enemies of the Israelites. Act of Herem simply in Hebrew meant total destruction. It therefore called for absolute ban to paganism.

For example in the war between the Israelites and the Amalekites, the Israelites under King Saul were to completely destroy all the Amalekites and their property without sparing even their king.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACT OF HEREM TO THE ISRAELITES

It was intended to do away with paganism. The Israelites would be influenced into worshipping pagan gods, thus would mark an end to anything related to paganism.

The Israelites were to show absolute faithfulness to God by carrying out the act of Herem.

It was a command from God to the Israelites before they reached Canaan. All their belongings like animals, plants, houses were to be destroyed.

It implied that the Israelites were divinely elected people of God and thus had to defeat all the pagan nations.

It aimed at encouraging the Israelites to worship only one God since paganism would be mixed with worship of the Almighty God.

It was intended to reveal the commitment of the Israelites and their obedience to their God by carrying out his orders without fail.

It meant absolute ban on compromise with the pagan religion which would influence people to practice paganism.

It was a form of punishment by God to the pagan nations for having practiced pagan worship.

It was intended at showing the supremacy of Israel over other nations in the world by revenging and completely destroying their enemies.

It was to prove that Yahweh was the overall controller of each and everything including life even among the pagan people.

It aimed at making the Israelites love only one God, the God of their ancestors; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ACT OF HEREM

Christians have a negative attitude towards the act of Herem;

Christians believe that killing against God`s expectations of having everyone having right to live.

Christians assume that Killing enemies causes suffering to the innocent children especially when their parents are the victims.

Christians believe that loving one another is very important. This love is to be extended to the enemies too.

Christians consider forgiving our enemies instead of revenging which is against God`s expectations.

They believe in praying to God for their enemies instead of revenging on them which involves killing them.

They believe that everyone on earth deserves the right to live and thus killing is against human rights.

Christian believes that it's God only with the power over human life and thus the giver of life. Therefore have no right over human life.

Christians reflect on God`s qualities of love, mercifulness and kindness to the enemies. Therefore killing is wrong and does not reflect God`s qualities.

RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM IN ISRAEL

Religious syncretism *refers to the worshipping of God alongside other gods or it's the mixing of religious beliefs. The Israelites mixed the Jewish religion with the Canaanite religion. So they believed in God at the same time believing in the Canaanite gods.*

WAYS IN WHICH THE ISRAELITES PRACTICED SYNCRETISM (Forms/Manifestation)

After occupying Canaan, the Israelites started sacrificing to the idols at the same time sacrificing to God which was against the covenant.

The Israelites became stubborn and started adopting the Canaanite culture for example Saul named his son Ishabaa meaning man of Baal.

The Israelites worshipped God alongside other gods like King Solomon worshipped the worthless goddess Asherah.

The Israelites like Jeroboam lost faith and trust in Yahweh by building temples for pagan gods at Bethel.

The Israelites neglected theocracy and instead demanded for an earthly king alongside God their top most king (God) (**1sam 8**)

The Israelites and their kings like David betrayed Yahweh by making unnecessary foreign alliances instead of seeking alliances from God against which they were warned. (**Deut 17:4-20**)

The Israelites refused to listen to God's message, they ignored the kings, despised them and harassed God's prophets for instance Amos was expelled from Bethel by Priest Amaziah in the northern kingdom of Israel. (**Amos7**)

They built shrines for other gods for example King Ahab (**1kings 16:32**), King Solomon (**1 kings 11:5**) built shrines for pagan gods yet Solomon had built the Jerusalem temple for God.

They offered human sacrifices alongside the offering to God. For example King Manasseh and Ahaz offered their sons as human sacrifice to their gods.

They practiced divination and magic for example Saul and Ahab consulted false prophets and mediums.

Some changed their year calendar. They changed seasons and feasts according to Baal calendar alongside the Passover and the atonement day.

HOW DO CHRISTIANS GET INVOLVED IN RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

Offering of sacrifices to the gods, spirits with the intention of seeking for prosperity, protection, long life and children as well as praying to God for the same

Consulting of witchdoctors, mediums and the spirits alongside the beliefs in the power of God

Building of shrines in homes at the entrance and in banana plantations as well as building of worshipping temples for God

Consulting of stars and horoscopes in the news papers with a strong belief in them alongside praying to God with faith

Wearing of protecting charms around waists alongside the belief in the almighty God

Food prohibitions that is, some societies deny women to eat certain food stuffs for fear of offending the gods.

Certain functions like funeral rites, marriage celebrations are usually conducted alongside other traditional beliefs and rituals.

Attending ceremonies like enthronement of kings, chiefs, clan leaders, there is a lot of unchristian beliefs.

Some people believe in God's miraculous powers and at the same time believe in magical and witchcraft powers to perform miracles especially in churches.

Some people accept sacraments like baptism, confirmation at the same time getting involved in funeral rites, rituals of twins which involve pagan practices.

CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN CANAAN

The Israelites were living double standards and thus they did not completely abandon God but they believed in Him and at the same time believed in the pagan gods.

All this was because of the following reasons;

The scarcity of God's visions led to religious syncretism for instance in **1Sam 3:1**, during this time, God's messages were rare and God took long to answer their prayers hence they turned to the visible gods.

The worshipping of pagan gods was interesting and exciting for instance worshipping Baal was through free sexual intercourse with women at the temple hence attracting many Israelites.

They had poor and wicked leaders who led the Israelites into syncretism. E.g. the sons of Eli had no interest in spiritual development of the people like they practiced cultic prostitution.

The change of their mode of work from pastoralism to mixed farming. This made them worship the fertility gods of the Canaanites to get fertility for their animals and crops.

The Israelites had greed for material gains which forced them into syncretism. They worshipped the Canaanite gods in order to get wealth.

They lacked the ultimate faith in their God. They resorted to double standards as they believed in God and the Canaanite gods.

The presence of the young generation who were ignorant of the greatness of Yahweh and thus they were convinced easily by the Canaanites to worship other gods.

They married the Canaanite wives whom influenced the Israelites into the worship of the gods of their wives and thus syncretism.

They lacked clear understanding of the Canaanite religion. The Israelites were convinced that they had to worship the gods of fertility to have children

They disobeyed God's instructions and refused to fulfill the act of Herem in which they were to kill all their enemies. This made the Israelites befriend them and ended up copying their culture.

The prosperity and military strength of the pagan nations led the Israelites into syncretism. Thus they were convinced that they would be strong if they worshipped the Canaanite gods

The Israelites found God's demands hard to follow compared to the demands of the Canaanites which were light hence resorting to syncretism.

HOW THE ISRAELITES DISAPPOINTED GOD UPON SETTLING IN CANAAN

The Israelites betrayed God by enslaving fellow Israelites and subjected them to exploitation and suffering especially during the reign of King Solomon.

They sold the land that God had given them for example Solomon sold 20 towns to the king of Tyre, and Ahab took Naboth's vineyard after killing him.

They practiced social injustices for example they used poor weighing scales, oppressed the poor through unfair hearing in the courts of law which was against the covenant faith.

They married foreign women, against which they were warned for example King Solomon married many foreign women and Ahab married Jezebel a Phoenician woman. (**1kings 16:30**)

They murdered innocent people for example Jezebel and Ahab killed Naboth's, king David plotted for the killing of Uriah.

They practiced sexual immorality; there was temple prostitution where by Eli's sons slept with the women working at Shiloh temple.

They grabbed the property of the poor for example King Ahab took Naboth's vineyard which was against the covenant way of life.

They violated God's instructions for example king Saul failed to fulfill the act of Herem in which he was to kill all the Amelekites and their king Agag.

They abused God's sacrifices for instance the two sons of Eli took the fatty pieces of the sacrifices (**1sam 2:12**), King Saul offered sacrifices on behalf of priest Samuel...

The Israelites worshipped God alongside other gods like King Solomon worshipped the worthless goddess Asherah.

The Israelites neglected theocracy and instead demanded for an earthly king alongside God their top most king (God) (**1sam 8**)

The Israelites and their kings like David betrayed Yahweh by making unnecessary foreign alliances instead of seeking alliances from God against which they were warned. (**Deut 17:4-20**)

They offered human sacrifices alongside the offering to God. For example King Manasseh and Ahaz offered their sons as human sacrifice to their gods.

CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR BETRAYAL OF GOD

Intermarriages resulted into apostasy for example the many wives of Solomon came in their foreign gods and Solomon was influenced to worship those gods.

The Israelites' demand for an earthly King resulted into suffering e.g. king Solomon subjected them to suffering, exploitation and slavery.

The cities of Samaria and Judah in the North and South were conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians respectively.

The once worshipping places of Shechem and Shiloh were destroyed as a result of people's sinful nature.

As a result of their defeat they became dominated by their foreigners e.g. the Assyrians and Babylonians took them to exile.

They were subjected to military defeat by their enemies the Palestine who even took the covenant Ark away from them.

God withdrew his favors, blessings and care from them, hence leaving them vulnerable to external attacks.

The kingdom finally became divided into North and south after the death of Solomon.

The great city of Jerusalem was destroyed because God withdrew his protection and power

The Israelites lacked unity i.e. constant internal rebellions became so common which created lots of social disorder e.g. David fought against Saul's sons and later killed them.

They were abandoned by Yahweh i.e. his visions became rare and the people lost trust and hope during the reign of priest Eli.

There was evolution of the class system i.e. the rich and the poor. This had never existed in Israel before as all people were equal before God e.g. during Amos' time, the rich oppressed the poor.

HOW DO CHRISTIANS DISAPPOINT GOD TODAY

Getting involved in sexual abuses like Homosexuality, adultery, incest...

Discrimination along lines of sex, age status in churches and in the society.

Selfishness and individualism leading to exploitation of the poor.

Killing of one another which is against the Ten Commandments.

Worshipping of other gods leading to loss of trust and faith in God.

Involving in cases of witchcraft with the desire to get power, prosperity...

Telling lies before God.

Corruption and bribery right from the Church and in public offices.

Putting trust in science and technology at the expense of trust in God

Robbery in the society.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE ISRAELITES IN THE NEW LAND OF CANAAN

Many Israelites lost their lives due to many fights with the Canaanites, philistines, Amalekites which thus reduced their population.

They experienced serious drought which resulted into famines leading to hunger and death of many Israelites.

They were constantly attacked by the foreigners who kept them on the run and thus never settled at any time.

The Israelites found God's demands so difficult to abide compared to the demands of the Canaanite gods e.g. the Canaanite religion never had strict demands and the Israelite religion emphasized the worship of only one God.

Many of them were misguided and turned to pagan gods because they believed that they owned the land of Canaan. Thus for them to live successfully, they worshipped the Canaanite gods.

They lacked organized leadership in the new land. Some leaders were unexemplary and misguided the people like the sons of priest Eli who acted as judges were wicked.

They were disunited as members of the family. They would get united while attacking a common enemy and after, they would be disunited again.

While in Canaan, the Israelites became immoral e.g. the sons of priest Eli started having sex with the women working at the temple entrance at Shiloh-cultic prostitution.

God took long to answer the prayers of the Israelites and they felt abandoned, became impatient and thus turned to pagan gods who would respond to their prayers quickly.

They faced a problem of infertility which forced the Israelites to worship the Canaanite gods of fertility for their wives, animals and crops.

They failed to distinguish the Israelite religion from the Canaanite religion simply because the two had some similarities which confused them and thus ended up disappointing God.

They became materialistic (strong desire for physical things) in the new land. This made them violate God's instructions E.g. king Saul violated the Act of Herem.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ISRAELITE AND THE CANAANITE RELIGION

Similarities

Both religions involved worshipping a super natural being for example the Israelites worshipped Yahweh and also the Canaanites had their super natural being "Baal".

Both religion emphasized prayers. The Canaanites prayed to Baal and the Israelites prayed to God the Almighty.

In both religions, festivals were common and emphasized. For example the Jews attached special meaning to the Passover and the Canaanites also had their own festivals.

Both religions had prophets. The Canaanite prophets promoted the Canaanite religion and the Israelite prophets emphasized monotheism.

In both religions, people were meant to repent their sins committed and ask for forgiveness from God and the gods respectively.

In both religions, obedience would yield blessings from God to the Israelites and from the Canaanite gods to the Canaanites.

Both religions involved sacrifice, the Israelites were required to give sacrifices to God and the Canaanites to their gods respectively.

In both religions forgiveness was expected from God the Almighty and the Canaanite gods in case one repented.

Differences

Religious leaders in the Jewish religion were chosen by God like priests and prophets while in the Canaanite religion, the leaders were self appointed.

The Canaanite leaders had power over human life and thus could kill and grab property while in the Israelite religion, they had to respect human life and none was above the law.

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In the Canaanite religion, sacrifices could be made from anywhere like under big trees, mountains, hills while the Israelites religion demanded sacrifices to be made from holy places chosen by God.

The Canaanite religion followed seasons like sunny seasons they worshipped the gods of the sun while in the Israelites religion, God would be worshipped all time regardless of seasons.

The Israelite religion involved strange miracles which revealed His powers while the Canaanite religion, magic was used to perform the same miracles.

The Israelite religion originated from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob while the Canaanite religion had never been traced by the Canaanites.

The Canaanite gods were visible and some were in form of human beings with children while the Israelite God was invisible because He was believed to be a spirit.

The Canaanite religion was natural and thus emphasized physical needs while the Israelite religion was beyond the natural needs because God aimed at spiritual perfection.

The Israelite religion involved monotheism (only one God) while the Canaanite religion involved the worshipping of many gods.

The Israelite religion involved making covenants like the Sinaic and Abrahamic covenants while the Canaanite religion never involved special covenants with their gods.

THE REIGN OF JUDGES

Judges were God's representatives. They were chosen by God and they used to deliver God's message to the people and people's response back to God.

They were chosen by God to act on his behalf in organizing the people of Israel when they had just entered the Promised Land.

The office of judgeship was not supposed to be hereditary but to depend on God's choice. They were national heroes, most of whom were military leaders rather than judges in the legal sense of the word.

For example Samson, Gideon, Deborah, Eli, Samuel, the last of the great judges...

ROLE OF JUDGES IN ISRAEL

They ensured that people practiced monotheism.

They led the Israelites into national repentance.

They led people into prayers

They acted as seers and predicted the future

They counseled and guided the Israelites in case they had problems.

They acted as king makers. King Saul was anointed by Samuel and when he was rejected, Samuel anointed David.

They were instruments of harmony and cooperation among the Israelites. They moved from place to place to settle disputes.

They offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the Israelites.

They acted as military commanders and led the Israelites into war and ensured that they gained victory in wars.

They promoted unity in Israel and ensured that all people lived as one people since they belonged to one God.

THE FAMILY OF PRIEST ELI

Priest Eli was one of priests and judges appointed by God when the Israelites had reached in the Promised Land.

When Eli grew old, he appointed his sons to act as judges. Therefore he made judgeship hereditary yet the judges were supposed to be appointed by God.

On top of that, the sons of Eli were wicked and therefore failed to follow their father's example. Because of being wicked the family was rejected.

FACTORS THAT LED TO THE REJECTION OF ELI'S FAMILY

(1 SAMUEL 2:12FF)

Eli's family was rejected because of the following reasons;

Eli's sons violated the regulations governing God's sacrifices as they were laid down in the book of Leviticus. They would get their share of the sacrifice before God would get his share which was against God's expectations.

The sons of Eli were greedy; they ate the fatty parts which were meant for God. Thus they had contempt for God. **(1 Sam 2:15ff)**

The sons of Eli indulged in sexual immorality in the sanctuary of Shiloh. They played sex with maids who worked at the entrance of the temple hence their rejection.

They were rejected because they were guilty of blasphemy (spoke evil of God). This was bad as far as the Israelites were concerned because they were warned in **Exodus 20:7**

Eli failed to discipline his children right from childhood; for this reason they became immoral and thus the rejection.

Eli himself had grown old. He kept on hearing what his sons were doing but almost did nothing to stop them which annoyed God hence rejection.

The sons of Eli were corrupt; they accepted bribes in judging cases. To this end therefore the whole family was rejected.

The sons of Eli were always intimidated the people who brought offerings. They often used force to get best parts that they rejected

The sons failed to respect for their father which was against the commandment of God. This explains why they faced Yahweh's judgment.

The two sons practiced paganism. They introduced and perpetuated pagan worship at Shiloh temple when they accepted offering to idols in the tent of God.

Eli's sons never respected God. They paid no attention to the lord in that they never listened to God's messengers whom He sent to warn them about their wickedness.

Eli knew what his sons were doing and knew that punishment would befall them but never bothered to correct them. **1samuel 2:23**

His sons failed to follow the example of their father who had served the lord faithfully as a priest of God hence rejection.

He made a mistake of appointing his sons as judges yet judges were leaders who were appointed by God but Eli decided to make judgeship hereditary.

As a result the sins of Eli affected the whole nation because God punished the Israelites by using the philistines who killed Eli's sons **1samuel 4:11** and the news shocked Eli to death.

LESSONS TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS TODAY

Modern religious leaders should respect God's places of worship unlike Eli's sons who had sexual intercourse with the maids at the temple.

They should be exemplary unlike Eli. They should advise their sons and also listen to peoples comments. Unlike Eli who paid no attention.

Leaders should discipline their children when they do wrong unlike Eli who just looked on when his sons were sinning against God.

Religious leaders should seek for advice when need arises unlike Eli who did not seek for advice from God on which person to succeed him since he had grown but instead he elected his sons.

They should fight against corruption and greed because they are evils which are punished by God.

They should practice democracy and respect public affairs because public affairs are not hereditary unlike Eli who appointed his sons as judges.

They should learn to entrust offices of responsibility to competent people unlike Eli who blundered by using his wicked sons.

They should emulate the good examples of their parents unlike Eli`s sons who never copied the good example of their father.

They should be satisfied with the privileges that they have unlike the sons of Eli who had access to the sacrifices but instead took the big parts.

They should respect for God`s sacrifices unlike the sons of Eli who forcefully grabbed the sacrifices of the people.

SAMUEL

Samuel was a son of Elkanah and Hannah from the tribe of Ephraim, who lived in the town of Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. He was a prophet and also remembered as the last of the great judges. He is the one who introduced the monarchy in Israel by anointing the first king-Saul.

Samuel was born during the time when priest Eli had grown old and had appointed his sons as God's judges and priests however they were sinful and made Eli's family to be rejected by God.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

Hannah's faith led to Samuel's birth. Hannah believed that God would provide her with a child and that's why she prayed desperately and later she was granted Samuel.

Hannah's faith led to Samuel's birth. When she went to Shiloh, she cried bitterly while praying and God granted her prayers because of the way she prayed.

Eli's blessings led to Samuel's birth. When Hannah told Eli that she was not drunk but she was only pouring her problems unto God, Eli blessed her and said, "....may God of Israel give you that you have asked Him for" **1 Samuel 1:17**

The need for a military commander. The Israelites were always under constant attack by the philistines and therefore Samuel was born to act as a military commander.

There was a lot of moral decay among the Israelites because they had no righteous leaders. Therefore Samuel was born to bring about religious cleanliness/sanity in Israel.

The situation in Elkanah's family. He had two wives Peninah and Hannah. Peninah used to provoke Hannah who cried all the time because she had no children. Samuel was therefore born to bring comfort to Hannah.

The need to pave way for a monarchy led to the birth of Samuel. Samuel was responsible for anointing the first king-Saul.

The need for someone to settle disputes honestly. He was to act as a fair judge, priest and prophet. He was to replace the dishonest judges/sons of Eli.

Samuel was born to provide a solution to Hannah's barrenness. She had lived a miserable and childless life. God decided to bring an end to Hannah's misery by giving her a son.

Hannah's promise led to Samuel's birth. She had promised that, if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to Yahweh. Therefore Samuel was born to test Hannah's faith.

THE CALL OF SAMUEL AS A PROPHET OF ISRAEL 1SAMUEL 3:1-19

One night Eli, who was almost blind was sleeping in the sanctuary of the Lord with Samuel where the sacred covenant box was. **(1 Samuel 3:2-3)**

The Lord then called upon Samuel, he answered, "yes sir and he ran to Eli saying you called me, and here I am," but Eli answered I did not call you, go back to bed. So Samuel went back to bed. **1 Samuel 3:4-5.**

The Lord called Samuel again though he did not know that it was the Lord because the Lord had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli but told him to go back to bed. **1 Samuel 3:6-7.**

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The Lord called Samuel a third time and he ran to Eli. Eli then he realized that it was the Lord calling upon Samuel and said to him go back to bed and if he calls you again say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." So Samuel went back to bed. **1 Samuel 3:8-9**

The Lord came and stood there, and called as he had done before. "Samuel! Samuel! Then Samuel answered speak your servant is listening. **1 Samuel 3:10**

The Lord said to him that one day He is going to do something so terrible to the people of Israel that everyone who hears about it will be stunned. **1 Samuel 3:11**

On that day He would carry out all the threats against Eli's family from beginning to end for he had already told him that he was going to punish his family forever because they spoke evil things against me.

This is because Eli knew that his sons were evil but he did not stop them hence no sacrifice would ever be able to remove the consequences of this terrible sin. **1 Samuel 3:14**

Samuel stayed in bed until morning, and then he got up and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. **1 Samuel 3:15**

He was afraid to tell Eli about the vision but Eli called him, and asked him, "What did the Lord tell u?" Don't keep anything from me because God will punish you.

So Samuel told him everything that the Lord said and never kept anything back and Eli answered, "He is the Lord, he will do whatever seems best to Him."

As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and made sure that whatever Samuel said came true. This made Samuel to be known as a true prophet of God. **1 Samuel 3:19**

LESSONS TO MODERN CHRISTIANS

Christians learn to respond positively to God's call likewise Samuel responded positively to God's call.

They should be obedient just as Samuel was obedient to God's instructions and Eli whereby he delivered the message to Eli.

They should condemn evil just as God pronounced to Samuel his condemnations against Eli's family.

They should be exemplary likewise Samuel showed a good example when he carried out God's mission.

They should live a righteous life likewise Samuel was righteous and that's why God appeared to him.

They should deliver God's message without fear unlike Samuel who had feared to deliver God's message to priest Eli.

They should listen to the advice of the elders like Samuel listened to the advice of Eli to tell him whatever God had told him.

They should be humble especially when they are called likewise Samuel responded with humility when he heard the voice calling him.

They should have respect for God's house just as Samuel respected the sanctuary.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SAMUEL IN THE LIFE OF THE ISRAELITES

He judged cases; Samuel moved from Mizpah, Ramah and Gilgal judging cases ranging social to religious in nature for example he used to settle disputes. **1 Samuel 7:16**

He anointed Saul as the first king of Israel **1 Samuel 10:1** and after he anointed David **1 Samuel 16:13** thereby transforming Israel into a monarchy.

He taught people God's message, organized the day of national repentance and sacrificed on behalf of the people. **1 Samuel 7:9**

As a seer he assisted Saul to trace his father's lost donkeys **1 Samuel 10:20** and he was able to identify David and Saul for anointing.

He advised and counseled people; Samuel told the people what ought to be and reminded them of the consequences of their demand for a king. **1 Samuel 8:11-18**

He gave out laws to the people; this is clearly seen in his constitution and guidelines regarding Kingship. **1 Samuel 10:25-27**.

As a prophet he worked amidst the Israelites and all what he said came true. **1 Samuel 9:6** and he also delivered God's message of condemnation to the entire household of Eli **1 Samuel 3:18**

He mediated between the Israelites and God. For example when the people demanded for a king, Samuel first consulted God and the answer was given. **1 Samuel 8:6-7**

As a military leader, Samuel was successful in all his military expeditions. For example, during his time the Philistines were defeated and stopped invading Israel's territory as long as Samuel lived. **1 Samuel 7:10-13**

He revived Monotheism amongst the Israelites by rehabilitating the Central sanctuary; the once rare words and visions of God due to the misconduct of Eli's family became common again.

He called upon the people to live by the covenant obligations and have fear for God. **1 Samuel 12:14**.

However Samuel never changed Israel completely in that;

He chose his own sons (Abijah, and Joel) as his successors to be judges yet the office of the priesthood was not hereditary. The sons accepted bribes and did not decide cases honestly. **1 Samuel 3:1-3**

Syncretism and idolatry continued to be practiced by some Israelites.

He is blamed for the rejection of King Saul because he over delayed to go and offer the sacrifice to God. And as a result Saul himself offered it, which led to his rejection as King by God.

He failed to instill discipline to his children Joel and Abijah. His sons accepted bribes and did not decide cases honestly.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CALL OF SAMUEL AND MOSES

Differences

MOSES		SAMUEL
Was called during day taking care of Jethro`s flock		Was called during the night while sleeping
Asked for God`s name which he revealed later as IAM WHO IAM		Never asked for the name because Eli told him that it was God speaking
Moses covered his face because he feared to look at God		Remained as he was because he was clean
He was told to remove his sandals because he was standing on a holy ground	WHILE	Samuel remained the way he was because he was clean.
Received the call from Mt. Sinai		He was sleeping in the sanctuary
Asked for a spokesman and was given Aaron		Was to speak by himself
Went to Egypt to save the Israelites who were suffering		Was sent to deliver a message of destruction and rejection to the family of Eli
He was given powers to perform miracles		Never doubted God and therefore was never given power to make miracles
His call was in the form of a burning bush		Heard a voice calling his name Samuel, Samuel...
During his call, God described his background as the God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac		Samuel never asked for any question and thus no name was revealed to him

SIMILARITIES

Both Samuel and Moses were faithful to God`s call. They carried out God's mission. Samuel delivered God`s message to priest Eli while Moses delivered the Israelites from Egypt.

Both received their calls directly from God. God appeared to Samuel directly without using a mediator and he also appeared to Moses directly.

Both received their calls from foreign places. Moses was in Midian while Samuel was a foreigner in Eli`s family.

Both calls were vassal in nature. They were between a superior party and inferior parties Moses and Samuel.

Both calls were initiated by God. Therefore it was out of God's initiative that Moses and Samuel were called.

Both Samuel and Moses were addressed by their names. In the burning bush, when God saw that Moses was getting closer, he called "Moses, Moses and while Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary and God called, Samuel, Samuel...

Both had never experienced God's call before/vision before. Therefore it was their first experience, that's why they had not realized God's call.

Both Moses and Samuel were hesitant to deliver God's message. Samuel was afraid to deliver the message to ELI and Moses was afraid to deliver the Israelites from slavery.

Both received their calls from holy places. Moses received the call from holy mountain of God, Mt Sinai while Samuel received the call from the sanctuary where God's covenant was kept.

Both heard God's voice. Moses heard the voice from the burning bush and Samuel heard the voice calling him when he was sleeping.

KINGSHIP

THE PEOPLE ASK FOR A KING 1 SAMUEL 8

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons Joel and Abijah to act as judges. Unfortunately, they did not follow their father's example. They were corrupt, accepted bribes and did not decide cases honestly.

On seeing this, the leaders of Israel went to Samuel demanding for a human king, "look, you are getting old and your sons do not follow your example so the, appoint a king to rule over us..." 1 Samuel 8:5

Note that they were meant to recognize God's leadership, he was their top most leader and king.

REASONS WHY THE ISRAELITES DEMANDED FOR A KING

Samuel had become too old to effectively mobilize and organize the people of Israel who had no trust in his children, thus demanding for a king to replace Samuel.

It was a period of moral decay due to the influence of the Canaanites where by religious leaders had temple prostitution hence people demanded for a leader to bring back religious sanity.

They demanded for a king because Samuel had appointed his son Abijah and Joel as judges but they were corrupt. This made the leaders to approach Samuel and asked for a king.

They wanted to be like other nations who had kings and held a lot of power and prestige so the Israelites also wanted a leader with powers to lead them.

They wanted a visible person they could approach to solve their problems unlike God who was invisible and took long to answer them.

They demanded for a king because they lacked appreciation of what God had done for them. They demanded for a king who would lead them to success in military and prosperity.

They demanded for a king because they had forgotten the covenant they made with God at Mt. Sinai which stated the theocratic nature of Israel as a nation.

The Israelites wanted a person who would lead them according to the covenant way of life. This was because they had no recognized leader to guide the people.

There was disunity among the 12 tribes of Israel. Therefore there was need to unite all the tribes hence the demand of a king.

External factors

They wanted a king who would organize and lead them in economic prosperity. For example neighboring nations like Syria, Moab, and Philistia developed because they had an organized political system.(1Sam 8:4-5)

The need for a military commander influenced the Israelites to demand for a king. There was lack of a large standing army to defend Israel against enemies. Thus need for someone to organize the people.

The capture of the covenant box by the Philistines during the time of Eli made the Israelites demand for a king who would defend them against such external threats. **(1sam 4:1ff)**

The philistines had killed Eli`s sons which caused fear among the Israelites. They therefore wanted a king would protect them against such threats and fears. **(1sam 4:12)**

The philistines had killed about 4000 Israelite men. The military strength of the philistines therefore made the Israelites demand for a king who would build Israel as a strong nation and defeat their enemies. **(1sam 4:2)**

SAMUEL`S REACTION TO THE DEMAND FOR A KING 1 SAM 8:11-17

Samuel was displeased with the people`s demand for a king and reacted and gave the effects kingship would have on the Israelites;

Kings would make their sons soldiers kings would make some of them serve in the war chariots, others in his Calvary, and others would run before his chariots.

Kings would make some of them officers of thousands men and others in charge of fifty men.

The kings would make your sons to plough their fields, harvest their crops and make their weapon and the equipment for his chariots.

Kings would force your daughters to make perfumes for them and work as their cooks and bakers.

The kings would take your best fields, vineyards, olive oil groves, and give them to their officials.

The kings would take your servants and your best cattle and donkeys, and make them work for them.

The kings would take a tenth of their flocks.

The kings would make the Israelites become his slaves.

Samuel said that time would come, when the people would complain bitterly because of their kings whom they chose but God will not listen to their outcry during that time.

The kings would make the Israelites sons to manufacture weapons of war.

In spite of Samuel`s advice, the people paid no attention to Samuel and went ahead to demand for a king. **1sam 8:19**

REASONS WHY SAMUEL REFUSED THE ISRAELITES DEMAND FOR A KING

Samuel said that the people`s demand for a king was pre-mature because God who is omniscient knew when he would provide them with a king as promised in Deuteronomy.

The people never consulted Samuel whether it was appropriate for them to have a king hence his refusal for kingship.

He refused their demand because the people were copying the ways of pagan nations something they had been warned about.

Samuel refused the people's demand for a king because it was a sign of rejecting Samuel as their leader much as he had grown old.

It was a rejection of Samuel's sons and his home who were supposed to take over from him as leaders.

The demand of a king challenged the kingship of God i.e. the people were tempting to overthrow the kingship of God hence his rejection.

According to Samuel, leaders in Israel were chosen by God and not by the people for example Moses and Joshua were chosen by God therefore he rejected their demand waiting for God to choose a king.

He refused because he saw it as the people's attempt to forget that being a chosen race meant being loyal to God.

Samuel refused because to him they were breaking the covenant obligation of God as their king.

Samuel saw it as a way of the Israelites trying to refuse to recognize that God fought wars and won their battles i.e. it was a direct denial of God's omnipotence and ability.

To him the Israelites were unappreciative of Samuel's role and contributions in the development of Israel.

To Samuel, it meant having a new political set up which would distort the original set up of theocracy hence his refusal.

To Samuel, the Israelites had been successful with their leader without an earthly king therefore he saw no need for a king hence his refusal for the demand of a king.

Samuel saw it as a rejection of God who was a well known leader of the Israelites hence his refusal.

HOW KINGSHIP JUSTIFIED THE EARLIER FEARS PRONOUNCED BY SAMUEL FOR KINGSHIP

King Ahab grabbed Naboth's vineyard as Samuel had predicted that the kings would grab their subjects' property.

King David killed Uriah and took his wife fulfilling Samuel's fear that the kings would grab their subjects' wives.

Kings Solomon and Ahab married foreign women which Samuel had feared and predicted. These women came with their gods and contaminated Israel with pagan worship.

Solomon sold God's land justifying Samuel's fear that the kings would sell God's land which annoyed God and the Israelites.

Naboth was killed by Ahab and Uriah killed by David fulfilling Samuel's fear since he predicted that the kings would shed innocent blood.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife brought Baal into land and 850 false prophets and gods. Solomon's wives came along with their gods into Israel

David and Solomon discriminated God's people. They favored the southerner at the expense of the northerners

Samuel feared that the kings would mislead God's people which was fulfilled by Saul who forced people to eat meat with blood which was against the covenant way of life.

King Saul disobeyed God's instructions when he spared Agag's life because of corruption as Samuel had predicted.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAELITE KINGS

They were supposed to be appointed and approved by God.

They were supposed to possess the spirit of the Lord to guide them after their anointment.

They were expected to respect the Law of Moses and all other laws which God gave to the Israelites.

They were supposed to be citizens of Israel and therefore foreigners were out.

They were supposed to be exemplary to his subjects to the Israelites. I.e. to be righteous and promote monotheism.

They were supposed to respect their offices

They had to listen to the complaints and views of the people and provide them solutions.

Kings had to show love to the Israelites as God love all of them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PAGAN KINGS

They used to force people to join the army

All their subjects were under and answerable to the kings alone.

The pagan kings were above the law and had power over people's lives.

They had freedom to make alliances with other nations for protection.

They were free to marry from other cultures and nations.

They performed duties of the priests like officiating sacrifices on their behalf.

They used to consult false prophets and believed in their prophecies.

They practiced polytheism and worshipped many gods and ensured people too did so.

The king's palace was a source of authority and before any decision would be made, the king had to be consulted and his decision was final.

End of The Topic

KING SAUL

Saul was a son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was handsome in the prime of his life; he was a head taller than anyone else in Israel.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE ANOINTING OF KING SAUL

1Sam 9:10:1ff

While Saul and the servant were looking for the lost donkeys of his father Kish, Samuel was also looking for him to anoint him as the king of Israel.

They searched for the donkeys in different regions, when they reached the region of Zuph, Saul suggested to the servant that they should go back home because his father would stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about them.

However, the servant suggested that they should go and consult a holy man who lived in the town. He was a prophet, and a seer and whatever he predicted came true.

Saul was worried that they had nothing to pay him for the prophecy. The servant suggested that they would give him a silver coin he had.

They agreed to proceed to the town where the holy man lived. As they were going up the hill, they met young women who were coming out to draw water.

They asked the whereabouts of the seer. They told them that he was in town just ahead of them going to offer a sacrifice at the altar on the hill.

They went to the town, as they were going in, they saw Samuel coming out towards them going to offer a sacrifice at the altar on the hill.

Samuel's meeting Saul was planned by God because the previous day God had told Samuel that the next day he was to send him a man from the tribe of Benjamin, he was to anoint as the king of Israel.

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, God told him that; 'this is the man I told you about, he will rule my people.'

Saul went to Samuel and asked him where the seer lived. Samuel told him that he was the seer. Both had never met before and thus did not know each other

Samuel invited Saul and his servant to share a meal together. Saul accepted and they were led by Samuel. Samuel told them that the lost donkeys were already found.

While they were having a meal, Saul was given a special piece of meat. After eating he was given a special room on top of the roof where he slept.

The following day Samuel told Saul to wake up such that he could send him on his way home. Saul woke up and they went out to the street together.

On reaching the edge of the town, Samuel requested Saul to tell the servant to go ahead of them and the servant left and Saul stayed behind for a while.

Samuel took a jar of oil, poured on Saul's head, kissed him and said, "The lord anoints you as ruler of his people Israel..." 1 Samuel 10:1ff

After the anointment, Saul left Samuel and on his way, he received God's spirit which took control over him.

SAUL IS ACCLAIMED AS KING (1 SAM 10:17)

Saul did not tell anyone about what Samuel had said about his becoming a king. Later on all the Israelites gathered together, they were called by Samuel for a religious gathering at Mizpah.

Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, the least important was chosen and shown to the people of Israel as their first king. They all shouted, long live the king.

The people were told the rights and duties of a king which were written in a book which was deposited in a holy place.

THE WAR AGAINST THE PHILISTINES 1SAMUEL 13:1

After Saul had been anointed and acclaimed as a king of Israel, he staged a war against the philistine. During this war, Saul failed to abide by God's instructions as far as sacrifices were concerned.

Saul had an appointment with Samuel to meet within even day, but Samuel did not appear to officiate the sacrifice in order to win God's favor.

Since the philistines were ready to attack Israel, and Saul's men had started deserting him, he decided to offer the burnt sacrifice which was against God's expectations.

As soon as he finished sacrificing Samuel appeared and blamed him for what he had done. The sacrifices were supposed to be presented to God by only his chosen priests.

Saul's foolish act of sacrificing on Samuel's behalf was against the covenant way of life because it had the following implications;

By officiating the sacrifice, Saul was trying to copy the pagan way of life. It was very common among the pagan kings to officiate sacrifices.

Saul lacked patience. He failed to wait for Samuel to come and officiate the sacrifice. As soon as he finished sacrificing, Samuel arrived.

Saul was unrepentant. After acting foolishly, by sinning against God, he did not ask for forgiveness but instead he was blaming Samuel for having delayed.

Saul failed to have respect for the priestly office. By sacrificing, it meant that Saul disrespected the priesthood office which he tried to assume.

Saul was unexamplary. He showed a bad example to his subjects because they knew that the law did not allow non-priests to officiate sacrifices.

when he was threatened by the philistines, he failed to consult God on what to do in Samuel's absence but instead he officiated the sacrifices which was wrong.

Sacrificing showed that Saul was a coward. He feared the philistines would attack him before winning God's favor and also his people were deserting him that is why he sacrificed. He was meant to remain brave and firm.

THE WAR AGAINST THE AMALEKITES 1 SAMUEL 15

When the Israelites were moving to the Promised Land, the Amalekites tried to stop them from passing through their land, which greatly annoyed God.

Samuel told Saul that God was going to punish them. Saul was to carry out the act of Herem. He was supposed to destroy all the Amalekites, young and old, and all their property. Everything was to be completely destroyed.

When they went to fight, Saul spared king Agag's life and the best animals. He only destroyed the worthless ones. This annoyed God who regretted for having made Saul King of Israel.

Saul's act had the following implications;

It was a sign of disobedience. This was a holy war where Saul was supposed to destroy all the Amalekites and their property as commanded by God, unfortunately he disobeyed God's instructions.

Saul proved to be materialistic. Instead of doing what the lord commanded him to do he was interested in amassing material wealth which was against God's expectations.

Saul feared and respected his soldiers more than God. He allowed them to spare the best animals instead of obeying God's command. He was meant to respect God only.

Saul was greedy; he spared Agag and the best animals for himself. This implied that he was not contented with what he had.

Saul was a liar. When Samuel met him, he told him that he had obeyed the lord's command yet it was not the case, he had disobeyed instead.

Saul failed to show a good example to his subjects e.g. showing greed, accepting to be bribed by Agag...were bad examples to the people.

Saul's act showed that he was corrupt. He spared Agag hoping to get a ransom which was a sign of corruption and against the covenant way of life.

Saul spared Agag yet he was supposed to destroy all the people. I.e. All people were supposed to receive equal punishment of complete destruction.

Saul was arrogant. When Samuel talked to him, he behaved as if he had not committed any sin (as if he had fulfilled God's will)

Saul was interested in personal prestige. After sinning against the lord, and God's rejection, he wanted to continue moving with Samuel in order to maintain his status before the people.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING SAUL

Saul was able to fight and defeat his enemies the philistines, ammonites, Moabites. These threatened the existence of Israel as a nation **1samuel 11:10-11**

Saul built a disciplined army. He recruited and trained Israelites soldiers and by the time David came to power, the army was organized.

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Saul united the Israelites. He brought together the 12 tribes of Israel so as to fight against his enemies. He treated all of them equally and gave equal opportunities.

He was a God fearing King. Saul participated in Samuel's religious functions, rejoiced before God and called upon people to honor the lord. **1samuel 11:15**

He had some devotions to God. He upheld the covenant faith during his early periods of his reign for example he at one time expelled from Israel all the mediums and fortune tellers.

Economically, Saul conducted trade especially in iron. This enhanced the economic prosperity in Israel.

Saul was a good administrator, he never discriminated against his people i.e. he was non-exploitative. In so doing he restored peace and law and order in the society.

Saul was a nationalist. He loved his nation to the extent that he died at the battle front with the philistines while defending his nation.

He cleared the forest areas of the philistines region purposely to reduce on the hiding places of the philistine army. This helped to strengthen security hence promotion of peace in Israel.

He laid a foundation to the institution of kingship which other kings like David, Solomon based on in developing Israel.

FAILURES OF KING SAUL

He violated the act of Herem (holy destruction of all living things). He was commanded by God to destroy all the Amalekites but instead he spared King Agag and the fatty animals. **1sam 13:1**

He was a coward. He showed great fear in Philistine war. He feared the threats of goliath **1 Sam 17:8-11**

He was a liar for example he deceived Samuel that he had obeyed the lord's command of destroying all the property yet he had spared Agag and the fatty animals.

He was impatient because he did not wait for Samuel who would conduct the sacrifice yet God does not work with impatient people after all Samuel appeared just after Saul's sacrifice

He worshipped Baal. For example he named his son a pagan name Ishabaa meaning man of Baal which was against the Mosaic Law.

Saul was materialistic. For example he spared King Agag in their war with the Amalekites and it's believed that Agag had promised Saul material wealth.

He offered the sacrifice which was against the Levite law of priesthood which required only the priests to offer sacrifices to God. Therefore he disrespected the priesthood office.

Saul was impatient. For example when he committed sin of offering a sacrifice and Samuel blamed him; but instead blamed it on the need that was there and refused to ask for forgiveness from God.

He consulted the false prophets (a medium) after failing to get an answer from an aspect which showed mistrust in God. **1samuel 28:3**

He was a murderer. He murdered 85 priests of Nob because they were cooperating with David and also made attempts to kill David. **1samuel 22:16**

Saul was unfair to his promises for example he promised to give his daughter to a person who would kill Goliath but when David so he did not fulfill his promise

He refused his men to eat food for a full day not until he had revenged on his enemies. **1sam 14:24ff**

He unappreciative of other people's contributions. Though David had played a big role of defending his kingdom, Saul could not appreciate and instead wanted to kill David.

He failed to control his army. In spite of his strong army. Saul failed to control his soldiers and most of them deserted him by giving way to the philistines to attack the Israelites.

Saul attempted to commit Suicide which was against the covenant laws out line Exodus 20:14, "do not murder". **1samuel 31:6**

He was jealousy and selfish. Several times, he attempted to kill David who was a friend to his son Jonathan. **1samuel 18:6-10**

Due to the above mistakes, Prophet Samuel announced the rejection of Saul by God. Samuel said, "Your rule will not continue, because you have rejected the word of God, He has also rejected you from being a king". **1samuel 13:11-15 and 15:23**

LESSONS TO POLITICAL LEADERS TODAY LEARN FROM SAUL

Political leaders should listen to advice given to them by religious leaders unlike Saul who failed to listen to Samuel.

They should use honest means of acquiring wealth. When Saul spared Agag because of material benefits during the Amalekites war, he was rejected.

They should be exemplary to the people they lead because may be rejected by God like Saul.

They should be obedient to God because disobedience leads to punishment. When Saul disobeyed God's commands he was punished.

They should be contented with what they have unlike Saul who was materialistic by sparing Agag and the sheep.

They should respect human lives than Saul who was a blood thirsty character, he killed God's prophet at Nob and also wanted to kill David.

They should be brave and strong, Saul's tendency of being a coward against Goliath promoted David's popularity who eventually replaced him.

They should work with patience unlike Saul who sacrificed before Samuel appeared for the sacrifice.

They should consult God and his messengers unlike King Saul who consulted the medium

They should respect and honor the lord's commands unlike Saul who disobeyed the rejected the act of Herem.

End of The Topic

KING DAVID

THE ANOINTMENT OF DAVID 1SAMUEL 16:1-13

David was anointed s king by Samuel after the rejection of Saul who sinned against God by failing to carry out the act of Herem, worshipping Baal...

The following are the circumstances that led to the anointing of David;

The lord said to Samuel, "how long will you go on grieving over Saul?" because he had rejected him as king of Israel. **1samuel 16:1**

The lord then told Samuel to get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem, to a man named Jesse, because one of his sons had been chosen as king of Israel. **1samuel 16:1ff**

Samuel was sacred because Saul would kill him if he heard about it. **1samuel 17:2**

The lord answered, "Take a calf with you and say that you are there to offer a sacrifice to the lord.

The lord then told Samuel to invite Jesse to the sacrifice and will tell him what to do; you will anoint as the king the man the lord tells him to. **1samuel 16:3**

Samuel then did what the lord him to do and went to Bethlehem, where the city leaders came trembling to meet him and asked, "is this a peaceful visit, seer?"

Yes, he answered. "I have come to offer a sacrifice to the lord; he ordered them to purify themselves and follow him to offer the sacrifice".

He also told Jesse and his sons to purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Jesse's sons Eliab and said to himself, "this man standing in the lord's presence is surely the one he has chosen."

But the lord said to him, pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is; he rejected him because God does not judge as people judge. They look at outward appearance, but the lord looks at one's heart.

Then Jesse called his son Abinadad and brought him to Samuel, but Samuel said, "No the lord has not chosen him either."

In this way Jesse brought seven of his sons to Samuel, and Samuel said to him, "No the lord has not chosen any of these."

Then Samuel asked him, "Have you any more sons?" and Jesse answered yes but the youngest is out taking care of the sheep.

Samuel ordered Jesse to call him and he said we won't offer the sacrifice until he comes.

So Jesse sent for him, he was a handsome, healthy young man. And his eyes sparkled.

Then the lord said to Samuel, "this is the one anoint him"

Samuel then took the olive oil and anointed David in front of his brothers.

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Immediately the spirit of the lord took control of David and was with him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramoth.

THE TRANSFER OF THE COVENANT BOX FROM BAALAH TO JERUSALEM 2SAMUEL 6

The covenant box had been captured from the Israelites by the philistines and returned it to them who then placed it at Baalah in Judah.

David collected 30,000 of his best soldiers and led them to Baalah in Judah in order to bring God's covenant box from the house of Abinadab.

They took it from Abinadab's home and placed it on a new cart.

Uzzah and Ahio were guarding the cart while David and all the Israelites were playing harps, lyres and drums while dancing and singing with their might to honor the lord.

As they came to the threshing place of Nacon, the oxen stumbled and Uzzah reached out and took hold of the covenant box.

God became angry with Uzzah and killed him.

David was annoyed because the lord had killed Uzzah in anger.

David decided to leave the covenant box at Obed's house where it stayed for 3 months and the lord blessed Obed and his entire household.

David collected the covenant box on hearing that God had blessed Obed and his family because of keeping the covenant box.

After a short period David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf.

David on their way to Jerusalem danced with all his might to honor the lord as they took the box to Jerusalem with shouts of joy.

David and all the house of Israel brought the box with shouting, and with the sound of the horn.

As the Ark of the covenant came to Jerusalem, Michal the daughter of Saul who was David's wife looked out through the window, and saw King David dancing before the lord; and she despised him in heart.

Then David with the Israelites brought the ark of the lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent which David had set up for it and David offered burnt and peace offerings to the lord.

After sacrificing to the lord he blessed all the people in the name of the lord and distributed food to them and all the people left, each to his house.

Then David returned to bless his household but his wife Michal rebuked him for having uncovered himself in the eyes of the maids of his servant.

David answered to his wife, "That he had to dance before the lord who chose him to rule over his people."

Michal's rebuke annoyed God and cursed her never to have a child until death.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT TO THE ISRAELITES

The event showed the Israelites that God is Holy; when Uzzah touched the box he was struck to death because he was unholy.

The event showed the Israelites that God is the source of blessings; When the box was left at Obed's house he was blessed together with his household after the 3 months.

The event showed that the Lord is to be praised and worshipped without the regard of one's status for example King David danced for God before the Israelites.

It showed that God can be worshipped in various ways for example through dancing, singing and playing musical instruments just like the Israelites did.

It showed the joy and happiness accompanying God's presence that is singing and shouting.

It showed the importance of dedicating the best to the service of God. David took 30,000 of his best soldiers to the and collect the covenant box from Baalah.

The event of bringing the covenant established Jerusalem as a city of God.

In carrying the box to Jerusalem the city came to be established as a worshipping center in Israel.

It showed that despising God's worshippers is a sin. When Michal David's wife rebuked him she was punished to be barren until death.

The event created unity among the Israelites. After placing the covenant ark in the tent, there was fellowship where David gave people food and blessed them.

It showed that God's duties should only be performed by those God had authorized. For example when Uzzah touched the ark without God's authority, he was struck to death.

The event led to the practice of monotheism because of the presence of the Ark of the Covenant which contained the 10 commandments including worshipping only one God.

The event meant that Israel was re-dedicated to God because the Ark of the Covenant had been lost before and it had been brought back.

The event showed David as a religious leader. David as a king put God first in his administration that's why he danced and took the best of his soldiers to go and collect the covenant box.

It showed how leaders can show exemplary acts to their subjects. Therefore if a leader is God fearing then his subjects will emulate him.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians should respect God's laws unlike Uzzah who failed to respect God's laws and he touched the covenant box.

They should always find the cause of problems before taking further steps. King David kept the box at Obed's home in order to find out the cause of the problem.

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Christians should pray to God for his guidance unlike Uzzah who was not guided by God.

Christians should depend and seek for God's blessings. God blessed the family of Obed and therefore God is the source of blessings.

Christians should do their work and respect the work of the religious leaders unlike Uzzah who touched the covenant box yet he was not supposed.

They should live holy lives because God associates with holy ones. Uzzah was unholy and was killed by God for touching the box.

They should live exemplary lives like David who danced in a way that was not befitting a king but for the lord.

They should live righteous lives to avoid God's punishment unlike Uzzah who was unrighteous and was punished by death.

They should have faith in God like King David had a lot of faith that he transferred the covenant box to Jerusalem.

They should sacrifice all they have for the service of God. King David offered sacrifices on their way to Jerusalem.

DAVID'S NOBLE IDEA OF BUILDING GOD'S TEMPLE 2SAMUEL 7

*Having established himself on the throne, living in a house of cedar, David saw it inappropriate for God's ark to be in a mere tent. Therefore he introduced the idea of constructing a magnificent temple for the Lord and this thought is formally known as **David's noble idea**.*

NATHAN'S MESSAGE TO KING DAVID [2 SAMUEL 7:1-17]

King David proposed to Prophet Nathan about the building of the temple for God

Nathan then gave David a go-ahead to build the temple, but that night the Lord said to Nathan, "Go and tell David that I say to him, is not the one to build for me the temple".

Nathan then told David that God was not associated with fixed places i.e. from the time he rescued them he had never lived in the temple.

Nathan also reminded David of his former occupation as a shepherd and how God took him from looking after the sheep and made him King.

He also reminded David of how the people of Israel had been settled in Canaan the Promised Land having been brought out of the Egyptian slavery.

God through prophet Nathan promised that the people of Israel will not be attacked by the enemies again as it had been in the earlier times because they will have God's divine protection.

God through Prophet Nathan also promised that it would be the son of David to build the temple for him.

That his son [Solomon] will enjoy constant love from God and God will never reject him like he did to Saul.

God through Prophet Nathan promised to protect David and keep him safe from his enemies all through his as he advanced.

God through Prophet Nathan also promised to give David very many descendants.

David was promised an everlasting dynasty which will continue forever and ever.

The prophecy also emphasized that God was to make David as famous as the greatest leaders in the world.

The prophesy also emphasized that God will have everlasting love for David's house and never to lose God's love under whatever circumstances.

The prophecy emphasized that when David dies he will be buried with his ancestors.

That one of his sons will inherit him as successor and God would be his father and he would be God's son.

God also through Nathan promised that when David's son goes wrong he will punish him as a father punishes his son but will not withdraw his support from him like he did to Saul.

That David will have many descendants and his kingdom will last forever and will never end.

That above makes the "**Davidic covenant**."

THE FULFILLMENT OF NATHAN'S MESSAGE IN THE LIFE OF THE ISRAELITES

The prophecy of David's name being great was fulfilled in that he was believed to be the most ideal and successful king hence making his name famous.

God promised peace and stability during David's time and this came to pass because his reign was referred to as the golden rule.

David was promised a strong dynasty which was fulfilled when his descendants from generation to generation ruled for 400 years in Judah.

God's promise that his son would succeed him and build the temple came to fulfillment when Solomon David's son succeeded him and built the Jerusalem temple.

During his reign David was kept safe from all his enemies by God. This was particularly revealed when he defeated all his enemies like the philistines.

The prophecy of an everlasting dynasty was fulfilled; through David's lineage there came Jesus Christ who established an everlasting dynasty that was promised to him.

The prophecy of David having many descendants was fulfilled when King David got many and important descendants like Solomon and Jesus Christ.

The prophecy of God punishing Solomon when he goes against God's law was fulfilled when God punished him by giving him only two tribes.

The everlasting temple promised to David was built by Jesus a descendant of David that is Jesus established a spiritual temple through his death and resurrection.

Despite David's sinfulness And his family, God supported and loved David's house.

David was promised a great kingdom which was fulfilled in that today Christians reflect the greatness of the kingdom promised to David

Jesus` entry into Jerusalem as a king was in line with the prophecies made to David.

Jesus cleansing of the temple confirms Nathan`s prophecy to David to being spiritual because he referred to the temple as his father`s house.

When David reached an old age, he died and was buried honorably with his ancestors in Jerusalem as it was promised in the Davidic covenant.

WHY GOD REJECTED DAVID`S NOBLE IDEA OF CONSTRUCTING THE TEMPLE

God already had someone in mind who was to construct the temple for him whom was David`s son and successor.

God appeared to be more comfortable in a tent, all though His travelling he had never lived in the temple.

It was because God had never asked anyone to build a temple for him and has never blamed any of the leaders.

Probably David would become proud and boast about the temple as his own achievement.

Probably David would turn the temple into his own possession and do away with the main purpose of the temple.

It was probably because David had shed innocent blood during the various wars and therefore may be God never wanted His temple to be built by bloody hands.

May be king David had not consulted God about the idea.

May be the temple would misled the people to think that God is confined in the temple. They would remain holy in the temple and become sinful outside the temple.

Probably God wanted to save David from inhuman acts like taxation, forced labor which would come with the construction of the temple.

Probably God looked at David`s idea as his second thought after constructing his own palace.

May be David still had many other programmes to fulfill or to accomplish before embarking on the temple construction.

Probably David was influenced by the pagan temple and God never wanted to be associated with paganism in any way.

King David had already achieved a lot; probably God wanted this to be an achievement of David's successor which would make him famous in the whole world.

DAVID`S PRAYER OF THANKS GIVING 2SAMUEL 7:18-29

David went to the tent of the lord and prayed that he was not worthy of what God had already done to him not even his family.

David thanked God for promising an everlasting dynasty.

David acknowledges one great God. That is the idea of monotheism is expressed; how great you are, Sovereign lord!" there is none like you; we have always known that you are God.

David goes ahead to thank God for choosing Israel as God`s nation leaving out other nations i.e. you have made Israel your own people forever, and you lord have become their God. **2sam7:24**

David thanks God for driving out other nations and their gods from the Promised Land. **2sam23**

David asked God to bless his descendants so that they will continue to enjoy God`s favours.

David glorifies and honors the name of God and calls upon all people to recognize God.

David thanks God for manifesting over Israel. That is acknowledges the idea of theocracy.

David was pleased and thanked God for knowing him by name.

David also acknowledges the greatness of God and says there is no one like him.

David thanks God for being trustworthy.

DAVID`S SIN WITH BATSHEBA 2 SAM 11

Circumstances that led to the death of Uriah the Hittite 2sam11-27

David stayed in Jerusalem when his soldiers were fighting against the ammonites.**2 sam 11:1**

One day, late in the afternoon, David got from his bed and went to the roof of the palace.

As he walked on the plat form, he saw a woman having a bath, she was so beautiful.

So he sent his messenger to find out who she was, he learnt that she was Bathsheba, the wife to Uriah the Hittite.

David sent messengers to fetch her; they brought he to him and he made love to her. Then she went back home. **2 sam 11:4**

Afterwards she discovered that she was pregnant and sent a messenger to David to tell him. **2sam 11:5**

When Uriah arrived, David asked him if Joab and the troops were well, and how the fighting going. **2samuel 11:7**

Then David said to Uriah, "Go home and rest a while." Uriah left and David sent a present to his home. **2samule 11:8**

But Uriah did not go home; instead he slept at the palace gate with the king`s guards.

When David heard that Uriah had had not gone home, he asked him, "You have just returned after a long absence, why you didn't go home?"

Uriah answered, the men of Israel and Judah are at war and the covenant box is with them; my commander Joab and his officers are camping out in the open. How could I go home, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife? By all that's sacred, I swear that I could never do such a thing!"

So David said, "Then stay here the rest of the day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next.

David then invited him to supper and made him drunk. But again that night Uriah did not go home; instead he slept on his blanket in the palace guardroom.

The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. He wrote; "put Uriah in the frontline, where the fighting is heaviest, then retreat and let him be killed."

So while Joab was attacking the city, he sent Uriah to a place he knew the enemy was strong.

The enemy troops came out of the city and fought Joab's army and some of David's officers were killed and so was Uriah.

Then Joab sent a report to David telling him about the battle and informed him of the death of Uriah.

David said to the messenger, encourage Joab and tell him not to be upset, since you never can tell who will die in battle. Tell him to launch a stronger attack on the city and capture it.

When Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed, she mourned for him.

When the time for mourning was over, David sent for her to come to the palace, she became his wife and bore him a son. But the lord was not pleased with what David had done. **2samuel 11:27**

NATHAN'S MESSAGE /PARABLE TO KING DAVID 2 SAMUEL 12:1-15

Nathan made David realize his mistake through a parable of two men who lived in the same town; one rich and the other poor. 2samuel 12:1

The rich man had many cattle and sheep, while the poor man had only one lamb, which he had bought.

The poor man looked after his animal, and it grew up in his home with his children and fed it with his own food, let it drink from his cup, and held it in his lap and the lamb was like daughter to him.

When the rich man received visitors, he grabbed the only sheep of the poor man and slaughtered it for the visitors.....

Nathan then asked David what to do for such a person; David was very angry with the rich man and said, "I swear by the living Lord that the man who did this ought to die! I.e. pass judgment on to that person.

David was so furious on hearing the story and said that such a person must be made to pay and he ought to die.

Nathan then told David that you are that man he had condemned.

Nathan told David that God had made him king of Israel and rescued him from Saul.

He told David that God had given him everything he wanted but he instead went for the poor's man's sheep, instead of asking more from God.

He made David realize that he sinned against Uriah's family and God.

Nathan then pronounced judgment on David of his disobedience and misdeeds as follows;

God pronounced a violent death to some of the descendants of David i.e. from generation to generation. Some of his descendants would die violently. **2samuel 12:11**

David was told that his wives will be taken away from him and given to other men who could have sexual intercourse with them in broad day light for the whole of the Israelites to see.

God through Nathan also proclaimed that someone from David's family would bring trouble to David.

David was told by God that a child born with Bathsheba would die.

David on hearing this he humbled himself and repented, he accepted his mistakes that he had sinned against the lord.

Nathan then told him that God had forgiven him that he won't die but the child would die.

MEANING OF THE PARABLE

In the parable, the rich man with many sheep and cattle was David with his many wives.

The poor man with one sheep was Uriah and his beloved lamb Bathsheba.

The way the poor man loved his only one sheep signified how Uriah loved and cared for his wife Bathsheba.

The rich man receiving visitors showed David's desire and lust for Uriah's wife Bathsheba.

The slaughtering of the poor man's lamb instead of choosing from the many sheep he had signified that instead of David choosing from the many wives he had to satisfy his sexual desire he turned to Bathsheba.

David becoming angry with the unknown person meant that David was concerned and touched and he did not want the action of the rich man.

David's reply that such man must repay showed that he knew the law and he wanted his people to observe the law.

Then Nathan said to David, that he was that rich man who grabbed Uriah's wife Bathsheba meant that David had passed judgment upon himself.

FULFILLMENT OF NATHAN'S PROPHECY

Absalom, David's true son had sexual intercourse with his fathers' concubines in broad day light when everyone was watching. **2samuel 16:22**

The prophecy of having Bathsheba's child dead was fulfilled because he became sick and died **2samuel 12:15**

David was disgraced when his son Amon raped his sister Tamar. **2samuel 13:1-14**

Chaos took place in David's house and in the kingdom when his son Absalom rebelled against him and he wanted to take over kingship from his father. **2samuel 15:1-12**

There was chaos in David's house when his sons were murdered one after another e.g. Absalom killed his brother Amnon. **2samuel 13:23-29** Absalom was also killed **2samuel 18:1ff**. Solomon murdered his brother Adonijah **1kings 2:25**

Coups were organized against David which aimed at withdrawing him from power although they were not successful.

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David's old age was full of agony and misery. This was witnessed on the death of his son Absalom, when he cried saying; "O my son Absalom! Absalom, my son! If only I had died in your place, my son..." **2samuel 18:33**

LESSONS RELIGIOUS LEADERS LEARN FROM NATHAN'S PROPHECY

They should deliver God's messengers without fear like Nathan delivered God's message to king David without fear or favor.

They should prophecy a true message for the right situation. Prophet Nathan prophesied a true message to King David.

They should condemn evil in the society like Nathan condemned David's wickedness when he had sexual intercourse with Bathsheba and later killed Uriah.

They should promote justice and condemn injustice likewise Nathan condemned David for being unjust to Uriah and Bathsheba.

They should carry out God's mission faithfully like Nathan delivered God's message to king David without hesitation.

They should seek God's guidance likewise Nathan was guided by God that's why he was in position to deliver the message in form of a parable.

They should encourage sinners to repent likewise Nathan's prophecies encouraged David to repent and ask for forgiveness.

They should forgive sinners like Nathan prayed to God and David was forgiven **2samuel 12:13**

ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING DAVID

He divided all the 12 tribes of Israel by establishing his administrative capital at Hebron in Judah. This is where he lived and ruled for 75 years

He brought security, peace and stability in Israel by conquering the Philistines, the Amalekites and the Edomites who had destroyed the Israelites' settlement.

King David killed Goliath who had terrorized the Israelite nation and through this peace was restored in Israel.

David founded a dynasty which lasted for 40 years such that even after the disintegration of the United Kingdom, his descendants continued ruling the southern kingdom (Judah)

He was an efficient political administrator who divided Israel into 20 units for easy governance. He developed a decentralized system of administration where he had officials like Adoniram in charge of forced labor and Nathan court prophet.

David promoted trade in Israel. He established and developed trade with other countries especially Tyre and Egypt meaning that he had to open up highways.

David established strong army for Israel. He created a disciplined army which he used to defeat his enemies like philistines thereby promoting peace and unity in Israel.

David extended Israel's boundaries through his wars of conquest by capturing all the land from Israel's neighbours that had been promised to Abraham.

He was a repentant man for example he repented after committing a sin of adultery; God forgave him and promised him an everlasting dynasty.

He was a good musician many songs for example psalms 51, and he organized various groups of musicians amongst the Israelites.

He made sacrifices and offerings to God only following the demands especially before and after war therefore setting a good example.

He was a religious leader whom transferred the covenant box from Baalah to Jerusalem. He worshipped and danced for the lord in a way not befitting a king.

He promoted monotheism. He carried away all the idols which the philistines had left behind and burnt them all. He also respect God's messengers like Nathan.

He upheld the idea of theocracy and mosaic traditions. He knew that God was the overall king of Israel and that's why he always consulted him.

FAILURES OF KING DAVID (How he betrayed the covenant faith)

He committed adultery with Bathsheba Uriah's wife. This was against the covenant way of life which said. "Thou must not commit adultery". This made him lose respect and this partly led to the division of the kingdom.

He coveted Uriah's` wife. This was against the covenant law because God commanded not to desire. **Exodus 20:17**

He murdered Uriah so that he could have his wife and this was against the covenant law in **Exodus 20:13**, thou shall not kill.

He organized an illegal census against the will of God a result of which 70,000 people died. This was bad in the sense that Israelites were not supposed to be counted.

He miss led his son Solomon. He advised him to revenge on his enemies in order to kill Joab.

He broke the covenant law regarding the covenant box which stated that "no Israelite was supposed to have sexual intercourse when Israel and the covenant box were at war but instead had sex with Bathsheba.

He practiced polygamy which was against Gods demands. In Israel a king was meant to marry only one wife. **Deut 17:14-20**

He failed to have control over his family in his later age. For example a man raped his sister Tamar and Absalom organized a rebellion against him.

He practiced tribalism and nepotism i.e. royal favours were given to the southerners at the expense of the northerners which later led to the division of the kingdom.

David killed Saul's wives and family members. After assuming power, he took Saul's wives and family members and killed them.

He failed to control his officers and gave them excessive powers to do whatever they wanted for example Adoniram was in charge of forced labor.

He made alliances with pagan nations like Tyre and Egypt in the name of trade, peace and security. This was against the law which prohibited Israel from making alliances with pagan nations but have trust in God only.

He introduced forced labor. He subjected his fellow Israelites to forced labor and even appointed Adoniram to be in charge of forced labor. **2samuel 20:24**

REASONS FOR DAVID'S SUCCESSES

David had a musical talent which enabled him to join Saul's palace from where he learnt much about leadership, realized the mistakes of Saul and made friendship with the palace officials.

David was a man of military abilities; from childhood, he used to demonstrate military quality in whatever he said for example in Saul's army he defeated the philistines.

David demonstrated his ability of brevity when he attacked Goliath whom Saul had feared and killed him, a factor which earned him popularity.

David was humble, calm and respectful for instance he remained humble even when Saul disturbed him.

David was a nationalist; he loved his nation and he decided to join Saul's army. This made him to defend his nation which factor made him successful.

Saul's rejection as a king created a political room in Israel; therefore God chose David to fill the vacuum that he had created.

David's physical appearance and character reflected a good leader that is he was loved and admired and above all handsome.

David became successful because of God's own choice, Yahweh wished to have a man of humility as David. So God sent Samuel to go and anoint David as king after the rejection of Saul.

David was successful because there was insecurity in Israel from the philistines; such a situation needed a brave man like David. This led to his rise to power

The death of Saul's son who was supported by the northern tribes opened way for David's rise to power as he was left unchallenged. **2samuel 4**

David's stay in the palace, since childhood David lived in Saul's palace. This gave him administrative and political ambitions and his plan to marry Saul's daughter gave him support from the people.

Deterioration in Israelites religion, so David having respected and feared the lord he was chosen to bring back religious morality.

David was successful because of Saul's being syncretic for example he named his son Ishabaa meaning son of Baal which annoyed God and led to his rejection and promotion of David.

David was successful because of Saul's materialistic nature for example he spared the best sheep during the Amalekites war, instead of fulfilling national obligations.

David came to power because of his strong bond relationship with Jonathan; a son to Saul enabled him to become king in that he alerted him of Saul's plot to kill him.

David's earlier occupation of a shepherd, a vocation that prepared him for the tasks and responsibilities of a head i.e. as a shepherd he met tough conditions like wild animals but overcame them. This enabled him to rise to power as he was used to the conditions.

REASONS FOR HIS FAILURE

He lacked self control for example he had sex with Uriah's wife and even killed Uriah.

David failed because he practiced segregation and nepotism for example he segregated the northerners from the southerners and gave all the administrative posts to his relatives.

David neglected the covenant law regarding the Ark of the Covenant which stated that, "no one was supposed to remain home when the Ark of the Covenant was at battle.

David was greedy; he was not satisfied with what he had for example he decided to take Uriah's wife-Bathsheba hence committing adultery.

He was corrupted by power to this effect he carried out illegal population census where many people died. According to the Israelites it was only God who was supposed to count his people.

David failed to control his family and the consequences were as follows; Amnon raped Tamar, Absalom killed Amnon, Solomon killed Adonijah...

End of The Topic

KING SOLOMON

Solomon was a son of David and Bathsheba a former wife of Uriah the Hittite. When Bathsheba bore Solomon, he was loved by God who instructed Nathan to name him Jedidiah because he was loved by God.

David promised Bathsheba Solomon`s mother that her son would become king after him.

SOLOMON BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL (1king 1:5-40)

When King David had become old, one of his sons Adonijah wanted to become the king. He got chariots, horses, and an escort of 50 men, Joab and priest Abiathar.

Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet plus Solomon were not invited when Adonijah offered a sacrifice to the lord.

After sacrificing, Nathan went to Bathsheba who was Solomon`s mother and asked her whether she had heard what had happened (Adonijah had made himself king)

Nathan advised Bathsheba to go to King David and ask him about the promise he had made before. (That Solomon would become the king)

Bathsheba went to King David and told him whatever had transpired when Adonijah had claimed himself as king and had made sacrifices.

As she was still speaking, Prophet Nathan came in to confirm what she had said and bowed down before the king.

When David heard from Nathan, he sent for Bathsheba to come in again and stood before the king. King David promised in the name of the living God that Solomon would succeed him.

Bathsheba bowed low and said "may my lord the king live forever" **1kings 1:31**

Then King David for Zadok the priest and beniah and when they came in, he instructed them to take his court officials and escort Solomon to the spring where he was to be anointed king of Israel.

David told them that after anointing him blow the trumpets and shout long live King Solomon.

He told them that after, they were to follow him back to the palace and he was to sit on David`s throne.

Nathan and the priest did as they were instructed and Solomon was anointed as king of Israel. **1kings 1:39**

People were filled with joy and they shouted and made a lot of noise which was in position to shake the ground. **1kings 1:40**

FACTORS WHICH LED SOLOMON RISE TO POWER

David's promise to Bathsheba. David had promised his wife Bathsheba that her son Solomon would succeed him on the throne.

David's love for Bathsheba was so much that he had to make various promises to her, among which he promised that her son would become king after him.

God's love for Solomon was at the extreme. When Solomon was born, God instructed Prophet Nathan to name him Jedidiah because God loved him.

David's faithfulness to the promise he had made to his wife Bathsheba that his son would become king after his death.

It was God's plan that Solomon become king, because while in power, he built a temple for God fulfilling Nathan's prophecy which came from God that David's son and successor would build the temple for God.

God's support helped Solomon to rise to power. God already had a plan for him to build Him a temple and thus God's support was there to enable him rise to power.

Solomon stood out in the whole family. He was unique from the rest of his brothers who caused chaos and disgrace to David's family e.g. Ammon raped Tamar, Adonijah wanted to overthrow his father....

Solomon was popular before prophet Nathan and priest Zadok and they also supported him to become king against Adonijah's wish to be king of Israel.

Solomon won David's support if he never supported Solomon, Adonijah would have become king.

Bathsheba's intervention also helped Solomon to rise to power. If she sat back and never went to confirm with King David about her son's succession, Adonijah would have become the king.

SOLOMON'S BUILDING PROGRAMME

When Solomon became king of Israel, he embarked on the building programme before his father David had a plan of building god's temple, but he was stopped by god through Prophet Nathan, who prophesied that David's successor would build God's temple. (2samuel 7:12-13)

When he settled, he thought about constructing God's temple, therefore fulfilling David's plan.

He prepared himself, exploited David's friendship with Hiram and got all the building materials and man power from tyre

During the fourth year of his reign, he began on the construction of the Jerusalem temple. It took him 7 years to build the magnificent building.

The temple was the greatest building that ever existed at that time.

*After its construction, the covenant box was transferred from the tent to the temple and many sacrifices were offered to God. **1kings 8:1ff***

*Then later the temple was dedicated to God where also many sacrifices were offered by Solomon. **1kings 8:62.***

*The dedication of the temple and Solomon's prayer **1kings 8:22***

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After constructing the temple, Solomon transferred the covenant box from the tent to the temple before a crowd of people.

Then a great sacrifice was made to God comprising of 22,000 head of cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings during the dedication of the temple.

Solomon addressed the people and made a lengthy dedication prayer. He presented many issues to Yahweh as the humbled themselves in adoration.

CONTENTS OF SOLOMON'S DEDICATION PRAYER

He thanked God for his love for the people of Israel and in a special way for the family of David.

Solomon praised God for helping accomplished the construction of the temple.

Then, he prayed that the temple would be a source of blessings. Whenever the people would run to the temple seeking for forgiveness and blessings, he prayed that God should grant their prayers.

Then, he turned to the people and challenged them always to maintain the expected holiness and at the same time he reminded God of the covenant he had made with David.

He prayed that God should continue fulfilling his promises that at every time there would be a descendant of David ruling Israel.

He prayed that God would always watch over the temple and protect it.

He further prayed that always hear his prayers when he prays from the temple.

Solomon prayed that God always punish wrong doers and bless those who are upright, especially those who come to pray in the temple.

He prayed that when people sin and get defeated at war as a punishment, God should forgive them if they come to the temple and repent.

He asked God to always listen to people's needs and problems whenever they pray within the temple.

Solomon asked God to grant victory to the people of Israel whenever they pray to him in the temple and whenever they would pray facing in the direction of the temple.

He requested God for forgiveness in case people sinned against Him and he decided to take them.

He prayed that if God would hold back the rain because of people's sins, let them be forgiven when they repent while in the temple.

He prayed that God should never abandon His people but always be with them. He even turned to the people and asked them to be faithful to God so as to strive His wrath.

RELEVANCE OF SOLOMON'S DEDICATION PRAYER TO CHRISTIANS

Modern Christians should always remember to thank God for everything in their lives just as Solomon did in his prayer when he thanked God for the temple.

They should praise their creator during prayers just as Solomon began his prayer by praising God as the one only above other gods and the most faithful.

They should sacrifice in any way possible to serve him just as Solomon made a great sacrifice during the dedication of the temple.

[Type here]

They should always present their needs to God through prayers just as Solomon asked God to solve various needs in the lives of the Israelites.

They should seek for repentance from God just like Solomon asked God to forgive the Israelites when they repent while in the temple.

They should be holy while approaching God just as Solomon offered pure sacrifices while dedicating the temple.

They should always go to worshipping places to pray to their creator just as Solomon asked the Israelites to make their prayers within the temple.

They should pray for people in trouble within their countries and outside just as Solomon prayed to the Israelites and the foreigners.

They should humble and be faithful before God just as Solomon did during the dedication of the temple.

They should repent whenever they sin against God just as Solomon encouraged the Israelites to repent and seek for forgiveness from God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE TO THE ISRAELITES

The construction of the temple promoted good relationships between Israel and her neighbours as they used to come and visit Israel.

The construction of the temple promoted trade between Israel and other nations because Israel wanted some construction items from Tyre especially timber.

It united the people of the led to centralization of the Israelites worship in Jerusalem that is people from all over Israel came to Jerusalem to worship God.

Through the construction of the temple the Israelites were able to fellowship with God and one another in a central place.

It helped the Israelites get a place from which to offer sacrifices and to carry out other religious rituals like celebration of the Passover.

The temple became a symbol of Israelite religious heritage and pride hence Israel became a theocratic nation being governed by God.

It promoted monotheism. The building of the temple helped to rededicate Israel to the worship of God as it acted as a centre of worship.

The temple symbolized God's protection over the Israelites against their enemies. They always sought God's protection before going for war

It acted as a place where kings and priests were crowned. The people would assemble, offer sacrifices and pray for the new king.

He Israelites got a place where their religious ritual could be performed. For example rites of purification were performed in the temple.

It acted as a source of blessing to the Israelites. The Israelites assembled in the temple to ask for blessings such as victory in battle, peace...

The Ark of the Covenant got to be enshrined in the temple. The Ark of the Covenant was moved to a more secure place or in fixed place making the temple very religious.

The temple acted as a place for seeking forgiveness from God. Whenever the Israelites sinned they went to the temple to seek for forgiveness through repentance.

It became a center of tourists to the foreigners because the temple was magnificently built that many people came to Israel to look at the temple.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE TEMPLE TO THE ISRAELITES

The building of the temple led to the division of Israel as a kingdom due to exploitation tendencies by Solomon. He used forced labor during the construction which made the northerners hate him and later opted for independence.

The Israelites were overtaxed by King Solomon in order to get enough revenue to purchase the construction materials used in the building programme.

Temple construction promoted forced labor. King Solomon used over 30,000 men to get building stones for the temple.

It led to big debts which later became a burden to Israel to pay back. It made Solomon borrow materials from Tyre and Edom which eventually led to selling of 20 towns.

Solomon and other Israelites became proud, extravagant and arrogant of the temple over other nations.

The Israelites lost their freedom and became very poor in the course of the construction due to the oppression and exploitation of King Solomon.

It led to political alliances with pagan nations because of the trade agreements in order to get building materials with other nations for example Israel allied with Tyre which was against the covenant faith.

The temple offered the Israelites false confidence with the temple in their midst. They thought they were safe and could not be destroyed.

The temple became a den of robbers and thieves and was equated to pagan sanctuaries and that's why Amos condemned such practices during his time.

It led to pagan practices. For example the skills of pagan craftsmen had been used in designing and furnishing of the temple hence portraying paganism in Israel.

After the construction of the temple, the Israelites thought that God was confined in the temple. This made them sin outside and then go for worship in the temple.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING SOLOMON

When Solomon became a king, he continued offering sacrifices to God. One night, God appeared to him and asked him what he wanted him to do for him. Solomon answered that; "...so give me the wisdom I need to rule your people with justice and to know the difference between good and evil....."
1 Kings 3:6-9

So God granted Solomon the wisdom which he used to become successful and achieved the following;

[Type here]

He built the Jerusalem temple which centralized worship in Israel. This fulfilled the prophecy of Prophet Nathan. **1kings 6.**

He composed hymns and proverbs. He enriched Israel's religious heritage by composing over 1001 songs and 3000 proverbs which promoted monotheism in Israel.

He had a reputation of knowledge and wisdom. He exhibited this when he settled disputes between the two prostitutes who claimed for the same son. **1kings 3:16-18**

He promoted trade. He built a fleet of trading ships within and out Israel. This promoted and improved standards between Israel and the neighboring states.

He was a good administrator. He re-organized the monarchy by dividing it into districts each governed by men of his own choice which helped in revenue collection. **1kings 4:7-19**

He promoted friendship and peace with his neighbours through his marriages. For example he got the city of Gezer as a wedding gift from the pharaoh of Egypt.

He built cities of Hezram, Megiddo and Gezer which were strategic for economic development. **1kings 9:15**

He made Israel known to the rest of the world. For example the queen of Sheba visited him carrying with her gifts. **1kings 10:6-10**

Solomon developed infrastructure for example he built ports such as Gezer which were used in the exploitation of copper deposits which helped in the development of Israel.

He installed the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. This made Jerusalem become a holy city because many Israelites could come for prayers in the temple.

He built a strong and professional army. This was used to defend Israel against Israel's neighbours and expanded the frontiers of Israel. **1kings 10:26**

He dedicated the temple to God. This symbolized the re-dedication of Israel to service of Yahweh.

WEAKNESSES/FAILURES

Solomon was met with many failures because of misusing his wisdom and the following are inclusive;

He married many women which was against the covenant law. Solomon had 300 wives and 700 concubines yet an Israelite king had to have only one wife. **1king 11:1-3**

He practiced Adultery. He had 300 wives thus he did not follow the Mosaic Law which was against Adultery. **Exodus 20:14**, you shall not commit adultery."

He allowed his wives to continue worshipping their gods in Israel and built Altars for them. **1kings 11:8**

Solomon practiced idol worship. He worshipped Astarte the god of Sidon, and Molech the disgusting god of Ammon. **1kings 11:5**

He imposed forced labor during the construction of the temple. For example he deployed 30,000 men and had 50 officials in charge of forced labor. **1kings 9:23.**

He heavily taxed the people to meet his building programmes and sustain his court and the expenses of his wives. He imposed heavy taxes on the people in order to support his projects.

He was extravagant. For example he used 5000kg of the fine floor, 10,000 litres of olive oil, 10 stall fed cattle and 100 sheep which were got from oppression of the people. **1king 4:2-23**

He committed murder. He killed Joab, shimei and his and his brother Adonijah for having organized a coup during David`s reign which was against the covenant law.

He practiced idolatry and Apostasy. His foreign wives influenced him to idol worship, constructed pagan shrines in Israel and even offered sacrificed to their own gods. **1kings 11:4ff**

He practiced nepotism. All cabinet posts were occupied by the in-laws for example Zadok was made the chief priest.

He sold twenty towns of Israel to king Hiram of Tyre. This was done in order to pay off the debts he had accumulated during the building of Jerusalem temple which was against the Mosaic Law. **1king 9:12-13**

He employed foreigners in building the temple and decorated it with foreign statues of their gods. For example he used Phoenician craft men to design and furnish the temple which contaminated the Israelites culture.

He was unrepentant. God instructed him to stop worshipping false gods but Solomon refuses. The lord appeared to Solomon twice asking him to confess his sins but he continued worshipping foreign gods. **1kings3:9**

Solomon accumulated a lot wealth in way that was against Yahweh`s servant and concept of Israel`s kingship; kings were not supposed to have much wealth. **Deut 17:14-17**

THE CONTRIBUTION OF KING DAVID TO SOLOMON`S REIGN

Because of David's contribution to Solomon's reign, it is said that Solomon became famous because of his father David and it was the origin of the common talk that" Solomon reaped where he did not sow"

Therefore David contributed to Solomon`s reign in the following ways;

David brought peace and security to Israel by weakening all the neighboring states e.g. David signed a peace treaty with Tyre which King Solomon just inherited and maintained the peaceful created by David.

When David was about to die, he gave Solomon instructions to be confident, determined and fear the lord and obey all his commandments which enabled him to be successful.

King David supported Solomon to become king of Israel when Adonijah had taken up the kingdom.

David was a good administrator in leading the Israelites. This set a good example to Solomon that he copied the good administrative techniques from David.

Solomon`s idea of construction of the temple was first proposed by David and so Solomon just fulfilled it hence becoming a famous leader because of David.

Solomon became King because of his father David. God had promised David that his son would become king of Israel which was fulfilled in the person of Solomon.

David brought back the Ark of the Covenant and Solomon started from where he had stopped by installing it in the temple hence becoming a famous leader.

It was David who conquered Jerusalem from the jebusites and Solomon easily developed it and constructed the temple.

Solomon inherited the strong diplomatic relations which his father David had signed. David had signed treaties of friendship with Tyre, Egypt and Edom and Solomon just carried on such alliances.

The discriminative tendencies by Solomon were started by his father David and Solomon accelerated the behavior hence becoming a famous leader because of David.

Solomon composed a number of psalms and proverbs which made him famous. It is believed that he may have learnt the skills from David who was a good musician.

It was David who united southern and the northern parts of Israel. This made it easy for Solomon to organize and develop the kingdom hence becoming a famous leader.

David had conquered many territories therefore Solomon received tributes from such conquered territories which he used to develop Israel.

David had weakened Saul's family which would have attacked the reign of Solomon therefore during Solomon's reign there was peace and stability hence becoming famous in Israel.

End of The Topic

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The division of the kingdom was during the reign of Rehoboam, that the once united Nation of Israel divided into two.

The Northern Kingdom comprised of 10 tribes and it formed Israel while the southern comprised of two tribes and it was called Judah.

After the division of the kingdom, the southern region was ruled by Rehoboam the son of Solomon and his successor while the Northern region was ruled by Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The causes were both long-term and immediate causes (underlying & immediate causes);

IMMEDIATE CAUSES;

Rehoboam was responsible in the following ways;

Rehoboam was unsympathetic and unpopular for instance he left the northern tribes to suffer at the expense of the southerners which annoyed the northerners who later agitated for independence hence division of the kingdom.

He rejected the advice of the elders, the people approached him asking him to lessen the taxes and forced labor but instead he promised to become harsh than his father Solomon which annoyed the people and opted for division **(1 kings 12:4)**

Influence of the young men, Rehoboam refused the advice of Solomon's advisors and elders of Israel and instead took the advice of his age mates which paved way for division. **(1kings 12:16)**

Rehoboam's policy of imbalance, he was ready to subject the northerners to over taxation and forced labor at the expense of the northerners who were exploited.

Rehoboam lacked proper strategies as a king, for instance in order to promote unity he sent Adoniram one of the chief promoters of suffering during Solomon's reign to the northerners who stoned him to death i.e. He was a poor choice in solving that problem. **(1kings 12:18)**

The threat from Egypt also led to the division. Egypt threatened to attack Judah which forced Rehoboam to forget about the rebellion from the North and decided to protect the south against Egypt. **(1kings 14: 25)**

Rehoboam's mistake of organizing 180, 000 men of Judah and Benjamin to go and restore the northern kingdom which led to the revolts hence division. **(1kings 12:21)**

Jeroboam was responsible in the following ways;

The presence of Jeroboam, readiness and acceptance to lead the Israelites as a king proved as the last element for the division of the kingdom. **(1kings 12:20)**

He accepted the 10 pieces of the robe given to him by prophet Ahijah an implication of the division of the kingdom. **(1kings 11:30)**

Jeroboam`s coming back from Exile in Egypt led to the division. When he came back, he instigated a rebellion against Rehoboam.

God was responsible in the following ways;

God sent prophet Ahijah when he appeared to Jeroboam and tore his robe into 12 pieces signifying the breakup of Israel into 2 unequal parts. **(1kings 11:30-32)**

God showed his determination to break Israel into 2 when Solomon turned away from God, he promised to take away the kingdom from him and give it to one of his officials. **(1kings 11:11-13)**

Through prophet Shemaiah, God stopped Rehoboam from going to the north to attack his brothers because the revolt was influenced by God himself. **(1kings 12: 22-24)**

It was God`s will that Rehoboam spoke to the Israelites harshly and made a wrong decision in order to fulfill Ahijah prophecy. **(1kings 12:15)**

LONG-TERM / UNDERLYING CAUSES

David was responsible in the following ways:

David ruled southern Israel for 7years before he could be accepted by the northern tribes. This showed that the north could not accept David's rule and his descendants.

He practiced Nepotism for instance he developed the southern region at the expense of the North which made the northerners to say that they had no share in David`s family. **(1kings 12:16)**

David`s scandal with Bathsheba in 2samuel 11 and the death of Uriah led to hatred for the southerners and David`s family.

David`s illegal census led to the death and suffering of many Israelites especially the northerners which later led to the revolt.

The rejection of Saul and replacement with David displeased the northern tribes who believed in Saul's family as ruler of Israel. These opted for independence hence division of the kingdom.

David`s 7years civil war in which he killed Saul`s son Ishbosheth because of his threats, who the northerners recognized as their king. This led to enmity and division between the north and the south.

David introduced forced labor which was later developed by his son Solomon caused suffering especially the northerners and later sparked off the rebellion.

The monopoly power of the southerners led to the division of the kingdom. For example King David, Solomon and Rehoboam were all from the south. This made the northerners tired of their rule and therefore desired for a change.

Solomon was responsible in the following ways;

Solomon`s policy of heavy taxation in which the northerners were subjected to heavier taxation as opposed to the southerners led to hatred hence the rebellion.

Solomon's policy of forced labor, exploitation and oppression on the northerners left them not contented and had to break away from the south. (**1kings12:11**)

Solomon` sale of the Israelites land (20 towns) annoyed the people and the lord. These made the Israelites opt for a break away from Solomon and support Jeroboam in the north because it was against the covenant law.

He promoted apostasy and idolatry where he built shrines for the gods of his wives. This angered God and promised to take away the kingdom from him. (**1kings 11:9-12**)

He lived a luxurious and extravagant life at the expense of his subjects who were living in absolute poverty especially the northerners.

He was so autocratic and harsh to the northerners. He placed heavy burdens on them and beat them with whipe (**1kings 12:11**)

He practiced nepotism whereby he discriminated people of the northern region. All administrative posts were given to the southerners especially his relatives.

EFFECTS/IMPACT OF THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISREAL

The division led to emergence of 2 capital cities, the north with its capital at Samaria under Jeroboam and South with its capital at Jerusalem under Rehoboam.

The kingdom of Israel broke into two; the southern kingdom called Judah with 2tribes and the northern kingdom -Israel with 10 tribes.

Hostility among the people emerged. For example the tribes of the north and south became enemies and they could go to war against one another.

There was vacuum of political independence; for instance Shishak of Egypt started demanding a heavy tribute from Rehoboam which is a sign of inadequate political independence.

The northern tribes broke the relations with the south in that Jeroboam stopped his subjects from going to worship in Jerusalem in fear of undermining the independence of the new kingdom.

The north worshipped idols and practiced apostasy. For instance jeroboam introduced idol worship by making the bull images as god of fertility for the people to worship.

There was economic imbalance in the kingdom where the northern region developed faster than the south because it controlled trade routes.

There was power struggle in the kingdom and kings were assassinated and bloodshed was rampant especially in the northern region.

The division led to both kingdoms be raided by the Assyrians and Babylonians for the Israel and Judah respectively into exile because they had weakened militarily.

The division led to illegal alliances with Canaanite people for example Jeroboam made alliances with Damascus in order to defeat Judah.

The division led to loss of the idea of theocracy (a nation ruled by God), syncretism and apostasy dominated.

It led to the rise of uncharismatic leaders like King Omri, Jeroboam, Ahab and Ahaz who is believed to have sinned more than any earlier king.

It led to the deterioration of the Israelite traditions for example the practice of monotheism and religious celebrations such as the Passover which started during the Exodus event declined due to the influence of Canaanites.

Both kingdoms became militarily weak against foreign attacks for example the king of Egypt dominated a big part of the kingdom of Judah for 5 years.

Led to the rise of false prophets e.g. during the reign of King Ahab, Jezebel his wife brought 850 Baal prophets and gods in Israel.

Positives

The northern kingdom was relieved of the overwhelming burdens of taxation and forced labor inflicted on them by the kings in the southern region.

Jerusalem was still recognized as a religious centre of Judah while the northern people got different religious centers such as Dan, Gilgal, and Bethel.

It led to the development of the prophetic age. Due to the sins of the two kingdoms, Yahweh sent several prophets to the people who advised them to repent such prophets included; Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

THE IMPACT OF KINGSHIP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL

NEGATIVES

The kings grabbed people's property e.g. Ahab grabbed Naboth's vineyard.

Kings committed Adultery e.g. King David took Bathsheba the wife of Uriah.

Kings promoted idolatry e.g. Jeroboam made a golden bull at Bethel for the Israelites to worship.

Kings made foreign alliances with other nations which were against the covenant law e.g. David and Solomon made alliances with Edom and Tyre in the names of trade and peace.

The institution of kingship led to the division of the kingdom into the south and northern Israel. This was attributed to the exploitation of King David, Solomon and Rehoboam.

The kings oppressed and exploited the Israelites through forced labor and over taxation e.g. Solomon used forced labor during the construction of the Jerusalem temple.

Kings murdered innocent people and a lot of blood was shed. E.g. King Saul killed 85 priests at Nob, Ahab killed Naboth and David plotted for the death of Uriah.

Kings abused sacrifices by offering human sacrifices e.g. King Manasseh and Ahab sacrificed their children and Saul sacrificed against the Levitical laws of sacrifices.

Kings broke the covenant faith and way of life through marrying foreign women e.g. Ahab married Jezebel a Phoenician princess and Solomon had 700 wives.

Kings were materialistic e.g. Solomon accumulated a lot of wealth and King Saul spared Agag the Amalekites king which were against the covenant faith.

Some kings instigated pagan influence to Israel e.g. king Solomon married many foreign women whom came with their gods in Israel and Jeroboam established 2 golden bulls for the people to worship.

POSITIVES

Kings composed songs, proverbs and hymns which were used in the worship of Yahweh e.g. King David and Solomon.

Kings expanded the boundaries of Israel e.g. David defeated the philistines; he captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it the capital of Israel.

Kings in Israel restored Yahwehism and monotheism e.g. king Josiah, Hezekiah, and Jehu carried out religious reforms.

Kings promoted fellowship and worship of Yahweh e.g. King Solomon built a temple in Jerusalem which led to its development as a religious centre.

Kings provided political stability by defending the Israelites against their enemies e.g. David defeated the Jebusites, philistines and amalekites.

Kings promoted trade which later led to economic prosperity. The kings boasted trade with other nations and this was mostly during the reign of Solomon where he built a fleet of trading ships to further trade.

The kings of Israel like Solomon built cities like Hezram, Megiddo which were strategic for economic purposes.

Kingship centralized worship in Jerusalem for instance David brought back the covenant ark and Solomon built the Jerusalem temple and enshrined the Ark of the Covenant in the temple he had built.

Kingship united the people of Israel as chosen race e.g. David struggled for 7 years to unite the south and north.

The kings developed infrastructure e.g. Solomon developed roads and established a fleet of trading ships to further trade.

Israel gained fame and popularity from within and outside e.g. the queen of Sheba came all the way from Ethiopia to visit King Solomon in Israel.

LESSONS TO TRADITIONAL LEADERS FORM THE ISRAELITE EXPERIENCE OF KINGSHIP

They should promote unity, peace and stabilities in their societies like King David tried to unite the south and northern kingdoms.

They should develop the infrastructures in the country just like king Solomon built cities and a fleet of ships that promoted trade in Israel.

They should establish places of worship just like Solomon did through the building of the temple and enshrining the Ark of the Covenant.

They should practice fair judgment to all people whether rich or poor just as Solomon settled a case between the two prostitutes.

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They should be exemplary to their subjects just like king David led his people into praise and worship during the transfer of the covenant box.

They should accumulate wealth in proper ways through hard work unlike Solomon who exploited the Israelites.

They should listen to the advice given to them by religious leaders just as David listened to Prophet Nathan and he repented after sinning.

They should promote the worship of only one God through destroying shrines like King Josiah carried out religious reforms in Israel.

They should carry out balanced development in all regions unlike David and Solomon who developed the south than the north.

They should stick to the constitution of their respective countries unlike King Saul who disobeyed and violated the covenant laws.

PROPHETS

Prophets acted as God's messengers and received messages from God from which they were supposed to deliver to the people. Their messages came directly from God the almighty and these prophets emerged at the time of the covenant betrayal. Therefore they came to restore religious sanity in Israel.

Among the prophets, there were true prophets (Canonical and oral prophets) and false prophets (professional prophets).

The canonical prophets were true prophets of God whose works are recorded in books under their names. They were divided into the Minor Prophets whose books are relatively short, and Major Prophets were those whose books are relatively long e.g. Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

Oral prophets are those whose prophetic ministry was not written down under their names as independent biblical books. These include Elijah, Elisha and Micaiah.

There were also the pre-exilic prophets who prophesied before exile, the exilic prophets who prophesied during exile and the post-exilic prophets who prophesied after exile.

CHARACTERISTICS/FEATURES OF THE TRUE PROPHETS

They derived their messages directly from God and as they spoke they ended their messages with the word "thus says the lord". Like Jeremiah.

They spoke their will as they were directed by the Holy Spirit, for example Jeremiah's temple sermon was a directive from God. **Jeremiah 7 and 26**

They prophesied for free without any pay in terms of money and spoke their messages to all people irrespective of whether they listened or not. For example Isaiah was to preach to the people who would not bather.

God's prophets were devoted to God for the rest of their lives for example they were not involved in drinking, theft etc.

Their prophecies always came to fulfillment for example prophet Elijah predicted the death of King Ahab and his family which came to fulfillment.

They based their messages on the Law of Moses and the covenant way of life. For example Hosea referred to the exodus event and Jeremiah preached about the new covenant.

Most of them came from a priestly background and they were groomed by a serving priest e.g. Moses was groomed by Metro, Isaiah by Amos.

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True prophets had interactions with God and they were called in a visionary and miraculous way i.e. for the call of Moses is associated with a burning bush, Ezekiel saw four winged creature.

True prophets sometimes clashed with the false prophets. For example the contest at Mount Carmel between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal

They were given difficult assignments e.g. Moses faced Pharaoh, Samuel was to announce the rejection of Eli's family and Isaiah was to preach to the stubborn Israelites.

They displayed the mighty nature of God e.g. Moses turned a stick into a snake and struck the red sea and divided, and Elijah raised the widow's son.

The prophecies of the true prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah were not final; they would change if people repented.

They used words and symbols of the Lord. For instance Amos' funeral song, Jeremiah's symbolic acts of smashing of the pot...

They gave a true message for the right situation e.g. they would prophesy doom/destruction whenever people turned away from God and prosperity whenever people followed the covenant way of life.

They got their authority directly from God e.g. Jeremiah was given powers to tear and uproot during his call.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE/PROFESSIONAL PROPHETS

The prophecies of the false prophets were never fulfilled unless by coincidence.

They promised fortunes to the people and in the long run, they would leave the people in suspense with a lot of disaster e.g. the 400 prophets told Ahab to attack Ramoth (**1 Kings 22:6**)

They were always self appointed but not chosen by God. Whenever one felt the confidence to convince the people, he would declare himself a prophet like Zedekiah.

Their prophecies depended on material gains. That is once given money they would give false enticing prophecies to their listeners.

They lived a life characterized of immorality like drunkardness and sexual abuses.

They gave messages of convenience to their listeners and not according to the prevailing circumstances.

They looked for what to preach and pretended to prophecy for Yahweh without receiving permission to do so.

They were yes men to the kings; they never resisted the will of the people. For example Zedekiah said Yes to Ahab when he consulted him on whether to attack Ramoth or not?

They used to accompany their prophecies with music as a way of drawing people close to themselves.

They worshipped idols and false gods (Asherah) they were therefore divergent from the covenant faith and teaching.

They used divination, magic and sacred stones to predict the future

They never stood firm for monotheism and instead worshipped Baal, they led people into syncretism and apostasy.

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ROLES PLAYED BY THE TRUE PROPHETS IN ISRAEL

They acted as chief advisors and consultants in times of crisis. For example, during wars, prophet Micaiah was consulted by Ahab and Jehoshaphat when Ahab wanted to get back Ramoth (**1kings 22**)

They were God`s messengers and spokesmen and delivered God`s messages e.g. when David wanted to build a temple for God, prophet Nathan was sent to deliver a message to him. (**2sam 7**)

They used to predict the future so as to strengthen people's faith. For example Micaiah predicted Ahab's death which came true. (**1kings 22:29**)

They always reminded the Israelites about the importance of repentance so that they would be forgiven and saved from destruction (**Amos 5 :**)

They promoted monotheism among the people. They ensured that people abandoned the pagan gods and worshipped Yahweh alone e.g. Prophet Elijah`s contest with the Baal gods led to the destruction of 450 gods and death of 400 Baal prophets.

They always interceded for the people. Whenever God wanted to punish the people, the true prophets would plead on behalf of the people. (**Amos 7-1:6**)

They warned people on the impending punishments from God so that people would come back to God. (**Amos 2:6, Amos 4:2-3**)

They acted as seers. They used to fore tell and they were consulted on many occasions about the unknown and whatever they foretold came true.

They preserved God`s message in writing such as the canonical prophets whose messages were written under their names e.g. Jeremiah, Isaiah...

They performed miracles e.g. Elijah, Elisha who performed so many miracles which revealed God`s omnipotence.

They pronounced God`s judgment upon Israel and other nations e.g. Amos pronounced God`s judgment upon Israel and other nations. (**Amos 1:1, 2:1**)

WHY THE PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS CONDEMNED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM-ISRAEL

The pre-exilic prophets condemned the northern Kingdom of Israel; because they sinned against God more than Judah and that is why God called prophets like Amos to go and preach in the North. Other prophets like Hosea and Isaiah also preached in the North but concentrated mostly in the south.

There was gross income inequality where the rich were very rich and the poor were poor because they lost their property to the rich.

There was luxuries and extravagance on the side of the rich i.e. they bought expensive robes and ornaments at the expense of the poor.

The rich grabbed the property of the poor. For example the rich grabbed the garments and blankets of the poor as security. (**Amos 2:8**)

The rich sold the righteous men for silver or a pair of sandals because they failed to pay their debts. (**Amos 2:6**)

The Israelites were worshipping Baal and other gods which was against the covenant law.

The women of the rich were demanding a lot from their husbands which forced the husbands to steal and oppress the poor.

There was increased sacrifice to God whereby those who offered too much were proud and offered to idols at Bethel. (**Amos 5:4**)

There was sexual immorality e.g. cultic prostitution was a great problem in Israel, at the temple of Bethel and Dan. And the father and son were having sexual intercourse with the same slave girl. (**Amos 2:7**)

There was exploitation of the poor for instance the rich men overcharged and mixed wheat with chaff swept from the floor. (**Amos 8:6**)

There was dishonesty with the weights and measures where the rich adjusted the weights in order to cheat the poor.

There was over taxation on the side of the poor while the rich enjoyed at the expense of the taxing the poor.

During Hosea's ministry the people expressed insincere and shallow repentance that is people promised without fulfilling.

People made alliances with pagan nations which was against the covenant law for example Israel sought for help from Egypt when they were attacked by the Assyrians.

Hosea 8:4 shows that the people made their kings through conspiracy and not by God's consent.

There was bribery and murder of innocent people to prevent justice, they let the wicked go free while punishing the innocent (**Isaiah 5:23**)

FORMS OF WORSHIP DURING THE TIME OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Israelites brought gifts and offerings to the priests who were in charge of the offerings in the temple.

The sacrifices were presented in a splendid way. The rich offered to boast and advertise themselves.

The Israelites practiced pagan worship and mixed the worship of Yahweh i.e. syncretism was common.

There was idolatry at the places of worship especially at Bethel and Dan where people worshipped the two golden bulls as gods established by Jeroboam.

There was burning of incense to the gods during worship at the altars, under the trees and on the hills.

There was cultic prostitution during the time of worship. The worshippers slept with the women who worked in the temple.

There was hypocrisy which dominated the daily worship. The worship lacked inner commitment which meant that it was devoid of moral values.

False prophets were very common who earned a living by selling God's message; those who sacrificed more received more false prophecies.

The rich worshippers grabbed the sacrifices of the poor which was an act of selfishness.

There was serious observance of the religious festivals and practices of the Canaanites like worshipping of the new moon.

Religious rites were performed in the name of God even though the participants were guilty of practicing social injustice.

The people sang pagan songs, feasted and played musical instruments during worship.

KING AHAB OF ISRAEL AND PROPHET ELIJAH

Elijah was one of those courageous spokesmen of God. He is especially remembered for his contest with the prophet of Baal. He is also remembered for his revolution against the reign of Ahab.

He prophesied during the reign of King Ahab of the northern region. This was a time when Israel experienced religious piety. Ahab sinned against God more than all his predecessors. Because of his wickedness God was forced to send Prophet Elijah from Tishbe to condemn him which led to a conflict between the two (Ahab and Elijah). Therefore his negative attitude towards the covenant faith made Elijah conflict with King Ahab.

AHAB'S WICKEDNESS

King Ahab was guilty of the following;

His marriage to Jezebel; he went further and married Jezebel the daughter of King Elhabel of Sidon. This was against Deut 17:14-20 the Israelites were warned of marrying from pagan tribes.

Ahab allowed Jezebel to worship Baal in Israel hence introducing apostasy and idolatry among the people of God. This was against the covenant way of life.

Ahab built a temple for Baal in Samaria and made an altar for him and installed a statue of goddess Asherah in the temple.

He allowed his wife to kill the prophets of God in Israel. Ahab allowed Jezebel to wage war against the true prophets of Yahweh whom she persecuted and killed in large numbers and also destroyed the altars of Yahweh.

Ahab spared King Benhadad of Syria against the will of God because he wanted payments from him. (**1king 20:31-34**)

He murdered Naboth. He allowed his wife to make plans to kill Naboth because he desired the vineyard which was against the covenant law. (**1kings 21:1**)

He hated, persecuted and imprisoned God's prophets for example he ordered for the arrest of prophet Micaiah. **1 king 22:26**

He coveted the vineyard of Naboth even though he knew it was an ancestral property, thereby breaking the commandment that says though shall not covet another man's property. (**Exodus 20:17-18**)

Ahab allowed Jezebel to take into Israel 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of goddess Asherah whom King Ahab consulted. These later hindered the work of true prophets in Israel. (1kings 18)

He consulted over 400 false prophets while preparing to attack Syria so as to reposes Ramoth. This was against the covenant law of monotheism.

He was very unrepentant. For long he was unrepentant even after prophet Elijah told him of his sins.

He made foreign alliances with pagan nations like Phoenicia and Sidon other than Yahweh. This was against the covenant law.

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Generally it's believed that Ahab broke the covenant faith and obligation more than any of his predecessors. It was during his reign that syncretism came to climax and many people worshipped God alongside other gods.

Ahab stopped the people from the northern region from going to Jerusalem to worship God. The Israelites were expected to visit Jerusalem temple at least once a year.

RELEVANCE TO MODERN POLITICAL LEADERS FROM AHAB'S LIFE

Modern political leaders learn the following from the life of King Ahab.

They should listen to God's message unlike Ahab who paid no attention to prophet Elijah.

They should try to follow God's laws because going astray leads to punishment for instance Ahab defiled the law of not marrying from the pagan tribes.

They should follow their country's constitutions for no one is above the law. Ahab failed to follow the laws of the Israelites and he was punished by God.

They should protect life of their citizens unlike Ahab who allowed jezebel to haunt Elijah when she wanted to kill him.

Leaders should accept advice from elders and religious leaders which is in line with the law unlike Ahab who ignored the advice of Prophet Elijah.

They should respect people's property unlike Ahab who coveted Naboth's vineyard which was against the law of the covenant.

They should accept and respect private ownership of property just as Naboth had his own land.

They should practice monotheism unlike Ahab who worshipped Baal and allowed his wife to bring in 850 gods and prophets of Baal.

They should be satisfied with what they have unlike Ahab who took Naboth's vineyard.

They should repent their sins unlike Ahab who failed to repent after several warnings from God through Elijah.

They should marry Christian women unlike Ahab who married from pagan tribes which was against the law.

They should control the characters of their wives unlike Ahab who just looked at his wife worshipping Baal and killing God's prophets.

They should consult only God and his messengers unlike Ahab who consulted Baal prophets other than God.

ELIJAH AND THE DROUGHT (1 KINGS 17)

Elijah a prophet from Tishbe told Ahab that God said that there will be no rain for the next 2/3 years until when he says so. All this was a punishment from God because of Ahab's wickedness/sins. Therefore the Israelites were to suffer because of Ahab's wickedness.

After announcing the drought, he went to the east and hid near the brook of Cherith, east of the Jordan. He was to be provided water by the brook and food by the ravens every morning and evening. However the brook dried up because of lack of rain.

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ELIJAH AND THE BAAL PROPHETS (1KINGS 18)

After some time in the third year of the drought, the LORD told Elijah to go and present himself to King Ahab so that he ends the rain.

The famine in Samaria was at its worst; there was no food and rain. So Ahab called in Obadiah who was in charge of worshipping in the palace. As he was looking for water, he met Elijah who told him to inform Ahab of his presence.

Ahab met Elijah, on meeting him he referred to him as the worst trouble maker. But also Elijah told him that he was the trouble maker because of disobeying the Lord's commands and worshipping the idols of Israel.

This contest therefore was **to decide and choose "who was the greatest, God or Baal"**

MOUNT CAMEL CONTEST WITH THE BAAL PROPHETS (1KINGS 18:19-40)

Elijah told Ahab that he and the people were disobeying God's commands and worshipping the idols of Baal, therefore he ordered Ahab to tell all the people to meet at Mt. Carmel.

Ahab had to come with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of goddess Asherah who were supported by Queen Jezebel

So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and the prophets of Baal to meet at Mount Carmel.

Elijah went up to the people and said "How long will it take you to make up your minds?"

So Elijah challenged them by telling them that he is the only prophet of God remaining, but there were 450 prophets of Baal. 1kings 18:22

Elijah ordered Ahab and the Israelites to bring two bulls out, one for him as a prophet of God and the other for the Baal prophets. 1kings 18:23

The Baal prophets were ordered to kill the bull, cut it into pieces but not to light the fire and Elijah was to do the same with the other bull.

Then Elijah and the Baal prophets agreed to pray to their respective gods so as the one who would send fire at the end will be regarded God. 1kings 18:22

The Baal prophets were requested to pray first to their gods until he sends fire to burn the meat because they were many in number. **1kings 18:25**

The Baal prophets took the bull that was brought to them prepared it and prayed to Baal until noon. They shouted, "Answer us, Baal" and kept dancing around the altar they had built. But no answer came. **18:26.**

At noon Elijah started making fun of them; pray! He is a god! May be he is daydreaming or perhaps he is gone to a journey! Or maybe he is sleeping, and you have got to wake him up **1kings 18:27.**

So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, according to their rituals, until blood flowed but no sound was heard as an answer from their god. **1kings 18:28-29**

Elijah then called the people closer to him, started preparing the altar which he built on twelve stones representing 12 tribes of Israel, put fire wood on it, placed the bull on it and dug a trench which he filled with water **1kings 18:30-35.**

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During afternoon, Elijah approached the alter and prayed to God, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that Aim your servant and have done all this at your command **1kings18:36**

The lord answered by sending fire which burnt up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, scorched the earth and dried up the water in the trench. **1kings 18:38**

When the people saw this, they threw themselves on the ground and exclaimed, "The lord is God; the lord alone is God!" 1kings 18:39

Then Elijah ordered his people to seize the prophets of Baal and led them down to river Kishon where they were killed. **1kings 18:40**

REASONS FOR THE CONTEST BETWEEN ELIJAH AND THE BAAL PROPHETS

The contest took place because of the following reasons;

It was intended to challenge the prophets of Baal that Baal was weak. Elijah wanted to prove to the Israelites that Yahweh was more powerful and reliable than Baal.

Elijah wanted to show that God can answer people`s prayers. When he prayed to God, he responded by sending divine fire which consumed the sacrifice yet Baal failed.

Elijah wanted to show that God is the source of all good things. He proved this when He sent rain after people had suffered for three years without rain.

Elijah wanted to disapprove Baal and show that Baal was dead and useless. This was proved when Baal failed to respond to the prayers of the Baal prophets.

Elijah wanted to prove that sin is punishable. The false prophets were seized and punished by death from river Kishon.

It was an attempt to accuse Ahab and his wife jezebel. They were the trouble makers and thus responsible for people`s suffering.

Elijah wanted to save the Israelites from God`s destruction after the contest, people turned to God and they survived destruction.

Elijah wanted to reveal the omnipotence of Yahweh. He confined this when Gods presence was manifested at Mount Carmel.

Elijah wanted to promote monotheism among the Israelites. Indeed people turned away from Baal worship to the worshipping of only one God.

Elijah wanted to prove to that God is omnipotent. He is powerful than Baal. This was confirmed when God sent divine fire which consumed the sacrifices.

Elijah wanted to prove Gods holiness to the Israelites. He did so and the Israelites got to know that God does not associate with ungodliness, and that's why the Baal prophets were killed.

Elijah wanted to prove that he was a true prophet of God. He proved this when God responded to his prayers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT TO THE ISRAELITES

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The event showed God's might over Baal. When God sent divine fire which consumed the sacrifice, all the Israelites believed that Yahweh was almighty.

It revealed God's omnipotence over Baal. It was His power, divine fire from heaven that consumed the sacrifice.

It helped the Israelites to know that God is always willing to answer people's prayers. Elijah prayed to God and responded by sending divine fire which consumed the sacrifice.

It showed the omnipresence of God. God responded at Mount Carmel which Baal failed to do because his presence was not manifested at Mount Carmel.

It showed that God is spirit. At Mount Carmel, He did not appear physically but his presence was manifested.

It proved Elijah as a true prophet of God. When he prayed to God, he answered his prayers by sending divine fire which consumed the sacrifice and also the drought came to an end.

It showed the power of prayers. When Elijah prayed to God, He responded by sending divine fire which consumed the sacrifice.

The Israelites learnt that God punishes the sinners. The false prophets were killed because of being sinful.

It proved to the Israelites that Yahweh was a true and living God. When Elijah prayed to Him, He proved to be alert (living) unlike Baal who proved to be dead, because he failed to respond to the prayers of the false prophets.

It promoted monotheism. When God sent divine fire which consumed the sacrifice all the people fell down and worshipped God.

It brought about religious sanity. When the Baal prophets were killed, after their god failed to answer their prayers, people turned away from Baal worship.

RELEVANCE OF THE EVENT TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians should worship God for his the greatest of all gods since he defeated the Baal prophets.

Christians should follow God's commandments at all times unlike Ahab who was punished.

Christians should be firm and courageous to oppose those who disobey God just as Elijah opposed King Ahab.

Christians should respect God's messengers such as priests, prophets and reverends unlike Ahab who failed to listen to Prophet Elijah.

Christians should acknowledge the power of God just like the Israelites who exclaimed, the lord is God". When He provided fire which consumed the sacrifices and stopped the drought.

Christians should be committed to God's work amidst challenges just like Elijah opposed the Baal prophets.

Christians should demonstrate faith at all times in their way of life and worship. Elijah had the belief that God was more powerful than the Baal gods which was proved at the end.

Christians should pray to God as a way of communicating to God just like Elijah prayed and his sacrifice was consumed by fire.

They should acknowledge God as the provider for example he ended the drought by providing rain and also provided for Elijah in the wilderness.

Christians should eliminate paganism in their communities just like Elijah called for the Mount Carmel contest which led to the destruction of the 850 Baal god and prophets.

Christians should dedicate their communities to God just as Elijah rededicated Israel to Yahweh.

Christians should bring out the wrongs committed in the society just as Elijah condemned the evil acts of King Ahab.

NATURE OF GOD IN RELATION TO THE CONTEST

God is holy and does not associate with ungodliness. He instructed Elijah to kill the false prophets who were unholy.

God is miraculous. He gave Elijah powers to perform miracles e.g. when he prayed, God sent divine power which consumed the sacrifice.

He is a punishing God. The false prophets were killed by Elijah which was a punishment from God.

He is a faithful God. When Elijah prayed to Him, he was in position to answer Elijah's prayers.

God is spirit by nature. God never appeared physically during the contest at Carmel.

He is a living God. He proved this when he answered Elijah's prayers unlike Baal who proved to be dead.

He is a source of all good things. After the contest, he sent rain and the drought which had lasted for 3 years came to an end.

He is omnipresent. He is found everywhere. His presence was manifested at Mount Carmel.

He is omnipotent. He is powerful because of his power; he was in position to send divine power which consumed the sacrifice.

He is almighty. He proved this when all the Israelites bowed down and worshipped Him and accepted that He was greater than Baal.

HOW GOD MANIFESTED HIS POWER THROUGH PROPHET ELIJAH

God manifested His power through the following ways;

Elijah was in position to announce the drought which lasted for 3 years. Many people died because there was no rain. **1 Kings 17:1**

Elijah was fed by the ravens. The ravens were sent by God and they brought for him food while he was hiding from Jezebel and Ahab. **1 Kings 17:6**

He restored the widow's son to life. When the boy died he prayed to God and the boy came back to life. **1 Kings 17:7**

He was in position to get water from the brook of Cherith while he was hiding after announcing the drought. **1 Kings 17:6**

Elijah made the Widow's bowl and jar not run out of flour and oil respectively. When the widow prepared a meal for Elijah as she had been instructed, she had enough food as long as the drought lasted. **1kings 17:11**

Elijah announced the drought and it disappeared in 3 years. When Ahab tried to search for him, he failed to find him because he was taken into hiding by God. **1kings 17:2**

Elijah made a sacrifice which was consumed by divine fire. After the false prophets had failed to get any answer from Baal, God responded by sending divine fire. **1kings 18: 36.**

He in position to run faster than Ahab's chariots. When it was about to rain, Elijah told Ahab to go back home. The power of the lord came to Elijah and was able to run ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah was in position to kill the false prophets. Elijah told the Israelites to seize the false prophets and they were killed in River Kishon.

Elijah prayed to God and He sent fire from above which destroyed the messengers of King Ahaziah **2kings 1:1ff**

He was in position to prophecy about the death of Jezebel which was fulfilled. **1kings 21:23-24** and when she died her body was eaten by dogs in Jezreel **2kings 9:30-37**

He was a promoter of monotheism. He ensured that people worshipped one God and that's why he condemned Baal worship and syncretism.

He condemned King Ahab without fear or favor whenever he sinned against God. For example he wanted Ahab wanted to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

Elijah together with Elisha were in position to cross the river Jordan on a dry ground. "Then Elijah took off his cloak, rolled it up, and struck the water with it, the water divided, he and Elisha crossed to the other side on dry ground. **2kings 2:8**

Elijah was in position to go to heaven alive. When he was walking with Elisha a chariot of fire pulled by horses came between them and Elijah was taken to haven by a whirlwind. **2kings 2:15**

THE ROLE OF ELIJAH IN THE LIFE OF ISRAEL DURING THE REIGN OF KING AHAB

He demonstrated the characteristics of a true prophet of God for example he ever feared to face Ahab when told by God.

He spoke on behalf of God and his predictions came to fulfillment for example he predicted the drought and famine which was due to King Ahab's apostasy.

Elijah showed that God is the provider of everything for example he was fed by ravens sent by God, he made the dish of olive oil not to dry up using God's power.

Elijah anointed Jehu; in order to execute the punishment which was to befall on Ahab's family. Elijah anointed Jehu to fulfill the punishment.

He was a strong defender of the covenant faith; for instance he challenged the worship of Baal by defeating the Baal prophets which showed that only Yahweh was God.

Elijah made the children of Israel repent and exalt Yahweh on mountain Carmel. When the people saw Elijah's sacrifice being consumed by divine powers they fell down and confessed that the lord alone is God.

Elijah commanded the killing of 850 false prophets of Baal on mountain Carmel thereby reducing foreign and false influence in the kingdom.

He promoted monotheism; Elijah renovated the altar of God which had been destroyed by Jezebel and preached against idol worship and worship of Baal, by so doing he was promoting God's worship.

He also condemned wickedness that is the corrupt and murderous practices of Ahab and Jezebel when they led to the Naboth.

Elijah was the fore runner of the canonical prophet and instituted the new spirit of Yahwehism that had been destroyed by the sins of Israel kings.

Elijah raised the son of the widow's son by the help of God.

He predicted the death of Ahaziah, because he was consulting Beelzebub the god of the philistine city about his sickness instead of God.

He pronounced judgment to Ahab after grabbing the vineyard of Naboth.

He anointed Elisha; Elijah was carried to heaven alive during which Elisha was anointed by touching on Elijah's cloak.

He also anointed Hazael as king of Syria in order to make sure that Ahab's family was punished.

He made Ahab repent; Elijah's prophecy made Ahab to repent of his sins and God decided that disaster to Ahab's family would not occur during Ahab's life time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHET ELIJAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The appearance of Moses and Elijah during the transfiguration event was a fulfillment of the Old Testament teachings in the New Testament.

Elijah like John the Baptist preached in the wilderness.

Prophet Elijah is important in the New Testament because just like Jesus, Elijah is believed to have gone to heaven alive.

Elijah just like John the Baptist stayed in the wilderness eating locusts, Elijah experienced the same during the 3 years drought. Mark 1:6

James in his letter cited Elijah as one whose prayers had a powerful effect. James 5:16-18

Jesus Christ in his ministerial teaching on earth compared John the Baptist to Elijah.

During Jesus' crucifixion and death. Some of the people heard him and said "listen, he is calling for Elijah. Mark 15:35-36

Just as God talked to Elijah on Mount Horeb, Jesus also visited the mountain to communicate to God. Mark 9:2

It is believed that John the Baptist dressed like Elijah just as prophet Malachi had prophesied.

During Peter's declaration about Jesus, when Jesus asked them how do people say he was, other disciples answered "others say you are Elijah" Mark 8:28

According to Luke 9:28-36, as Jesus was praying on the mountain his disciples say Elijah as one of the people. Luke 9:28.

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Some of the miracles performed by Jesus were also performed by Elijah for example Elijah the widows son just as Jesus raised Lazarus.

ELIJAH AT MOUNT HOREB/SINAI 1 KINGS 19

After the Mount Carmel contest, the prophets of Baal were killed in River Kishon. When Ahab told Jezebel what Elijah had done, she was bitter and sent a message to Elijah that, "may the gods strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don't do the same thing to you that you did to the prophets?" 1kings 19:2.

On receiving the message, Elijah was afraid and fled for his life into the wilderness.

He sat down in the shade of the tree and wished that he would die. He said that; it is too much, lord "...take away my life; I might as well be dead". 1kings 19:4.

He lay down under a tree where the angel of God brought him bread and water and woke him up to eat. This was done twice and he got enough strength which made him to walk 40 days to Sinai/Horeb the mountain of God.

At the mountain, he went into the cave to spend the night. There God appeared to him and asked him what he was doing. He said that he was hiding because he feared for his life because he was the only prophet remaining after others had been killed under the authority of Jezebel the wicked woman.

REASONS WHY ELIJAH WENT INTO HIDING IN THE CAVE AT MT.HOREB AFTER THE MT. CARMEL CONTEST

Elijah went into hiding in the cave because of the following reasons;

It was because Elijah had triumphed over the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel. Elijah's prayers were answered by God while Baal failed to respond to the prayers of the Baal prophets.

Elijah had received a lot of support and applauding from the people which scared Jezebel. When God sent divine fire which consumed the sacrifice, all the Israelites believed that Elijah was the only true prophet and Yahweh the only true God.

Elijah had killed the 850 prophets of Baal which reduced the religion of jezebel because the main promoter of Baal worship had been destroyed and jezebel was furious.

Jezebel and her supporters had been humiliated and embarrassed by Elijah when they failed to prove that their god was living.

Jezebel had sent a message to Elijah to express her disappointment about the killing of the Baal prophets.

Jezebel had sworn to have Elijah killed by a certain time the following day. "may the god strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don't do the same thing to you that you did to the prophets" 1kings 19:2.

Ahab and jezebel had killed all God's prophets. Therefore Elijah feared that he could be the next one since he was the only one remaining. **1kings 18:22**

Elijah went into hiding because Obadiah had told him that he was a wanted man; "...the king has made a search for you in every country in the world..." **1kings 18:10.**

He was blamed for causing the drought in Israel. since he is the one who announced the drought, Ahab believed that he was responsible for the people`s suffering. When Ahab saw him, he said so there you are.... The worst trouble maker!" **1kings 18:17**.

Elijah had proved that Yahweh was the only true God. Therefore He was the living God while Baal was dead and useless which annoyed jezebel.

He had gone to communicate to his God. While in hiding God appeared to him and talked to him.

Elijah wanted God to provide a solution to the prevailing circumstances. He was suffering; he feared for his life and never knew what to do. Therefor

e he expected to get an answer from Yahweh who provided a solution while in hiding.

THE DEATH OF NABOTH 1KINGS 21

Naboth was a God fearing man who had a vineyard near Ahab`s palace in Jezreel.

King Ahab admired Naboth`s vineyard for his vegetable garden .therefore he proposed to exchange it for a better vineyard or to pay Naboth a fair price.

Naboth refused to sell the vineyard to king Ahab because he had inherited it from his ancestors and the lord forbade selling Israel`s land because it belonged to Him.

This response annoyed Ahab, he went home depressed, faced the wall while sleeping and refused to eat.

Jezebel demanded to know why Ahab was behaving in weird manner. Then Ahab told her the whole story that, Naboth had refused to sell him his vineyard.

Jezebel decided to take the law in her own lands and promised to get the vineyard for King Ahab.

Then jezebel wrote letters, signed them with Ahab`s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the officials and leading citizens of Jezreel.

In the letters, jezebel requested the officials to proclaim a day of fasting, call all the people together and give Naboth a place of honor.

She requested the leading citizens and the officials to get two scoundrels to accuse him to his face of cursing God and the king and after he would be taken out of the city and be stoned to death.

The day of fasting was proclaimed and all the people met together, Naboth was given a place of honor.

Two scoundrels accused h3im of cursing God and the king. Later Naboth was stoned to death.

Then a message was sent to jezebel that Naboth had been put to death.

As soon as she received the massage, she informed Ahab that Naboth was dead. She told him to go and take possession of the vineyard to sell to him.

At once Ahab went to take possession of the vineyard.

REASONS FOR THE DEATH OF NABOTH

The following reasons led to Naboth's death;

Lack of respect for human life. Ahab and Jezebel had no respect for human life and that's why he found it easy to have Naboth killed.

Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, a pagan woman, led to the death of Ahab. Among the pagan people, kings had powers over their subjects' lives and property, and thus Jezebel influenced Ahab to have Naboth killed.

Naboth died because of possession of the fertile vineyard. If Naboth never had the fertile vineyard, then Ahab would not have admired it and thus he would not have lost his life.

Naboth died because of Ahab's greed. Ahab seemed not to be contented with all the land he had possessed yet as a king.

The nearness of Naboth's vineyard to Ahab's palace, which was strategically located, that Ahab admired it for his vegetable garden.

The false accusation of Naboth led to his death. Naboth had been accused falsely for cursing God and the king. This was blasphemy and treason, which required death as the punishment.

The presence of the law concerning the land led to his death. If there was not any law concerning land, Naboth would have sold his vineyard to King Ahab and thus he wouldn't have lost his life.

Naboth's faithfulness to the law led to his death. Because Naboth never wanted to break the law concerning the land, therefore he was faithful to the law, which later led to his death. (the law stated that no one should sell God's land)

Ahab's failure to live by God's laws, which says "you shall not admire another man's property" Exodus 20:17, led to the death of Naboth because Ahab admired the vineyard.

There was moral decay in Israel. If all people were morally upright, there is no way a day of fasting would have been misused, and even the two scoundrels would not have accused the innocent Naboth falsely.

The weakness of Ahab's administration led to the death of Naboth. Jezebel wrote letters, signed them using Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the officials of Israel, who acted as if the instructions came from their master King Ahab.

Naboth died because corruption was at its peak. The scoundrels were promised a ransom, that's why they accused Naboth falsely.

Ahab's failure to control his emotions led to Naboth's death. When Naboth refused to sell him the vineyard, he faced the wall and refused to eat. If he had behaved normally, Naboth wouldn't have known that there was something disturbing her husband.

THE MESSAGE WHICH AHAB RECEIVED FROM ELIJAH AFTER NABOTH'S DEATH 1KING 21:17

After killing Naboth, a message was sent to Jezebel, who told to go and take possession of the vineyard. At once Ahab went to the vineyard to take possession of it.

The Lord said to Elijah "go to King Ahab of Samaria. You will find him in Naboth's vineyard, about to take possession of it"

Elijah went to Samaria and delivered the following message to the king;

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Elijah began by asking Ahab a question that after murdering the man, are you taking over his property as well? 1 kings 21:19

Elijah accused Ahab for continuous sinning against the lord, "you have devoted yourself completely to doing what is wrong in the lord`s sight" 1kings 21:20.

Elijah pronounced judgment upon Ahab`s family. He said that the lord says I will bring disaster on you. I will do away with you and get rid of every male in your family, young and old alike.

Ahab's family will become like the family of King Jeroboam for stirring up God`s anger by leading Israel into sin. And God was determined to destroy his life. 1kings 21:22

Elijah said that the dogs would eat her body in the city of Jezreel. 1kings 21:23

Elijah said that the relatives of Ahab who die in the city will be eaten by dogs.

Elijah told Ahab that any of his relatives who die in the open country their bodies would be eaten by vultures. 1kings 21:24

Elijah said that in the territory of Jezreel where dogs licked up Naboth`s blood, they would lick up Ahab`s blood too.

WHY PROPHET ELIJAH CONDEMNED KING AHAB

Elijah condemned king Ahab because he coveted Naboth`s vineyard which was against God`s commandment. "you shall not covet your neighbor`s property.

He murdered Naboth which was against God`s commandment, "you shall not kill".

His act was a manifestation of lack of appreciation for what God had done for him despite the fact that he was with all privileges.

He promoted injustice in the Israelites society which was against the concept of kingship which required justice.

He lacked faith and trust in God as the provider. He did not believe that God can provide him with better vineyard.

He copied the pagan practice of other nations and kings who would grab anything yet Israel was a theocratic nation.

He abused the omniscience of God. He is all knowing and he knew what was adequate for Ahab but Ahab thought ha his land was not enough.

He trampled over and denied Naboth his right to private ownership of property which was against the covenant law.

He was materialistic. Ahab showed greed by taking the only vineyard of Naboth and never minded about God and the covenant.

He proved to be above God`s laws. The land was for the ancestors and Ahab could only pass it to the next generation but he violated the law.

He manifested selfishness and lack of love for fellow man. He portrayed this when he killed Naboth and grabbed his vineyard.

Ahab misused the office of kingship yet he was God`s representative thereby setting a bad example to his subjects....

SIGNIFICANCE OF NABOTH`S DEATH TO THE POLITICAL LEADERS TODAY

Political leaders should be contented with what they have unlike Ahab who seemed un contented with what he had and wanted to have Naboth's vineyard.

They should acquire property in peaceful means unlike Ahab who grabbed Naboth`s vineyard.

They should follow their country's constitution for no one is above the law unlike Ahab who violated God`s laws concerning property.

They should protect the lives of their subjects unlike Ahab who instead killed Naboth with the motive of taking his vineyard.

They should make independent decisions without being influenced by other people unlike Ahab who was ill advised by his wife jezebel.

They should respect people`s property unlike Ahab who coveted Naboth`s vineyard which was against the covenant law.

They should accept private ownership of property just as Naboth had his own land.

They should show love to one another unlike Ahab who showed selfishness and hatred for Naboth

They should respect their offices and use them properly unlike Ahab who misused the office of kingship.

They should consult God and his messengers unlike Ahab who never consulted any but only influenced by his evil wife jezebel.

THE DEATH OF KING AHAB 1KINGS 22: 1-37

The following are the circumstances that led to the death of King Ahab.

There was peace between Israel and Syria for the next 2 years, but in the third year king Jehoshaphat of Judah went to see king Ahab of Israel. 1king 22:1

Ahab asked his officials, "Why is it that we have not done anything to get back Ramoth in Gilead from the king of Syria? **1kings 22:3**

Ahab then asked Jehoshaphat to assist him in attacking Syria in order to repossess Ramoth in Gilead **1kings 22:4**

Jehoshaphat accepted to offer him full support on condition that they first consulted the lord their God **1king 22:5**

Then Ahab called in the 400 prophets and asked them whether to go and attack Ramoth or not? 1kings 22:6

They all answered that Ahab and Jehoshaphat should go and attack Syria because God will give them victory.

But Jehoshaphat was not contented with their answers, so he demanded that one more prophet should be consulted. **1kings 22:7**

Ahab then summoned prophet Micaiah and when he came, he asked him whether they should attack Syria or not? He answered that they should.

But Ahab was not contented with the prophecy of Micaiah and he demanded re-assurance in the name of God. **1kings 22:15**

That's when Micaiah told him that he saw the people of Israel defeated and the soldiers scattered over hills like sheep without a shepherd. **1kings 22:17**

Ahab exclaimed! "Didn't I tell you that he never prophecies anything good for me? It's always something bad!" **1kings 22:18**

The prophet Zedekiah went up to Micaiah, slapped his face, and asked him, "When did the spirit of God leave me and speak to you?" **1kings 22:24**

Then Micaiah re-assured Ahab that, "if he returns safely, then the lord has not spoken through me" **1kings 22:28.**

Ahab then went on to attack Syria during which he asked Jehoshaphat to wear his robe while he disguised himself. **1kings 22:29**

In the front line of the battle the Syrians sighted a king dressed in his royal robe and rushed to attack him but Jehoshaphat cried out and the Syrian army withdrew because they realized that he was not the king of Israel. **1king 22:32**

By chance, however, the Syrian soldier shot an arrow which struck King Ahab between the joints, "I'm wounded!" He cried out to his chariot driver. **1kings 22:34**

Ahab bled and his blood ran down and covered the bottom of the chariot, and in the evening he died. **1kings 22:35**

His body was taken to Samaria and buried, the chariot cleaned up and the dogs licked up his blood and prostitutes washed themselves, as the lord had said would happen. **1kings 22:37**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INCIDENT TO MODERN LEADERS

Modern leaders should seek God's guidance before doing anything just as Ahab and Jehoshaphat had done.

They ought to follow God's guidance unlike Ahab who failed to follow God's advice.

They should use peaceful means like peace talks to solve problems instead of force unlike Ahab wanted to attack Syria to get Ramoth.

They should be self driven other than doing things because of peer influence.

They should believe in God's messengers unlike King Ahab who failed to believe in prophet Micaiah's message.

They should speak the truth however bad and dangerous it is just like Micaiah.

They should respect one another unlike Prophet Zedekiah who slapped Micaiah.

They should consult God before doing anything just like Jehoshaphat consulted God through prophet Micaiah.

They should give advice to their friends just like Jehoshaphat advised Ahab to first consult God.

They should love all people unlike Ahab who disliked Prophet Micaiah and whatever word that came from his mouth.

THE CALL OF PROPHET ELISHA 1KINGS 19:19

Elijah found Elisha ploughing with team of oxen; he took off his cloak and put it on Elisha.

Elisha requested Elijah to first kiss his father and mother good bye and then followed Elijah.

Then Elisha killed his team of oxen, cooled the meat and served the people. Then he followed Elijah as his helper.

When Elijah was walking with Elisha, Elijah told him to request for what he wanted before he would be taken away. **2kings 2:9**

He request for a share of his power. "Let me receive the share of your power that will make me your successor. **2kings 2:9**

The request seemed difficult but Elijah replied that; "you will receive it if you see me as Aim being taken away from you..." **2king 2:10**

As they walked, a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire came between them and Elijah was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind.

Elisha saw it and cried out to Elijah, my father, my father, the mighty defender of Israel! You are gone" and he never saw Elijah again. **2kings 2:12**

Elisha picked Elijah`s cloak and struck the waters of River Jordan which divided and he crossed on a dry ground, it was confirmed by the 50 prophets that the power of Elijah was on Elisha.

THE ROLE OF PROPHET ELISHA AS A TRUE SUCCESSOR OF ELIJAH

Elisha received a share of Elijah`s powers when he saw him being taken to heaven alive and he was able to do the following;

When Elijah was taken to heaven alive, Elijah picked up his cloak, struck the water of River Jordan and it divided and crossed on the dry ground **2kings 2:14ff**

Elisha was in position to purify the water which used to cause miscarriages by throwing salt into the spring and from then the water became clean. **2kings 2:19-22**

Elisha assisted the poor widow from having her sons taken as slaves in repayment for late husband`s debt. She used a small jar of oil to fill as many jars as possible and sold them and paid all the debts. **2kings 4:1-**

He fore told that the rich woman from Shunem that she would give birth to a son which was later fulfilled **2kings 4:8-17**

Elisha prayed to God and the son of the rich woman from Shunem who had died came back to life **2kings 4:18-ff.**

He assisted the Israelites to purify the food which was poisoned. One man picked gourds from a wild vine which poisoned the food but Elisha cleansed it. **2kings 4:38-41**

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Elisha saved the people of Samaria from famine. They got enough food to eat and even had leftovers. **2kings 4:42**

Elisha prayed to God and Naaman recovered from the dreaded skin disease. His flesh was restored and he was cured completely and his flesh became like that of a child. **2kings 5:1ff**

Elisha cursed Gehazi and was attacked by a skin disease which had attacked Naaman and his skin became as white as snow. **2king 20-27**

Elisha recovered an axe head from River Jordan. By doing so, he proved that Yahweh is a God who sees everywhere and who cannot be defeated. **2kings 6:1-7**

Elisha prayed to God and the soldiers from Syria became blind, they were trapped and defeated by the Israelites **2kings 6:18ff.**

He organized for the anointing of Jehu as king of Israel and made many reforms. He told a young prophet to go with Olive oil, take Jehu into a private room, pour oil on his head and say " the lord proclaims, I anoint you king of my people Israel" **2kings 9:6.**

He proved that a believer does not die forever e.g. a man's body was thrown into Elisha's grave and when it came into contact with Elisha's bones in the tomb, the man came back to life and stood up. **2kings 13:20-21**

THE ANNOINTING OF JEHU 2KINGS 9:1FF

The following circumstances led to the anointment/ways in which Jehu was elected as King of Israel;

At God's command due to Ahab's sins Elijah was told to anoint Jehu as the king of Israel but he died before fulfilling God's command and Elisha succeeded him.

Elisha called one of the young prophets under him, instructed him to go to Ramoth in Gilead where the Israelites army had camped.

He was to carry with him a jar of olive oil.

On reaching Ramoth, he was to look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, take him to a private room and anoint him from there as king of Israel. 2kings 9:2

When the young prophet went to Ramoth he found the army officers in a meeting. 2kings 9:4

He asked to talk to Jehu and took him indoors from where he poured olive oil on his head as a sign of anointing. 2kings 9:6.

He proclaimed that the lord had anointed Jehu as the king of the Israelites.

Jehu was therefore given a task of bringing an end to Ahab's family. That is, he was to kill Joram and Jezebel because she had murdered God's prophets. 2king 9:7-8

The young prophet said that Ahab's family was to be treated the way Jeroboam and Baasha's families were treated by God.

When Jehu went back to his fellow officers they asked him what had happened. 2kings 9:11

Jehu told them that he had been anointed as the king of Israel by God 2KINGS 9:12

Jehu was anointed to punish Jezebel, Ahab and his son Joram for the bloodshed of the Lord's servants.

Jehu was then ordered to restore the covenant faith by weeping out Baalism which had become the order of the day.

Therefore the evils of Ahab, Jezebel and Joram were the major factors that led to the anointing of Jehu as king of Israel.

At once Jehu's fellow officers then spread their cloaks/clothes at the top of the steps for Jehu to stand on, blew trumpet and shouted with joy "Jehu is King" 2Kings 9:13

THE REFORMS CARRIED OUT BY KING JEHU 2KINGS 9:14 - 10:28

When Jehu became a king he carried out the following reforms;

Jehu killed Ahab's son Joram who succeeded Ahab for instigating bad worship of Baalism.

Jehu continued with God's prophetic message of destruction by killing Ahaziah king of Judah who was related to Ahab's family.

He then killed Jezebel the queen mother who was the chief promoter of Baalism in Israel and her body was abandoned in the city of Jezreel where his body was eaten by dogs. 2Kings 9:33

Jehu ordered for the killing of 70 descendants of King Ahab who were living in Samaria because they were great supporters of Baal worship. 2Kings 10:11

Jehu killed 42 relatives of king Ahaziah of Judah as they were going to mourn Ahab's family members. 2Kings 10:12-14

He killed the friends, chiefs of Ahab and all those who had been left of Ahab's family.

He organized for killing of all Baal prophets, priests and worshippers of Baal in order to bring spiritual revival in Israel

He demolished the pillars of the pagan temple of baal-melart and converted the place into a latrine.

He wiped out of Israel Baal worship and promoted monotheism among the Israelites.

However much as he succeeded in fulfillment of God's prophetic message of destruction he had some failures;

He failed to remove the idolatrous shrines and the two golden calves established by Jeroboam at Bethel in the temple.

Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser of Assyria in an attempt to hold on to power.

It proved that Jehu's reforms had a political angle that is, killing the whole family of Ahab that had a political angle.

He was more of a murderer because his reforms were characterized by bloodshed to even the innocent people for example he killed the relatives of Ahab.

He promoted apostasy by setting up two golden calves at Bethel and Dan and worshipped them. This made him to follow the example of Jeroboam and led Israel into sin.

PROPHET AMOS

Amos was the prophet who prophesied in the northern region /kingdom of Israel.

He was both a trader and a shepherd.

He was called by God from Judah to go and deliver his message of condemnation to the people of Israel.

AMOS` CONDEMNATION OF THE VARIOUS STATES

Prophet Amos in his ministry began with the condemnation of the neighboring states because of the following reasons;

Amos wanted to show that Yahweh was a universal God. He therefore had the right to pronounce judgment upon all the states because he was a God of all the people but not only the Israelites.

Amos wanted to show that Yahweh was the master of the whole universe. He had the right to judge all the since there was no God above Him.

Amos wanted to give the Israelites a chance to repent and ask for forgiveness. He believed that incase the Israelites heard about his prophecies the Israelites would repent.

It was a technique of getting an audience from the Israelites. Amos thought that if the Israelites heard about his prophecies, they would be willing to listen to him in case he began to prophesying to them.

Amos wanted to show that salvation was for all people. Therefore he wanted the Israelites and people of other nations to prepare for salvation.

He wanted to show the omnipotence of God; God is powerful and master of the entire world even the gentiles.

Amos was sending a warning to the people in the distant lands that God was also watching over them.

Amos wanted to do away with the Israelites monopoly over God. They thought that God is for them alone.

Amos wanted the Israelites to learn from other Nations and turn to God.

Amos began by condemning the pagan states because of the evils they had committed and the message of destruction. He wanted to pronounce upon the pagan states and Judah.

Amos condemned Damascus for their savage and cruelty against the people of Gilead during military campaigns. They were very hostile and mistreated the people of Gilead. God would smash down the walls of their cities to ashes and take some to exile. **Amos 1:3**

Amos condemned Tyre for violating the treaty of friendship with other nations and enslaved the neighboring communities. God was going to send fire to burn down the walls of Tyre and their fortresses and would be evade by a foreign army. **Amos 1:9**

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Philistia was condemned for sending others into slavery as opposed to the law in Exodus 21:15. As a punishment God sent fire which destroyed the wall of Philistia and their King, the children and women were to be tortured to death. **Amos 1:6**

Edom was condemned for exploiting, oppressing and ruthlessly attacking the people of Israel and because of that fire was to turn down the walls of the palaces of their king. **Amos 1:11**

The Ammonites were condemned the Ammonites for killing the people of Gilead to the extent that they even killed the unborn babies. **Amos 1:13**. God was to send fire upon the city walls of Rabbah and burn down the fortresses and their King and his officers would go into exile.

Amos condemned the Moab for killing the people of Gilead to the extent that they dishonored the bones of the king of Edom by burning them to ashes. God was to send fire to burn down the walls of their cities and their king was to be taken to exile. **Amos 2:1-3**

Judah was condemned for despising the teachings of the Lord and breaking the covenant law that is worshipping Baal. God would send fire to burn down the walls of Jerusalem. **Amos 2:4-5**

RELEVANCE OF THE MESSAGE OF AMOS TO UGANDANS TODAY

Ugandans should respect the Ten Commandments and try the level best to follow the unlike the people of Judah who continued to break the covenant law.

They should obey the treaties of the fellowship made before God unlike the people of Tyre who broke the treaties made with others.

They should show love for one another to the extent of even loving their enemies unlike the people of Edom who ruthlessly attacked the people of Israel and killing the unborn babies.

They should repent so as to ask for God's forgiveness unlike the people of Judah and other states who were punished by God for continued sinning without repenting.

They should condemn evil just as Amos condemned Israel and other nations for committing sin against God.

They should practice justice to people and other neighboring nations because God hates injustices and that's why other nations were punished.

They should respect others and dead bodies and failure to do so leads to punishment just as the Edomites were punished.

They should provide for the poor and the needy materially instead of oppressing them like the Israelites exploited the poor to the extent of selling them into exile/slavery.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ISRAELITES BY PROPHET AMOS

Amos condemned the Israelites for their continued sinning against God.

Religiously;

The Israelites were consulting false prophets. According to the Mosaic Law, they were only expected to consult the true prophets of God.

They had forgotten God and had started worshipping pagans which was against the Mosaic Law and its teachings.

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There was blasphemy among the Israelites. They used abusive languages against God's name e.g. they would say that God is unfair and not caring.

The priests were misguiding God's people. Instead of guiding the Israelites towards the covenant law, they did the opposite.

There was a lot religious pretence. Many Israelites pretended to be religious yet their actions never proved so e.g. they engaged in sex abuse...

They were unrepentant. The Israelites were expected to repent whenever they sinned against God.

They offered unclean sacrifices, yet according to the mosaic teachings, they were expected to offer only clean sacrifices.

There was idol worship, instead of worshipping God, people had turned to idolatry which was against the covenant way of life.

There was religious formalism where by many Israelites used to do this for formality e.g. worshipping God, sacrificing...

Syncretism and apostasy were common in the northern region. Many people used to worship pagan gods alongside Yahweh and lost trust in Him.

Economically;

There was income inequality. Some people were very rich yet others were very poor. All resources were to be shared equally according to mosaic teachings.

The rich were money hungry. They overcharged their commodities and cheated their customers by mixing wheat with dust.

The rich were lending at high interest rates and in case a poor person failed to pay back, his property would be confiscated

The rich used dishonest weights and measures in business. They tampered with the weighing scales in order to cheat their customers.

There was a lot of extravagance and a lot of luxury among the rich. E.g. the poor would only afford meat on big days but the rich could eat choized lambs each day.

Socially,

The poor had no say in courts of law e.g. a poor man could move all the way to Samaria to get justice but instead he would injustice in the courts of law.

Sex abuse was common. E.g. a father and a son would share one slave woman yet according to the mosaic teaching, children were expected to respect their parents.

The wives of the rich were demanding too much from their husbands and their husbands ended up oppressing and cheating the poor in order to please them.

On many occasion, offerings to God were acquired by grabbing from the poor. This was especially done by the rich.

The Israelites especially the rich, idleness and unnecessary luxuries were very common. They were supposed to live an equal life but the poor were living absolute poverty.

The houses of the rich were full of stolen property from the poor and according to the Mosaic Law, stealing was forbidden.

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Anybody who spoke the truth in Israel was hated. In fact almost all the people were liars.

Politically;

Over taxation of the poor was common and according to the Mosaic Law the Israelites were expected to be taxed according to their income.

Forced labor was common. The political leaders used to force people to work for them without any payment.

The political leaders used their positions to grab people's property. The leaders believed that they were above the law and therefore had the right to possess whatever they wanted.

Political leaders made alliances with the pagan states. The Israelites were expected to depend on God according to the Mosaic Law.

AMOS` MESSAGE OF DOOM/JUDGEMENT

Amos never had any kind words for them because of the wickedness of the Israelites and the pagan people. He prophesied a message of doom/condemnation and his message was as follows;

Amos passed judgment to Israel, Judah and their neighbors i.e. Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Assyria due to their sins indicating that he was a prophet of judgment. Amos 1:13

He condemned the fat women of the rich Samaria and that they will be dragged on hooks on the day of the lord/judgment day. Amos 4:2-3

He sang a funeral song to illustrate the future of Israel. The song shows the future judgment of Israel and never to raise hence a message of condemnation. Amos 5:1ff

Amos shows a different nature of the day of the lord which was contrary to the expectations. It would be a day of terror, darkness and judgment hence a message of doom.

In the vision of the plumb line Amos` message of doom is presented in the destruction of the cracked walls. Amos 7:7

The vision of locusts presents doom because all the plants were to be destroyed by the locusts as a result of people's sins. This would bring drought and famine. Amos 7:1ff

The vision of the basket of the fruit further showed that judgment was over and Israel was ripe for destruction. Amos 8:1ff

According to Amos, God will turn their festivals into funerals and change glad songs into cries of grief, shave their heads and wear sackcloth, and they will be like parents mourning for their child.

Amos says, time is coming when God will make the sun go down at noon and the earth grow dark in daytime indicating a message of doom. Amos 8:9

As a prophet of doom, Amos says that God would send a foreign army to occupy Israel, oppress them and stretch from the Northern part to south; he compared the coming destruction to that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Amos prophesied massive destruction of property and worshipping places like Bethel and Gilgal because of the empty mockery of God which made him a prophet of doom.

Amos pronounced disaster to the family of priest Amaziah of Bethel for trying to stop him from preaching at the temple. He told him that his wife was to become a prostitute and his children killed in war. Amos 7:17

To Amos death will be rampant to the extent that everyone will die and it will be difficult to bury them.

According to Amos winter and summer houses decorated with ivory will be destroyed and they will not drink wine from the beautiful vineyards they had planted.

Amos says, "time is coming when the Lord will send famine on the land, people will be hungry and thirsty but not for food but hungry for the message of God. Amos 8:11

He warned the rich for exploitation of the poor that they were selling honest people for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals and said "I will not let them go unpunished". Amos 2:6-7.

Because of cheating the poor, the Lord was going to send an earthquake and everybody was going to be destroyed.

Because of God's anger, the sacrifices of the Israelites would be rejected by God and however much they would pray, He would never accept respond to their sacrifices.

He said that those who became rich through injustices and exploitation would not enjoy their beautiful houses.

He said that Israel would be like sheep eaten up by a lion which implied that the Israelites would not survive God's punishment.

AMOS' MESSAGE OF HOPE

Despite the fact that Amos was a prophet of doom, there are some features of hope in his prophecy as indicated below;

Amos called the people to repent so that God may forgive them and they will be saved from destruction. The Lord says, "Come to me and you will live." Amos 5:4-6

By sending Amos to prophesy in the northern region was an indicator that God never wanted his people perish but to see the change and live.

He indicates to the Israelites that God is ready to change the day of the Lord to a glorious one if they repent. That is the righteous will be remnants and saved.

He said that God was going to meet the remnants on which he will build a new nation of Israel. To him even if the people refuse to repent some will die and others remain so that God's saving act of mankind will be fulfilled. Amos 3:12

In the vision of the fire and locusts and in the plumb-line, he pleaded to God and God changed his mind, he shows that God is going to destroy up where mistakes are made and a new beginning will be set. Amos 7:7

Amos indicated that the Lord was going to restore Israel after exile which is a message of hope, "a day is coming when I will restore the house of David and repair its walls". Amos 9:11

Amos condemned the pagan nations that wanted to destroy the Israelite nation which shows that he wished Israel well therefore a message of hope. Amos 1:3,2

As a prophet of hope Amos reveals a time when God will give material blessings to the Israelites when they come back from exile.

As a prophet of hope, Amos says that at that the harvest will be much more than what can be harvested.

As a prophet of hope, Amos says that God promised to turn the Israelites` funeral songs into songs of joy if they turn back to the lord.

Amos called for justice to prevail in courts of law and let it flow like a stream that never dries so that the lord will have mercy upon them.

He further said that the people will come back from exile and enjoy the wine which will flow from the mountains. Amos 9:13ff

He indicated that a time will come when the grains and grapes will grow faster than they can be harvest and the mountains will drip with sweet wine. Amos 9:13

He says that the Israelites would be brought back from exile (distant land) and they will rebuild the ruined cities and they live in them again. Amos 9:14

He says that during the restoration, people will plant vine yard and gardens and they will eat their crops and drink their wine which indicates a message of hope.

He said that God will plant the people of Israel on the land he gave them and they will not be pulled up again. Amos 9:15

He compared Israel to a stick saved from fire that implied that a remnant will be there from whom the lord will fulfill his salvation plan.

God`s response to Amos` prayers averted the punishment; this indicated that there is hope for the Israelites.

Amos says that the taking of the children of Israel to exile was not because God does not love them but it was intended for repentance hence a message of hope.

AMOS` TEACHING ABOUT THE DAY OF LORD (AMOS 5:18FF)

The people of Israel were longing for the day of the lord. However, much they sinned; they expected the day of the lord to be characterized by the following;

They expected God to show his power over the pagan nations. In other words they believed that God would not allow the pagan states to defeat them.

They expected the day of the lord to be a day of victory and glory in battle for Israel i.e. they expected to defeat all their enemies.

They expected to begin living in material prosperity and accumulate a lot of wealth.

they expected to receive God`s blessings especially the blessings He had promised through Abraham their ancestors.

They expected their vineyards and olive oil gardens to produce in plenty and they also expected corn to grow faster than it would be harvested.

They expected God to send rain at the right time such that people could plant and harvest enough food.

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they expected God to forgive their sins and begin living in harmony with them

The Israelites expected to increase in number together with their domestic animals.

They expected trade to boom such that they would make a lot of profits on the day of the lord.

They expected to live in peace and never to be disfigured by their enemies.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DAY OF LORD ACCORDING TO PROPHET AMOS

Amos rejected and attacked the view of the Israelites about the day of lord. He taught the following;

To Amos the day of the lord will be a day of darkness and not of light. **Amos 5:18**

Amos said that the day of the lord would be a day of terror, disaster and not a day of rejoicing as they thought.

It would be a day when all the sinful people would meet their death i.e. the priests, merchants and women of Samaria.

He said that it would be a day of gloom and doom.

To Amos, on that day there will be wailing and misery in all towns, cities and high places.

To Amos, it would be a day of sorrow and mourning because the entire land would be filled with dead bodies.

That day, the Israelites songs would be turned into mourning and funeral songs.

It would be a day when the Israelites would grind their teeth, as they will be exiled, tortured and suffer.

He symbolically compared it to the time one who runs from a lion meets a bear. **Amos 5:19**

He also compares it to someone who comes home and puts his hand on the wall only to be bitten by a snake.

Amos said that on that day God will not hear their songs, listen to their prayers and would not accept their sacrifices and offerings.

On that day their property would be burnt and destroyed including the places of worship like Bethel, Dan and Gulag.

Those who swear in the name of false gods at Dan sanctuary would fall and never to rise again.

On this day neither Mount Carmel nor Baal would provide a hiding place; they will call Yahweh's intervention, but he will not listen to them.

On that Day God would not listen to the noise of their songs. **Amos 5:23**

To Amos on that day God would send all the idol worshippers to exile beyond Damascus. **Amos 5:27.**

Amos shows that if people repented their sins, some would be remnants. **Amos 5:15**

THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

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They believed that this day is going to be Jesus` second coming (Parousia) which all people are longing for.

Christians believe that on this day Jesus will appear with the angels. He will come as the lord to carry out his judgment.

Christians believe that on this day, there will be a final struggle against the powers of Satan. Satan shall be defeated on this day once and for all.

They believe that this day will mark the end of the world and therefore the universe will come to an end.

The righteous shall be separated from the unrighteous. This would be like separating the sheep from the wolves.

It is believed that the righteous will go to heaven and sit at the right hand side of God where as the wicked/sinners would serve their everlasting punishment.

Jesus will take control over the whole universe. He will show His powers as the king and the lord. Strange miracles shall happen e.g. the dead will rise; the sun will go down at noon...

Christians are expected to repent as they prepare for the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, all people are expected to be ready for this day.

Christians believe that the day will come abruptly like a thief. it is believed that no one knows the day or even an hour.

Christians shall be accountable for their earthly lives i.e. explain the ways one spent life while serving God.

Christians expect that God will humble all the proud and arrogant and raise all the humble and righteous.

It will be a terrible day full of earthquake, lightning and thunder.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PRIEST AMAZIAH AND PROPHET AMOS (AMOS 7:10-17)

When Amos was prophesying in the northern region, he was attacked and stopped by priest Amaziah from prophesying especially because of attacking the place of worship and the king.

Because of Amos` prophecies, a conflict developed between him and Amaziah and the following caused the conflict.

Priest Amaziah wanted favors from the kings, e.g. Amaziah the priest sent a report to King Jeroboam of Israel, "Amos is plotting against you among the people and his speech will destroy the country".
Amos 7:10

Amos pronounced judgment on Jeroboam and the people of Israel i.e. Jeroboam would die in battle and the people of Israel will be taken away from their land into exile. **Amos 7:11**

Amos conflicted with the priest because he stopped Amos from preaching near the temple. **Amos 7:12**

Amos was accused of making propaganda in favor of the enemies that the people of Israel would be taken to exile. **Amos 7:11**

According to Amaziah, Amos was blasphemous. When Amos attacked the places of worship by saying that they would be destroyed; Amaziah said that it was blasphemy which was against the covenant way of life.

Amos conflicted with Amaziah because Amaziah was blocking Amos from talking against the sinful people of Israel.

Amos conflicted with Amaziah the priest because he was forced to end his prophecy pre-maturely and advised him to go back to Judah and preach from there.

Amaziah had branded Amos as a false prophet who prophesied for payment. Amos 7:14

They conflicted because the prophet had exposed the people's evils and pretence and therefore they were going to be taken to exile. **Amos 7:16**

They conflicted because Amaziah was trying to stop the truth and perpetuate the evil.

Because Amos had condemned the hypocrisy of the religious leaders

Amos had pronounced judgment on the family of Amaziah i.e. Amaziah wife would become a prostitute on the streets, the children be killed in war, the land be divided up and Amaziah die in a heathen country. **Amos 7:17**

Amaziah and Amos conflicted because Amaziah doubted Amos' prophecies and never believed in whatever he prophesized.

THE CALL OF AMOS AND HIS VISIONS

The call of Amos is traced in the 5 visions which God revealed to him showing how He was going to punish the Israelites using the 5 destructive visions.

The visions were as follows;

THE VISION OF LOCUSTS AMOS 7:1-3

Amos saw God create a swarm of locusts just after the king's share of hay had been cut and the grass was starting to grow again.

Amos saw the locusts eat up every green thing in the land.

The vision symbolized disaster which was to befall the Israelites in terms of famine leading to death of many people.

Amos pleaded to God; Sovereign lord, forgive your people, how can they survive? They are so small and weak.

The lord changed his mind and said "what you saw will not take place." God therefore withdrew his punishment.

THE VISION OF FIRE AMOS 7:4-6

Amos saw God preparing to punish His people with fire. the fire burnt up the great ocean under the earth, and started to burn up the land

The vision symbolized a prolonged drought which would dry up all the water bodies and the land as a sign of destruction to all the Israelites.

When Amos saw this vision, he pleaded to God and said "stop, sovereign lord, how your people can survive? they are so weak and small"

The lord changed His mind again and said, "This will not take place either."

THE VISION OF A PLUMB LINE AMOS 7:7-9

Amos saw God standing beside a wall that had been built with the help of a plumb line; and he had a plumb line in His hand.

He asked that, "Amos what do you see?" Amos said that "A plumb line, "the God said that He was using it to show that His people are like a wall that is out of line

This meant that the Israelites had failed to live up the covenant law.

When Amos saw this, he did not plead to God as he had done in the first 2 visions. God was unwilling to change His mind about punishing the Israelites because they were like a crooked wall fit for destruction.

God promised to destroy the worshipping places and to bring the Dynasty of king Jeroboam to an end.

THE VISION OF A BASKET OF FRUIT AMOS 8:1-4

Amos saw a basket of fruit at the end of the King`s harvest.

This meant that the end had come for the people of Israel and God was not going to change His mind.

the vision symbolized that people`s sins were beyond limit and it also meant it was the right time for God to punish them.

Because of the destruction, the songs in the palace would become cries of mourning.

There would be dead bodies everywhere and the city would be filled with wailing because the dead bodies would be many.

THE VISION OF THE DESTROYED ALTAR AMOS 9

Amos saw God standing besides the altar. He commanded him to strike the tops of the temple columns so hard that the whole porch will shake. He told him to break them off and let them fall on the head of the people.

God promised to kill the rest of the people in war and no one would survive /escape.

The vision symbolized the destruction of the temple and all the worshippers.

because of people`s sins and their failure to change, the temple would no longer be God`s dwelling place.

PROPHET AMOS AND THE FUNERAL SONG (AMOS 5:11)

This cover Amos` call for repentance for Israel and because of the sins of the Israelite, Amos sung the funeral song over Israel. This was because of the following sins;

There was gross inequality of income. The poor were very poor because they lost their property to the rich.

There was over taxation on the side of the poor and unfair rent. **Amos 5:11**

There was luxury and extravagance on the part of the rich; they bought themselves expensive robes and ointments while the poor went with cloaks of linen wool.

The rich had both summer and winter houses which were decorated with ivory while the poor men could not afford.

The rich were money hungry. They overcharged their commodities and cheated their customers by mixing wheat with dust.

The rich were lending at high interest rates and in case a poor person failed to pay back, his property would be confiscated

They offered unclean sacrifices, yet according to the mosaic teachings, they were expected to offer only clean sacrifices.

There was idol worship, instead of worshipping God, people had turned to idolatry which was against the covenant way of life.

Cultic prostitution was a great problem in Israel at the temple of Bethel, which profane the holiness of God. Amos 2:7

The poor had no say in courts of law e.g. a poor man could move all the way to Samaria to get justice but instead he would find injustice in the courts of law.

Sex abuse was common. E.g. a father and a son would share one slave woman yet according to the mosaic teaching, children were expected to respect their parents.

End of The Topic

PROPHET HOSEA

Hosea was a son of Beeri, he prophesied in the Northern region after prophet Amos during the troubled times before the fall of Samaria. He was one of the Minor Prophets.

God told Hosea to marry a woman who was going to be unfaithful (prostitute). This way God wanted to illustrate the relationship between Him and the unfaithful Israelites using Hosea's marriage experience.

HOSEA'S MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE AND ITS PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Hosea compared the relationship of a loving father with his children to God's relationship with the Israelites.

He shows that the Israelites had rejected God's love like his wife who was unfaithful and had rejected his love.

Hosea's prophetic message in his marriage experience is based on the Sinaic covenant.

The following illustrates how Hosea's marriage experience reflects God's experience with the Israelites.

God commanded Hosea to marry Gomer but he was warned of her unfaithfulness in future. this is illustrated with Yahweh's relationship with sinful Israel.

The marriage had a spiritual meaning where Hosea represented God, the marriage was the covenant that God made with the Israelites and Gomer represented the sinful Israel.

Hosea loved and protected his wife just as Yahweh protected the people of Israel during the Exodus event.

the early days of Hosea's marriage to Gomer became a prostitute which spoilt their relationship. This is symbolic of Israelites when they violated the covenant and turned to syncretism.

The marriage symbol in Hosea's relationship changed from husband-wife to child-father **Hosea 11:1-3**. Yahweh reminds people that he was their lord and they were his children.

While in marriage, Hosea and Gomer produced three children who were given symbolic names but unfortunately even the children followed their mother's unfaithfulness just like the descendants of Israel were unfaithful to God.

Gomer produced the son whom Hosea gave a symbolic name of "**Jezreel**" symbolizing the coming judgment of God on Israel.

The second child was named "**not loved**" which signified that the Israelites rejected God and in turn God also withdrew his love from them.

The third child was named "**not my people**" which signified that the Israelites were no longer God's people.

Hosea asked the children to go and plead with their mother to stop prostitution. This is illustrated how God sent prophets to tell people to repent and follow the covenant faith.

It's believed that Gomer practiced prostitution for material wealth and prosperity. This is illustrated in how Israel was attracted to Baal worship to attain security and high yields.

If Gomer did not turn away from her lovers, Hosea would punish her by stripping her naked. This showed how God would punish Israel for failure to stop apostasy and syncretism.

Hosea intended to stop Gomer's promiscuity. This signified God's intentions to stop Israel's apostasy and syncretism.

Gomer would be fenced as a way of punishment. This illustrated how Israel was going to be exiled and fenced by enemies.

While in the desert Gomer suffered isolation and rejection just as the people of Israel would suffer under the bondage of Slavery.

After the punishment, Gomer was restored by Hosea. This is understood as God's restoration of Israel after undergoing punishment.

Hosea was forced to buy Gomer back for 15 pieces of silver. This signified God purchasing the lovely nation of Israel.

On winning Gomer back he was to stay for some time without having sexual intercourse with the husband in the same way the Israelites would stay for sometime without kings.

When Hosea got love for the love again he even changed the names of his children just as Israel on coming back to God lived by the covenant faith.

The name **Jezreel** which meant destruction was changed to prosperity an indication that the people of Israel will be prosperous again.

The name "Not loved" was changed to "**loved**" signifying that God will love the Israelites again.

The name "**Not my People**". showed that the Israelites would become God's people and he will provide for them again.

The experience in the desert made Gomer to hate the other lovers just as Israel hated the Baal after exile.

The re-marriage between Hosea and Gomer signified the new Covenant which God was going to make with Israel.

OTHER THEMES IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The Idea of foreign alliance of Israel with other nations like Assyria

The idea of shallow repentance of the people of Israel especially the priests

The role of priests who were unfaithful to God

God's impending judgment yet to come because of the sins of the Israelites.

Hosea challenges priests to direct people to God's principles rather than diverting them.

He talks about the immoral behavior of the people and the priests such as cultic prostitution

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The book is concerned with Exodus event.

It looks at the idea of lack of appreciation on the part of the people because God had done a lot for them.

God's love and restoration for the nation of Israel

Hosea's book also talks about the idea of suffering in exile.

EVILS WHICH WERE CONDEMNED BY PROPHET HOSEA

The condemnation was made because of the way the Israelites related with other nations. That is they sought for help from other pagan nations.

There was injustice in the judicial courts; the poor could no longer get fair justice because they could not bribe.

There was idolatry where by the Israelites worshipped idols and did not acknowledge God as their leader.

He condemned a foreign alliance which was a failure of their trust in God; they allied with countries like Syria in order to fight Assyria instead of allying with God.

The Israelites lacked steady fast love and faithfulness to their God; the covenant love was expected to be steady fast love.

There was a lot of arrogance and pride thinking that God will always be on their side regardless of their numerous sins.

The Israelites were hypocritical in their religious practices. They expected repentance which was shallow and insincere.

The Israelites had broken their promises made to God by rejecting to keep the law and lead the people to righteousness instead they promised lies, murder...

Hosea condemned Israel because of Apostasy and syncretism which was so dangerous to monotheism.

They were condemned because of the insincere act of worship.

The political and religious leaders led the people a stray and condoned evil for their personal gains.

They were condemned because of worshipping of Baal and their idolatrous practice.

The people forgot God's deliverance from Egypt and instead went in for the powerless gods.

The Israelites were unrepentant and could not come back to God.

The people had rebelled and abandoned Yahweh and the covenant obligations.

There was insincere sacrifice for instance they offered stolen animals and always offered when their hearts were away.

There was gross violation of human rights for example they murdered kings after kings.

There was a lot of materialism which had cropped into religious establishment for example priests were growing rich on the sins of the poor.

There was conspiracy in the palace where by the Israelites made their gods and appointed their leaders without God's approval.

HOSEA'S MESSAGE OF JUDGEMENT/DOOM/CONDEMNATION

The name Jezreel pointed to the coming judgment which was going to be terrible because of the sinfulness of the people.

The name "unloved" showed that God will not love his people for he would send them to the wilderness.

The name "not my people" implied that God was going to abandon them where they would be taken to exile.

Gomer being taken into the desert was symbolic of the judgment that people of Israel were punished by being taken to exile.

The stripping of Gomer naked meant that the people of Israel would not enjoy God's protection for he would expose them to other nations hence a message of judgment

By Hosea saying that the people would live in the tents again as it was in Egypt meant that the Israelites would be enslaved.

The priest would be rejected by God and would not even accept their sons as priests; the priests like the people would be subjected to the same punishment.

Hosea says that the people would continue worshipping their god of fertility but the Israelites would still remain barren.

The priests and prophets who neglected their duties would be destroyed together with the rest of the Israelites.

Those who practiced temple prostitution would be carried into exile where they would face a lot of humiliation.

He said that the kings would be taken away from their land and the people would have no leaders despite the fact that they had demanded for a king.

He prophesied that God would never listen to the prayers of the people and never to accept their sacrifices because they lacked love in their midst.

Hosea said that God would send a disastrous wind which would wash away people's crops and later the people would die of hunger.

Hosea said that God was going to break down the altars of the Israelites and cause death in Israel.

Hosea pronounced judgment against Judah for attacking Israel and stealing their land. Hosea said that God was going to destroy them and He was going to pour punishment on them like flood.

HOSEA'S MESSAGE ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR THE REBELLIOUS PEOPLE AND THE MESSAGE OF HOPE/MERCY/REDEMPTION

While prophesying, Hosea showed the Israelites that in spite of their rebellious nature, God loved them and there was hope for them. He showed them this in the following ways;

God used Hosea's family tragedy to illustrate his covenant relationship with the people of Israel and how he loved the Israelites.

Hosea shows how God went through his marriage with Gomer, choosing her out of many women in Israel illustrates how God loved the Israelites by choosing them out of the many nations

Hosea portrays God as the loving father who shows care to his children and that's why he liberated the Israelites from Egypt.

He referred to the Israelites as "my" to refer to the personal choice of Israel among all nations. Hosea 11:10

God shows that He will never destroy Israel again when Israel has had her exile experience she would return to God.

Hosea portrays God as a loving husband in spite of his wife's unfaithfulness continues to show love to her just as God continued to care for the sinful Israelites hence a message of hope.

The symbolic names of Hosea's children were intended to show Israel's guilt so that she could turn back to God.

The change of names for example **Jezreel** which meant judgment to **prosperity** meaning God's love would bring prosperity pointed to the time of redemption.

"**Not loved**" was changed to "**loved**" meaning that God loved the Israelites and freed them from evil i.e. out of love he was ready to redeem them.

"**Not my people**" was changed to "**my people**" meaning that God had restored the Israelites who were rejected hence a message of redemption.

God sending the prophet to talk to the Israelites and bring them back to God was a way to free them from evil and redeem them.

Hosea shows that in Days of restoration. There would be everlasting peace and prosperity which showed that God was ready to redeem the Israelites.

Hosea compared God's love to that of a parent who disciplines a child in the wrong because of the love has towards the child.

Hosea's reformative punishment to Gomer shows that in the same way the Israelites would suffer but they would be restored back to God hence a message of redemption.

Hosea uses his children to go and plead with their wicked mother a symbolism of the love of God to his people where God always sent prophets to talk to his people.

The symbolic buying of Gomer for 15 pieces of silver was a manifestation of love of God to his people; God was ready to do anything to redeem his people.

Despite Israel's rebellious nature God still loved them just like Hosea still loved the rebellious Gomer.

He refers to the Exodus period and portrays God as a loving father who cared and liberated the Israelites from exile where they were suffering.

The symbolic punishment of Gomer where she was stripped naked and sent to the desert was a manifestation of God's love for the Israelites. In the same way the people for Israel were taken to exile to make them kind and be used by God again.

God said that when Israel was a child, I the lord called him out of Egypt as my son. this shows that his love for the Israelites was strong and there God's judgment was redemptive.

HOSEA ACCUSATIONS TO THE PRIEST OF ISRAEL

Hosea accused/condemned the priests of Israel because of the evils they were committing which were as follows;

The priest of the time failed in their duties and could not acknowledge Yahweh. i.e. they forgot about the covenant obligation.

They violated the law regarding sacrifice in the book of Leviticus by fattening themselves on people's sacrifices and offerings.

The priests worshipped Baal and the gods of fertility i.e. they practiced syncretism and apostasy which was against monotheistic values of the nation.

They were immoral. Like other worshippers they took part in cultic and temple prostitution; they openly slept with temple prostitutes in the sanctuary of God.

The priests committed murder. They murdered and killed innocent people which were against the covenant laws.

They were unrepentant and instead condoned people to sin the more. The priests did nothing to stop the people from sinning and warn them of the impending punishment yet it was their duty.

The priests were unexamplary. They felt at ease as they spent the whole day drinking and staggering with wine hence deserved judgment.

Hosea conflicted with the priests because they were arrogant and proud. The priests were in most cases proud and arrogant and this made God's people to suffer.

They ignored the message of God and his teachings i.e. they did not respond to the call of the prophets.

The priests failed to guide the people to the covenant faith and teach them the ways of God. Instead of teaching people the covenant laws, they were worse than the pagans who did not know the covenant.

They never preached the truth. The priests preached to please the kings of the time by giving them only encouraging message.

Priests were greedy. They lived luxurious houses which they acquired after exploiting the poor.

Priests behaved like robbers. They were robbers who grabbed the sacrifices of the worshippers.

They practiced injustice in judging cases. They were corrupt and tried as much as possible to confuse the people that God would not punish them.

they stopped God's prophets from preaching God's message which was against God's expectations. E.g. Amaziah stopped Amos from preaching.

WHY HOSEA WAS AGAINST THE SACRIFICES OF THE ISRAELITES

They were offering unclean sacrifices. Some of the sacrifices were ritually unclean e.g. the animals were lame, blind and had defect.

They were offered by unclean people. Some of them were guilty of sins like murder, sex abuse, greed...

some of the sacrifices were treated with a lot of disrespect e.g. some priests ate God's chosen parts which was a sign of disrespect.

Some sacrifices were mere outward show. I.e. people sacrificed with an intention of showing off their wealth which displeased God.

Some sacrifices were insincere yet the Israelites were expected to sacrifice with a lot of sincerity.

Some sacrifices were offered by unrepentant people. The Israelites were expected to repent if their sins were to be forgiven after sacrificing to God.

Some people sacrificed yet their hearts were very far away from God therefore Hosea condemned their sacrifices.

Some sacrifices were for formality. In other words they were sacrificing because they wanted to fulfill the Law of Moses.

Some people who sacrificed were intentional sinners. They sacrificed hoping to be forgiven by God and later they committed the same sin.

They sacrificed to God when they lacked faith yet God was interested in people's faith other than their sacrifices.

People sacrificed with a double mind. They sacrificed to God and at the same time they felt like withdrawing the sacrifices yet they were expected to sacrifice to God whole heartedly.

Some people offered sacrifices to God at the same time they sacrificed to pagan gods.

Some sacrifices were grabbed from the poor especially by the rich. Therefore Hosea condemned sacrifices acquired through illegal ways.

NATURE OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF HOSEA

(Explanations in relation to the book of Hosea====shall be done in class)

Man is sinful

Man is unfaithful

Man is unrepentant

Man is forgetful

Man is greedy and never contented.

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Man is dishonest

Man is faithful

Man is patient

NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF HOSEA

God is the source of providence

God is forgiving

God is a punishing God

God is loving

God is jealousy

God is faithful

Go is the source of protection.

God is a spirit by nature

God is merciful

He is Almighty

COMPARISON BETWEEN HOSEA`S MARRIAGE AND A.T.S MARRIAGE

SIMILARITIES

Both love was a key component e.g. Hosea had too much love for his wife despite her unfaithfulness and also in ATS there was love in the marriage.

In both permanence was emphasized e.g. Hosea loved Gomer despite her unfaithfulness and also in ATS partners were meant to love their partners permanently without divorce.

In ATS, the choice of marriage partners was done by elders likewise in Hosea`s marriage, the choice was done by God who was his superior.

In ATS, sex misuse was condemned and punishable. The main aim of the punishment was to stop evil likewise, Hosea condemned the unfaithfulness of his wife and he punished her with the intention of stopping her unfaithfulness.

In both cases, marriage was seen as a religious institution ordained by God. In Hosea`s case, marriage was ordained by Yahweh and in ATS marriage was ordained by super natural beings.

In both case, children were valued. In ATS they were considered to be a blessing and people used to produce many children because of their importance and also Hosea had children who were considered to be blessing from God.

The husband is regarded as the head of the family. In ATS it was clearly emphasized as it is seen in Hosea`s case, he was the head of the family.

In ATS, the approval of marriage partners was done by senior members of the family. Likewise in Hosea`s case, choice was approved by God because he is the one who instructed Hose to go And marry Gomer.

DIFFERENCES

ATS	HOSEA
Marriage was between two families	Marriage was between Gomer and Hosea
Women were subordinates to their husbands	There was equality in the marriage
Polygamy was practiced	Monogamy
Marriage was cemented by bride price	Bride price was never mention when Hosea was going to marry Gomer
Divorce was encouraged but allowed under certain/serious circumstances	Permanence is emphasized
Extra marital sex was allowed under certain circumstances like barrenness, impotence	He was faithful to his wife and was in position to wait for her.

PROPHET ISAIAH

THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah is divided into 3 parts/sections

Proto-Isaiah (first Isaiah); it covers **chapters 1-39**. It is said to have been written during the Eighth century. First Isaiah is referred to as Jerusalem because its concerns are centered in Jerusalem (Judah)

Deutro-Isaiah (Second Isaiah); it covers **chapters 40-55**. This book is addressed to the Israelites in Babylonian exile. This section is referred to as "the book of consolation" because it gives hope of deliverance to the suffering Israelites in exile. It was written around the 6th century

Trito-Isaiah (Third Isaiah); covers **chapters 56-66**. It was addressed to the Israelites in Judah who had returned home from the Babylonian exile.

Scholars agree that the book of Isaiah is a compilation of 3 works written by different times and from different prophetic schools rather belong to a particular individual.

The other writers admired or were inspired by the work and support of Prophet Isaiah and later they called themselves Isaiah's disciples. The name was therefore used to give authority to their work.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PROPHET ISAIAH (Not examinable)

Isaiah is a Hebrew name which means "Yahweh is salvation" or "Yahweh saves" Isaiah was called during the year King Uzziah died. It was a time when the king of Assyria was extending his conquest over all countries in the Middle East and Egypt.

Prophet Isaiah prophesied during the reign of 3 kings of Judah; Joram, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Isaiah was a states man. Being a member of the aristocratic class helped him to talk and influence the aristocratic class and kings of Judah. He was conversant with the political situation of Judah and the international politics of the time. He therefore played a significant role in the politics of the time.

Prophet Isaiah was a married man. His wife was a prophetess. He had two children whom were given symbolic names.

The prophetic ministry of Isaiah was centered in the city of Jerusalem, although he also operated in Israel and the neighboring states of Syria, Assyria, Babylon and Egypt.

He was a historian who had a wide knowledge of the history of the Israelites which was integrated in his teachings.

He was a teacher as well and welcomed as many followers/disciples as possible. These are believed to have compiled the sections of the book of Isaiah

He was a dedicated servant of God. He was committed to the cause of his call and did not mind much about the problems and hardships which would come as a result of his call. He was willing to suffer and serve as a suffering servant. He received his call from temple.

THE CALL OF ISAIAH (ISAIAH 6:1-13)

Isaiah's call to be a prophet came to him when he was in the temple.

God called him to a prophetic office when he was still a young man after the death of king Uzziah.

His call was in form of a vision where he was the lord seated on his throne exalted and his robe filled the whole temple. **Isaiah 6:1**

He was surrounded by a flaming creatures each had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings and its body with two and used the other two for flying. **Isaiah 6:2**

The creatures were calling out to each other "Holy, holy, holy! The almighty is holy~ His glory fills the word." **Isaiah 6:3**

The sound made the temple to shake to its foundation and the entire building was filled with smoke.. **Isaiah 6:4**

The vision opened Isaiah's eyes and saw the unholliness that existed among the Israelites. **Isaiah 6:5**

One of the heavenly beings brought him purification and forgiveness with a burning coal that had been taken with a pair of tongs from the altar. **Isaiah 6:6**

Isaiah's cleansing and forgiveness were immediately followed by his commissioning to go and speak for God to the sinful people amongst whom he lived.

The voice of the lord asked, "Whom shall I send?" who will be our messenger?" Isaiah answered, "I will go! Send me!" **Isaiah 6:8**

Then God gave him a message, "that people were not going to understand, no matter how much they listen they will not know what is happening," **Isaiah 6:9**

Then God ordered Isaiah to make the minds of the people dull, their ears deaf, and their eyes blind, so that they cannot see, or hear or understand. **Isaiah 6:10**

Isaiah asked, "How long will it be like this, lord?"

Then God answered, "Until the cities are ruined and empty, until the land its self is desolate waste. **6:11-12**

God told Isaiah that he would preach up to judgment where a few remnants would remain from which a new nation would come.

ISAIAH'S RESPONSE TO THE CALL

In his call, Isaiah realized his own sinful nature and that of the Israelites. **Isaiah 6:5**

He confessed his sins which were followed by cleansing **Isaiah 6:5-7**

Isaiah accepted God's task as a messenger when he was asked, "Who shall be our messenger?" I will go. Send me said Isaiah. **Isaiah 6:8**

During his call, Isaiah wondered for how long he was to preach to people who were hard i.e. Isaiah asked, how long will it be like this, Lord?" **Isaiah 6:11**

Isaiah went on and performed prophetic signs to show his message i.e. he went with his son Shear-Jashub. To give the message of God. **Isaiah 6:7**

He realized that there was no hope for him; he said, "There is no hope for me. I am doomed because my lip is sinful, and I live among people whose every word is sinful. **Isaiah 6:5**

He condoned the people of Judah and told them that they were going to be destroyed when he used a sign of quick loot, fast plunder **Isaiah 8**

Isaiah also prophesied words of hope to the people during his call when he used a sign of Immanuel. **Isaiah 7:10**

Isaiah went on and condemned the people of Judah for their sins and the city of Jerusalem.

He prophesied about the invasion that was going to run the people into exile.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ISAIAH'S VISION TO ISRAEL

the vision showed the Israelites a new beginning of God's people; stump of the oak tree that had been cut down pointed to that. **Isaiah 6:13**

the vision revealed God's holiness; this is seen when the winged creatures sang, "holy, holy, the almighty is holy."

The vision showed the universal nature of God. The winged creatures were calling out, "the almighty is holy, and his glory fills the world."

the vision also revealed God's omnipresence. The robe of Yahweh and the smoke that covered the whole temple pointed to that.

The vision helped Isaiah to see the lord and exalt him i.e. "I saw the lord" which showed the revelation of God. **Isaiah 6:1**

It showed the sinful nature of man; Isaiah was cleansed with a burning coal, "this has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone and your sins are forgiven". **Isaiah 6:7**

This showed that God is the creator. In Isaiah's vision Yahweh's revelation came to him in form of "winged creatures" that surrounded him which showed God as the creator.

God is omnipotent (powerful). This is showed when God manifested himself in form of smoke and winged creatures.

The vision showed that God can call any one irrespective of his status since he called Isaiah who was sinful.

The vision showed the Israelites the need to praise God for example the creature were sinning, "Holy, holy, holy and his glory fills the world.

the vision showed the Israelites God's glorious nature over nature as the way the creature filled the whole temple.

it showed the Israelites the significance of positive response to God's call just as Isaiah did and was to preach to the sinful people.

It showed the Israelites the importance of faith to Yahweh. Isaiah had faith in God which helped him realize his sinful nature.

helped to show God's justice and love towards the sinful people of Israel. This is seen when God sent Isaiah to go and preach to the sinful Israelites.

The vision helped Isaiah to repent off his sins which was followed by cleansing i.e. made him understand his sinful nature and the nature of the Israelites.

The vision signified the call for repentance by the Israelites in order to seek forgiveness.

the vision showed the Israelites that Isaiah was a true prophet like Moses and Amos received God's call in form of visions.

the vision was significant to Isaiah because it meant salvation to the people he was to preach since he was cleansed off his sinful nature i.e. he was to bring forgiveness to God's people who were blind to God's character.

It showed Isaiah the nature of his prophetic mission as challenging i.e. he was to make the minds of the people dull, their ears deaf, and their eyes blind, so that they cannot see, hear and understand.

LESSONS MODERN CHRISTIANS DRAW FROM ISAIAH'S CALL

Christians should respond to God's call positively and immediately just like Isaiah responded to God's call despite the hard task he was to face.

Christians should repent their sins so as to be forgiven for instance when Isaiah repented he was forgiven by God.

Christians should obey God's call because God calls any one regardless of the background

Christians should love God just as he loves them; before punishing his stubborn people he sent Isaiah to talk to them a sign of love.

Christians should be faithful however sinful the society may be for always God will identify a few faithful people.

Christians should accept to serve God without regard to their past just as Isaiah accepted to be God's messenger.

Christians should be able to acknowledge that they have sinned before God just as Isaiah accepted his guilt.

Christians should serve amidst difficulties just as Isaiah was to continue preaching despite the fact that the people's hearts would be hard.

Christians should be holy just as God is holy like the creatures were singing holy, holy, holy, holy...

Christians should always praise and worship God like the creatures were singing...

EVILS CONDEMNED BY PROPHET ISAIAH

There was hypocritical worshipping of the Israelites. Isaiah told them that their sacrifices, religious gathering and festivals and prayers meant nothing if their hearts remained evil

He condemned the oppression of the widows and orphans by the rich. They ignored their rights and grabbed their property.

He condemned theft that was common in Judah as the teachers had become thieves and others were friendly to the thieves.

There was a new development of materialism and exploitation in Judah. There was a group of the rich that added one house to another, field to field, but at the expense of others.

There was extravagant living of the rich. After exploiting the poor and orphans, the rich would enjoy themselves by making parties and feasting luxuriously coupled with excessive drinking and eating.

There existed drunkenness in Jerusalem. He condemned those in particular who got up very early in the morning to drink and spent their evening drinking.

He was bitter at the idolatry that was being practiced. They worshipped trees and planted sacred garden.

They abused wisdom. There were people who called evil good and vice-versa. They had turned darkness into light and light into darkness which Isaiah condemned.

He condemned the murder of the innocent people. At one time the city was filled with righteous men but now only murderers remained.

He condemned the pride and arrogance of the women of Jerusalem. They walked with their noses in the air, took little exaggerated steps and possessed decorated ankles.

He condemned syncretism and apostasy that was rampant in Israel. They had forgotten the worship of their God and believed in fortune tellers and consulted mediums instead of the true prophets of God.

Isaiah condemned the people who put their trust in material wealth, armies and the unholy alliances instead of trusting God. The rich believed in their wealth while the political leaders were putting their trust in their armies and political alliances.

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE OF JUDGEMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH

Isaiah prophesied that God would never listen to their empty prayers. their worship and unholy sacrifices would not be accepted by God because they lacked sincerity of their hearts and holiness.

Isaiah confirmed to them that their idols would be destroyed.

He said that there would be a great humiliation for the arrogant and rebellious people. That they would try to hide in holes to escape the anger but it would not be possible.

God was going to take away all the soldiers, judges, prophets and political leaders. **Isaiah 3:6-7**

To the woman of Jerusalem, God would take away whatever made them proud. Their heads would be shaved and left naked thus turning their beauty into shame.

The men of Judah would be killed in war and thus there would be scarcity of husbands. Seven women would grab one man and ask him to be their husband so as to be saved from the shame of being unmarried. **(4:1)**

Their land would be invaded by foreigners who would take them into exile and have their city of Jerusalem destroyed together with other cities.

To the proud who misused their wisdom by turning good into evil would be abandoned by God. Their gods would be left in the streets like rubbish **(5:25)**

The land of the rebellious people would become un-productive and its leaders would starve to death.

He said that the day of the lord will not be a day of victory but a day of destruction.

Isaiah said that God would send locusts to attack their gardens and this would result into severe famine.

The fire would be employed by God to destroy their city of Jerusalem.

That God would elect for them young and un-experienced people to govern them in their land.

THE SONG OF THE VINE YARD (ISAIAH 5:1FF)

The parable of the Vineyard, Isaiah shows how the owner of the vineyard provided a very fertile environment for it while aiming at high yields.

In the parable of the vine yard, the vine yard was the nation of Israel of the lord Almighty. **Isaiah 5:7**

According to the parable, the vines are the people of Judah whom God expected to do what was good.

The gardener or owner of the vineyard represented the lord the lord Almighty with people of Israel and Judah when he settled at a fertile land of Canaan.

The gardener dug the soil and cleared it out of stones which symbolically meant that God had cleared the land of Canaan and removed all obstacles that would hinder them from settling peacefully on the land.

The Gardner planted the finest vines which symbolize the election of Israel as a special nation among other people.

The owner of the Vine yard built a watch tower in the middle of the garden to which meant that God monitored all their activities in the new land.

The Gardener built a hedge and wall around the garden to prevent wild animals from trampling on the vines. This meant that God protected the Israelites against their enemies.

The gardener dug a pit for crashing the grapes meant a perfect Harvest; God expected the Israelites to do what was good since he had done lot to protect them.

The Gardener expected sweet grapes from the garden however the vineyard produced sour grapes. This symbolized that the Israelites disappointed God by turning to Baal worship and committed murder.

The owner on being disappointed had no alternative but only to remove the hedge (surrounding) broke down the wall that protected it. This meant God withdrew his protection from the Israelites.

The letting of the wild animals and allowing it to be over grown with weeds meant that the Israelites were now exposed to the Babylonians and Assyrians.

Just like the vine yard caused sorrow to the farmer by producing sour grapes, the Israelites caused sorrow to God by turning to Baal worship.

God turned had done everything to make Israel follow the covenant just as the farmer did to the vineyard to be fruitful but all was in vain.

The parable was a warning to the Israelites to desist from evil and to do good. He was prophesying the destruction that would befall them if they refused to turn to God.

It was intended to show the people of Judah that they were making a mistake to seek for protection and security from political alliances.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VINEYARD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It was a background in Jesus' teachings of the people's sins and the consequences. **Mark 12:1-12**

Jesus referred to a metaphor vine which meant New Israel. This metaphor is significant in the following ways;

It meant that Jesus is the true Israel of God.

According to the "Aim" the garden of the vine is God; therefore all believers belong to God as their father

This meant Jesus does the will of God; he is loyal and faithful to God.

In the gospels of **John 5:1-6**, Jesus referred to himself as a true vine who will produce vine grapes meaning that he is the source of eternal life to the believers.

It showed that the following would continue to have life if they continued to abide in him

It showed that the followers would continue to be persecuted and many would give up their faith as shown by pruning of branches.

It also showed that persecution would help the church to expand.

It meant that Jesus was the expected messiah when he said that he was the true vine who will give eternal life to the believers.

It showed that Jesus was true son of God. He acknowledged himself as a true vine and God his father as a gardener.

Jesus also wanted to show that whoever needs life can only get it from him; therefore those who do not have faith in Christ will not expect everlasting life.

It was pointing to the new covenant Jesus was going to make with his people through his blood which would be everlasting.

It showed that true faith in God means following Jesus Christ by obeying his commands.

It also pointed to God and Judaism whereby Christianity replaced Judaism.

It showed Jesus' relationship with the people and his disciples; the true vine would be the good actions of love, peace and faithfulness to which all the believers are encouraged to bear.

ISAIAH AND KING AHAZ (ISAIAH 7:8)

Ahaz was one of the wicked kings of Judah. During his reign, Judah faced a political crisis. At a time Assyria had become so powerful and was planning to conquer all the neighboring states in an effort to transform itself into an empire.

The threat from the armies of Assyria made the northern kingdom of Israel and Syria to make an alliance against Assyria. These two powers therefore asked Judah to join them in their struggle but Judah was unwilling to join their alliance.

This however annoyed the 2 powers who tried to use force to ensure that Judah joins their alliance.

Pekah the king of Israel and Rezin of Syria sent their armies into Judah to force Ahaz to join their alliance or else they replace him with another king who would be willing to join them in their

struggle. The invading army terrified Ahaz and his people that they trembled like trees shaking in wind. (Isaiah 7:2)

This was the crisis during which Isaiah was sent to Ahaz.

THE MESSAGE PROPHET ISAIAH DELIVERED TO KING AHAZ;

God told Isaiah to go with his son Shear Jashub and meet king Ahaz. Shear Jashub conveyed some message to the king and the people of Judah who were greatly worried.

It meant that the remnants shall return.

By going with shear-Jashub, God wanted to encourage Ahaz and his subject that even if their kingdom is overrun by Israel and Syria, not all people will go, some will stay behind.

Isaiah wanted to show that God would intervene and restore the kingdom of Judah

It was to imply that God would avail protection to his people of Judah. Therefore it was not necessary for him to join their alliance.

shear-Jashub pointed to God's love for his people. That even when they are attacked he will come in to defend them.

Prophet Isaiah told Ahaz not to be disturbed or intimidated by the invading army. he told him to remain calm and alert.

He prophesied the end of the speedy end of the threat from Syria and Israel. he encouraged the king of Judah to have trust in God.

Isaiah assured Ahaz that the plan of the invaders was not going to succeed because those two kings were weak and Israel would soon be shattered to survive as a nation.

Isaiah told Ahaz to endure with faith, "if your faith is not enduring you will not endure" Isaiah 7:9

as proof of Isaiah's prophecy, Ahaz was asked to ask for any sign from God which would serve as evidence that whatever Isaiah had said to king Ahaz would happen.

However, Ahaz refused on grounds that he cannot put God on the test. This indicated that Ahaz had already made up his mind to ally with Assyria against Israel and Syria.

Since he refused to ask a sign from God, the lord gave him the sign of Immanuel. A young woman from his house was to give birth to a baby boy who would be named Immanuel.

This meant that 'God is with us'. Thus the presence of God in the midst of the Israelites was assured and therefore Ahaz did not have to worry.

The name meant that God was a savior of those in problems

It showed that God is an ultimate protector of all sorts of people.

Isaiah told Ahaz that before the son is old enough to make his own decisions, the two kings that were worrying Ahaz would be deserted. Therefore Ahaz just had to believe in God.

however Ahaz refused to accept Isaiah's message and to have trust in God. He went ahead and made a treaty with the kingdom of Assyria and paid a tribute to Assyrian king Pileser Tiglath. 2Kings 16:7

Ahaz therefore sent silver and gold found in the house of the lord as a gift to king Pileser in order to secure political protection against Syria and Israel which threatened Judah

Because of this stand, God decided to punish him and the entire kingdom of Judah.

SYMBOLIC NAMES USED BY PRPHET ISAIAH

SHEAR-JASHUB (Isaiah 7:3)

It was on such issues of the King's disobedience that Isaiah gave a sign of the name of his son.

"shear-jashub" it meant that God was about to use a foreign nation Assyria to punish His people.

Shear-jashub is a symbolic name meaning "only the remnant shall return."

The presence of Isaiah's son as he spoke to the king was a prophetic sign carrying a message that king Ahaz should not fear as there was going to be a speedy(fast) end to the threat of Assyria.

The name meant that God was going to pass judgment to majority and then restoration to the remnants.

IMMANUEL (Isaiah 7:14)

Again, Isaiah provided another sign through a woman who would have a son by the name "Immanuel" meaning that God is with us which was an assurance of the disappearance of the enemies if Ahaz had faith.

The sign of "Immanuel" was also to remind Ahaz that before Yahweh all things are possible.

It showed that God was ready to protect the nation of Israel if Ahaz changed from apostasy, syncretism to monotheism.

MAHERSHAL AL HASH-BAZ (Isaiah 8:3)

It was a warning that Israel would be invaded by enemies who would destroy it, and that would be a shame to God's chosen nation.

It was a warning for the Israelites to change their un Godly acts and repent off their sins.

It was also a warning to the leaders of Israel that their reign would be overthrown by the enemies.

The name also meant that Damascus and Samaria would be looted and plundered by the king of Assyria. (Isaiah 8:4)

RELEVANCE OF SUCH SYMBOLIC NAMES TO CHRISTIANS

They should give their children Christian names like Emmanuel which means God is with us.

Christians should have faith and a strong inspiration in the lord God because these symbols were performed to increase Ahaz's faith in God.

Christians should acknowledge the presence of God just as the sign of "Immanuel" which means that God was with the Israelites.

Christians should listen to religious leaders because to leads to punishment like Ahaz led the Israelites be attacked by the Assyrians.

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They should humble themselves and respect God because during God`s punishment only remnants shall return.

They should depend on God instead of making foreign alliances unlike Ahaz who made foreign alliance.

Christians should realize God`s presence in times of despair and stress, God will always send his messengers to encourage believers just as God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz.

They should believe in God`s protections in all circumstances unlike king Ahaz who never believed in what prophet Isaiah was telling him up to the extent of shaking like leaves of the tree blown by winds.

Christians should perform signs and miracles to instill people`s faith just as Isaiah took his son to King Ahaz.

EVILS COMMITTED BY KING AHAZ OF JUDAH

The evils committed by King Ahaz led to a serious conflict between Isaiah and King Ahaz

He failed to follow the good example of his ancestor king David; instead he did what was not pleasing to the lord and followed the example of the kings of Israel **2kings 16:2**

Ahaz practiced human sacrifice and even sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering to idols. **2kings 16:3**

Ahaz offered sacrifices and burnt incense at the pagan places of worship, on the hills, and under every shady tree.

Ahaz trusted more in political alliances other than God. He sent a message to the Emperor of Assyria to come and rescue him from the king of Syria. **2kings 16:7**

Ahaz paid tribute to Assyria by plundering the temple and palace treasuries **2kings 16:8**

Ahaz had made foreign alliances with the pagan nations which was against the covenant laws **2kings 16:7**

Ahaz copied pagan practices for example he ordered Uriah to construct a temple in the exact model he had seen in Assyria. **2kings 16:14**

Ahaz moved the bronze altar dedicated to the lord which was between the new altar and the temple to the north side of his new altars.

Ahaz removed from the temple the platform for the royal throne and closed up the kings' private entrance to the temple in order to please the Assyrian emperor. **2kings 16:18**

He acted cowardly, terrified and trembled like trees being shaken by the wind when he heard that the Syrian Army was already in the territory despites Isaiah`s words of comfort. **Isaiah 7:2**

He led the whole Israel nation into paganism. for example he instructed Uriah to construct a temple similar to that of the Assyrians **2kings 11** and Uriah kept the bronze altar for divination **2kings 15**

He allowed foreign nations like Assyrians to enter Judah and dominate the decision making process in the country. **2kings 16:18**

Ahaz worshipped pagan gods like Baal which was against the covenant law and this made him conflict with prophet Isaiah **2kings 16:4**

Ahaz refused to ask for a sign when told by Isaiah that he can't put God to test. **Isaiah 7:12**

Ahaz never listened to the advice of prophet Isaiah.

LESSONS TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS TODAY

They should be exemplary to their subjects unlike Ahaz who never followed the good example of his ancestor David.

They should respect human life unlike King Ahaz who sacrificed his own son as burnt offering to idols.

They should worship only one God unlike Ahaz who worshipped Baal.

They sacrifice their lives to God unlike Ahaz who sacrificed and burnt incense to pagan places of worship and under every shady tree.

They should trust more in the almighty God who is powerful unlike Ahaz who trusted more in political alliances.

They should construct churches in Christian ways unlike Ahaz who built a temple in the exact model he had seen in Assyria.

they should listen to the advice of God`s messengers unlike Ahaz who never listened to prophet Isaiah.

They should respect worshipping places and use the church funds properly unlike Ahaz who plundered the temple and palace treasures.

they should promote and preserve the country`s independence unlike Ahaz who allowed foreign nations to dominate decision making in Judah.

They should stand firm and be courageous when faced with problems unlike Ahaz who trembled when he heard that the Assyrian army was already in the territory.

They should pray to God and ask for his guidance in case of problems unlike Ahaz who refused to ask for a sign when told by God.

they should be principled and stick to their good principles unlike Ahaz who removed the platform for the royal throne and closed up the king`s entrance to the temple in order to please the Assyrian Emperor.

KING HEZEKIAH AND PROPHET ISAIAH

The reign of Ahaz in 715 Bc. by the time the people of Judah had seen their brothers defeated by Assyria and finally exiled in 722bc. During the reign of Ahaz Judah remained under the Assyrian control but was invaded by the very Assyrian army and subjected to destruction after the fall of Israel.

Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz in 715 BC and his was contrary from that of his father. He spear headed a number of reforms which included the following;

He did what was pleasing in the sight of the lord by following the example of his ancestor David.
2kings 18:3

He destroyed the pagan places of worship which acted as a centre for the Canaanite worship, broke the stone pillars and cut down the images of goddess Asherah. **2kings 18:4**

He destroyed the pagan altars and all the idols of Molech and Ashetoroth which were put up by Ahaz.

He also broke the stone pillars of the pagan gods in the temple and cut down the poles of goddess Asherah.

Hezekiah as well broke into pieces the bronze image that Moses had made which was called Nehushtan. This ended the practice of burning sacrifices in honor of it by the Israelites. **2kings 18:4ff**

Hezekiah also trusted in the lord, the God of Israel; Judah never had another king like him, either before or after his time. **2kings 18:5**

He revived theocracy in Judah which had died away during the reign of Ahaz. he ruled and followed the concept of kingship and the covenant law/

Hezekiah revived Israel`s sincere and true worship of the lord therefore monotheism was promoted.

He fought and defeated the philistines and even raided their settlement from the smallest village to the largest city, including Gaza and its surrounding territory. **2kings 18:8**

he closely associated with and worked hand in hand with Yahweh`s priests and prophets. Prophets were allowed to start prophesying and priests resumed their duties.

He refused to make any political or religious foreign alliance with pagan nations of Assyria i.e. he cut off relations and demands of pagan kings of Assyria.

He trusted in the lord and often consulted and prayed to Yahweh in case there was danger and this is seen during the Assyrian thereat.

He renovated the temple and removed the pagan paints from the walls of the temple and painted them again.

He was faithful to the lord and never disobeyed him, but carefully kept all the covenant commands that the lord had given Moses. So the lord was with him, and he was successfully in everything he did **2kings 18.**

He centralized worship in Jerusalem such that all the Israelites in Judah had to worship, pray and offer sacrifices in only the Jerusalem temple in order to purify faith in Yahweh.

He rebelled against the emperor of Assyria and refused to submit to him. E.g. he stopped paying tribute and dismissed all the Assyrian officials.

He destroyed all the altars of Baal worship in Judah.

However, as Hezekiah's reign progressed, he abandoned his religious reforming zeal. He was tempted to join political alliances with the Babylonian ruler in order to bring down the Assyrian dominance which annoyed prophet Isaiah. He sent all the silver in the temple and in the temple treasury to the king of Assyria.

EFFECTS OF HEZEKIAH'S WEAKNESS ON JUDAH

Hezekiah's weakness led to Isaiah's confrontation of his reign; his alliance with pagan nation annoyed God who later sent Isaiah to pronounce evasion.

Israel was evaded and the people exiled in 722BC by the Assyrians. This was a result of people's sins and a warning to Judah.

The king of Assyria later attacked Judah as well and conquered the fortified cities and Hezekiah responded by sending an apology and demanded the end of the attack.

Hezekiah's weakness led to the raise of king Manasseh.

His weakness of paying to his allies left Jerusalem stripped off its wealth in an effort to survive.

Hezekiah's weakness led to defilement of God's altar with festivals and feasts from people who were not only proud, but also unfaithful and unrepentant.

His weaknesses increased people's sins, people claimed to know God but they were real hypocrites therefore the worship was for formality.

His weakness denied the people opportunity of having joy because he failed to guard them against apostasy.

WHY WAS JERUSALEM BESIEGED/CONQUERED DURING HEZEKIAH'S REIGN AND NOT AHAZ'S REIGN

Jerusalem was attacked during the reign of king Hezekiah and not during Ahaz's because of the following reasons;

it was according to God's plan. At Yahweh's command Isaiah prophesied that Babylon would conquer Judah and send her into exile

It was a fulfillment of what prophet Isaiah had prophesied to king Ahaz during his reign.

It was because Ahaz was more committed to defending Jerusalem and his people than Hezekiah i.e. Ahaz accepted to pay tribute to his enemies rather than being besieged.

Jerusalem was besieged during Hezekiah's reign and not Ahaz's because Ahaz related better with the enemies of Judah than Hezekiah who rebelled.

Hezekiah had a negative attitude towards Assyrians which won for him hatred and Assyrians later on besieged and invaded Judah.

Hezekiah's act annoyed God; he displayed his wealth before the pagan foreign visitors such as gold and silver to assure Babylonian forces of Judah's strength hence Isaiah was sent to pronounce invasion of the Babylonians. **2kings 20:12-19**

Hezekiah carried out religious reforms thereby destroying the symbol of paganism in Judah which annoyed the enemies hence being attacked during his time.

Hezekiah later allied with enemies that annoyed God, this brought conflict between Hezekiah and God's prophets and as a punishment Judah was besieged and invaded. **Isaiah 20:1ff.**

The religious reforms carried out by Hezekiah won him support of prophet Isaiah, something that angered his enemies unlike Ahaz refused to co-operate with prophet Isaiah and pleased the enemies and thus could not attack him.

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The alliance with foreign nations showed his lack of trust in God and God punished him by sending the Babylonians to invade his kingdom.

Hezekiah also later paid tribute to pagan nations moreover from the temple treasury which left Jerusalem stripped of its wealth.

THE SIGN OF A BARE FOOTED AND NAKED PROPHET (ISAIAH 20)

During the reign of Hezekiah, the lord told Isaiah to take off his sandals and the sack-cloth he was wearing. Isaiah obeyed and went around naked and barefooted for 3 years.

This was a sign of what would happen to Egypt and Ethiopia which powers the philistines and the Israelites were proud of.

The emperor of Assyria was going to capture some inhabitants of Egypt and Ethiopia and take them away in exile as prisoners of war.

They would be taken bare footed and naked with their buttocks exposed bringing shame on Egypt.

This was therefore a prophetic sign which pointed to the fact that Egypt and Ethiopia were about to face shame and humiliation at the hands of the Assyrians.

The sign intended to show the Israelites and philistines who strongly trusted in the security and protection of Egypt and Ethiopia that they would be disappointed.

The powers of Egypt would be disapproved and would not be able to protect themselves and thus be humiliated yet the Israelites had strongly relied on them.

The sign thus was calling upon the people of Judah to put their trust and faith in God instead of the political alliances. Political alliances cannot lead anything good but destruction and humiliation.

DEUTERO-ISAIAH'S MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE SUFFERING ISRAELITES IN EXILE ISAIAH 40:1FF

The prophet talks to the people in exile with the desire to comfort them and encourage the people of Jerusalem. **Isaiah 40:1-12**

Isaiah assured the exile that they had suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven. **Isaiah 40:2**

In **Isaiah 40:6**, a voice again cries out to the prophet to proclaim the message that the word of the lord endures forever and the people will not endure any more.

The prophet proclaimed the good news to Jerusalem and Judah and encouraged them not to be afraid because their God is coming. **Isaiah 40:9**.

He said that the lord will take care of his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs together and carry them in his arms,

Isaiah called upon the exiles to understand that the Babylonians gods were unhelping and worthless. **Isaiah 4:9-20**

Isaiah reminded the exiles to acknowledge and glorify Yahweh as a God above gods.

Isaiah portray God's universality by pointing out that Yahweh has commands and control over the whole world. **Isaiah 44:24**

Isaiah consoled the exiles that they were still God's chosen people. That is **Isaiah 41:8-10** says "the people I have chosen are the descendants of Abraham"

Isaiah consoled the captives that the Babylonians would be punished and will send an army against the Babylonians which will break down their gates and lead them into crimes. **Isaiah 43:14-15.**

Isaiah points out the future prosperity after exile. That God would give them soil fertility, plenty of wine and peaceful political atmosphere which was good news to the exiles.

Isaiah continued to console the exiles that they would rebuild their temple when they return to Judah.

He consoled the exiles in Babylon that God had promised a future messiah who would liberate the exiles from their problems which was good news to the exiles.

To Isaiah, God would comfort his people; he will have pity on his suffering people. **Isaiah 49:13**

Isaiah consoled the exiles by quoting God's answer, "can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you." **Isaiah 49:15**

Isaiah said that when time comes to save the Israelites, God will show them favor and answer their cries for help, guard and protect them and through them he would make a covenant with all people. **Isaiah 49:8**

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE ABOUT THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (ISAIAH 42:1-9)

Isaiah prophesied that the servant of the lord would be one who would be anointed by the lord himself and he will be pleaded with him.

He said that the servant of the lord would be guided by the lord in his mission.

Isaiah prophesied that the servant of lord would bring long lasting justice to all nations and therefore establish peace in all nations. **Isaiah 42:1**

The servant of the lord would not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches on the streets. **Isaiah 42:42:2**

The messiah would not lose hope or courage even when is persecuted or opposed. He would endure suffering and contempt in his ministry and would never give up.

Through the servant God would make a covenant with all the people in the world and this will reflect God as a universal God. **Isaiah 42:6**

The servant of the lord would bring light to those who are in blindness and darkness. He would open the eyes of the blind with the light of God and would set free those who are seated in darkness of the world. **Isaiah 42:6**

The lord's servant will have power given to him by God to see that justice is done on earth. **Isaiah 42:6**

The lord's servant would bring salvation not through the popular means of use of arms but through suffering for the majority.

The servant of the lord would eagerly be waited for in distant lands to hear his teachings. **Isaiah 42:4**

The lord`s servant would be a devoted one, who would do his will as he would be asked by God himself. He would not be like the kings of Israel who defied God`s instructions.

His mission would be a universal one because the law and light he intends to bring for mankind are universally given.

The lord`s servant would tell new things before they would begin to happen. **Isaiah 42:9**

HOW WAS THE PROPHECY FULFILLED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus healed the man blind in **Mark 8:22** thereby fulfilling the idea of the servant who would make the blind to see.

During the triumphant entry in Jerusalem, Jesus came in a humble way thus fulfilling the lord`s servant in **Isaiah 42** who will not shout and make loud speeches.

God was pleased with Jesus during his baptism, "you are my own dear son, Aim pleased with you" hence reflecting the messiah in Isaiah 42 whom God would be pleased with.

During baptism and death Jesus was filled with the power of the Holy spirit, hence reflecting the character of the lord`s servant in Isaiah 42 who would be filled with the Holy spirit.

Through Jesus' death, God made an everlasting covenant with mankind hence reflecting the servant in Isaiah 42 through whom God would make a covenant with his people.

In Isaiah 42, the messiah talked of would know things before they happen. This was reflected when Jesus predicted Peter`s denial, Judas Iscariot`s betrayal and his death and resurrection. **Mark 14:42**

The messiah would set people free and bring lasting justice on earth just as Jesus set people free from evil spirits e.g. the Demon possessed man, adulterous woman.

The servant of the lord in Isaiah would preach to even the distant lands just as Jesus preached to the Gentiles and all nations.

The servant of the lord would have power given to him by the lord. This was reflected when Jesus cleansed the temple.

However the lord`s servant;

Was gentle while Jesus used force during the cleansing of the temple therefore Jesus does not reflect the true characters of the servant in Isaiah.

The servant in Isaiah would not lose hope or courage but Jesus lost courage when he was in Gethsemane. **Mark 14:34**

ISAIAH'S TEACHING ABOUT THE THEME OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF GOD (ISAIAH 52:13-53:1-12)

Isaiah described the suffering servant of God in the following ways;

Isaiah shows that the servant of the lord will succeed in his task and will be highly honored and his success will depend on God`s powers. **Isaiah 52:13**

To Isaiah, many people were shocked when they saw the servant; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked Human. **Isaiah 52:14**

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To Isaiah, many nations will marvel at him, and kings will be speechless with amazement; they will see and understand something they never known.

to Isaiah it was the lord`s will that his servant grow like a plant taking root in the dry ground; to this he had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him. **Isaiah 53:2**

To Isaiah people despised him and rejected him but he endured suffering and pain; no one would even look at him. **Isaiah 53:3.**

The prophet shows that he endured suffering that would have been ours, the pain that we should have borne and all the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God. **Isaiah 53:5**

To Isaiah such a servant was beaten and wounded because of our sins and we are healed by the punishment he suffered. **Isaiah 53:5**

The prophet shows that the servant was treated harshly, but it humbly; he never said word like a lamb about to be slaughtered and a sheep about to be shared. **Isaiah 53:7**

According to Isaiah the servant was arrested, sentenced and led off to die but no one cared about his fate as he was put to death for the sins of the people. **Isaiah 53:8**

According to Isaiah, the servant was placed in a grave with the wicked; he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or even told a lie. **Isaiah 53:9**

according to Isaiah the suffering of the servant was God`s will and his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness and so he will see his descendants and live a long life, and through him God`s purpose will succeed. **Isaiah 53:10**

To Isaiah after a life of suffering the servant will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain. **Isaiah 53:11**

Isaiah points out that through the servant of God would make a new covenant and see that justice is made on earth.

To Isaiah the servant was going to be chosen among the descendants of Abraham and lineage David.

To Isaiah the servant would offer blessings not only to Israel but also other nations.

the servant is God`s devoted one, with whom he is pleased and will bear the punishment of many and for his sake God would forgive them. **Isaiah 53:11ff.**

God would give the servant a place of honor, a place among the great and powerful. **Isaiah 53:12**

The prophet shows that the servant willingly gave his life and shared the fate of the evil men. **Isaiah 53:12ff**

Isaiah shows that the servant took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven. **Isaiah 53:12ff.**

IMPORTANCE OF THEME TO THE EXILED ISRAEL

The words of Isaiah about the suffering servant comforted the suffering Jews and gave them hope for forgiveness of their sins.

It helped them to focus their attention on Yahweh`s servant who would liberate them from slavery through his suffering.

The words of Isaiah increased great liking amongst the exiles that, Yahweh is powerful and just and he cannot be compared to anyone.

To Isaiah, the servant of Yahweh would be people`s shepherd; through him Jerusalem would be revived as a sign of relief to the people of Yahweh.

It helped them to realize that if the Babylonians could boast of their god as powerful, how about them who new God from historical facts.

It changed the minds of the exiles towards a second exodus. That is, Isaiah affirmed God`s role as a creator and sustainer of life.

It helped the exiles to know their position in relation to Yahweh. The exiles realized that God could protect them in times of crisis because he was still faithful to his promises.

It helped the exiles to realize that they were suffering for their own cause and the prophet`s words enabled them to seek reconciliation.

It helped the exiles to remember that their history had been placed in the hands of God.

PROPHET JEREMIAH

Prophet Jeremiah was a son of Hilkiah who was a priest of Anothoth in the territory of Benjamin. He prophesied in the southern kingdom during the reign of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. His term of office started from around 626BC.

During his ministry, he warned God's people of the catastrophe that to fall upon the nation because of their idolatry and sin.

He lived to see this prediction come true with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction of the city and the temple and the exile to Babylonia of Judah's king and many of the people.

He also foretold the eventual return of the people from exile and the restoration of the nation.

Jeremiah was a sensitive man who deeply loved his people, and who hated to have to pronounce judgment upon them and on many instances, he spoke with deep emotion about the things he suffered because God had called him to be a prophet. The word of the lord was like fire in his heart which he couldn't keep back.

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH TO BE A PROPHET **Jeremiah 1:1-19.**

The lord told Jeremiah that, "he was chosen to be a prophet to all nations before he was given life and before he was born". **Jeremiah 1:4**

When Jeremiah heard God's call he replied that he was unable to begin because of his age and inability to speak. **Jeremiah 1:6**

God assured him protection and encouraged him that he will provide what he was going to talk. **Jeremiah 1:8**

Then the lord stretched out his hands and touched his lips and words in him to speak to all nations. **Jeremiah 1:9**

He gave him authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. **Jeremiah 1:10**

Jeremiah was called to pronounce God's judgment over his people. That is he was constructive and destructive to the Israelites because of their wickedness.

His task was going to be challenging and he would be persecuted, they would fight against him and conflict with kings and the people.

Jeremiah's call was accompanied by two visions; "the lord asked what do you see?" A branch of an Almond tree, he answered. **Jeremiah 1:11**

This vision was intended to show that God was watching to see that his words come to fulfillment. **Jeremiah 1:12**

Then the lord asked, "What else do you see? Jeremiah answered a pot boiling in the north, and it is about to tip this way." **Jeremiah 1:13**

This showed that enemies from the north would come and destroy the people of Jerusalem. **Jeremiah 1:14**

Jerusalem was going to be destroyed because of people's sins for instance the people had offered sacrifices to other gods, and had made idols and worshipped them. **Jeremiah 1:16.**

Jeremiah was promised protection by God; that the kings of Judah, the officials, the priests, and the people will be against you but God was going to give him strength. **Jeremiah 1:18-19.**

EVILS OF THE ISRAELITES DURING THE TIME OF JEREMIAH

The Israelites were worshipping worthless idols and became worthless themselves. **Jeremiah 2:5**

The Israelites were guilty of sexual immorality especially adultery. God had done a lot for them and instead of appreciating the abused God by committing adultery. **Jeremiah 5:7**

The Israelites made alliances with foreign nations for example Egypt and Syria which was against the covenant way of life. **Jeremiah 2:17-18**

The people believed in deceitful words, we are safe! And continued doing evil. **Jeremiah 7:4**

Drunkardness and gluttony were the order of the day especially in Jerusalem during jeremiahs' time.

The leaders were rebellious and the priest were not seeking God's guidance. **Jeremiah 2:8**

They were ungrateful to God who brought them out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness but they continued to defile the land and God himself. **Jeremiah 2:6**

There was human sacrifice; the people of Judah built an altar called Topheth in the valley of Hinnom so that they can sacrifice their sons and daughters in the fire. **Jeremiah 7:30-31**

The poor were given unfair treatment in the courts of law and the law suits were used to serve the interests of the rich. **Jeremiah 7:5**

The people turned the temple into a hiding place for robbers **Jeremiah 7:11**

They worshipped natural objects on every hill and under every green tree with the hope of getting fertility. **Jeremiah 3:13**

There was murder and shedding of blood of innocent people i.e. their clothes were stained with blood of the poor and the innocent people.

There was offering sacrifices to Baal, and worshipped gods that they had never known before. **Jeremiah 7:9**

There were evil ways of acquiring wealth by the rich i.e. the rich acquired wealth through corruption and over charging the poor.

There was cultic prostitution at the altars by both the worshippers and the priest

There was the practice of syncretism i.e. pagan worship was mixed with the worship of Yahweh.

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN JUDAH BEFORE THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

THE ERA KING MANASSEH

Manasseh was son of Hezekiah king and he succeeded his father at the age of 12. He inherited the throne at such age and this made him an ineffective king who committed more evils than any other king of Judah.

The sins committed by King Manasseh include the following;

He revived the old Baal worship and brought to Judah the pagan Assyrian worship of the gods of the stars.

He built pagan altars in the temple of God where God's sacrifices were formerly made from. He also sacrificed his very son from this altar. 2Kings 21

He practiced divination and magic. He consulted mediums and fortune tellers which was against the covenant demands.

Manasseh placed the symbols of Asherah in God's temple. He irreligiously stirred up God's anger which forced him to punish the entire country. 2Kings 21:7

He influenced the people of Judah into apostasy and made the people adopt syncretism and pagan ways of life.

He paid a deaf ear to the messages and warning from God's prophets. He was therefore committed to sin.

Manasseh shed innocent blood of very many people especially those who protested against his Canaanite influenced life. Blood is said to have flowed on all the streets of Jerusalem. 2Kings 21:16

He deliberately replaced God's worship with that of pagan gods. He lost confidence in God and believed that by worshipping the pagan gods, he would be relieved of the problem in his kingdom.

KING JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS 2KINGS 22, 23)

Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon who ruled for two years. He was assassinated by his official and they made his son Josiah king of Judah

Josiah ordered the repairing of the temple which had been ignored for so long and this made it fit for proper worship. 2Kings 22:1

He made a covenant with God to obey him and to abide by the terms of the covenant with all his heart and soul. 2Kings 23:4

He ordered Hilkiah and his assistant, priest to bring out of the temple all the objects used in the worship of Baal, goddess Asherah and stars. He burnt all those objects outside the city.

He removed from office the priests that the kings of Judah had ordained to offer sacrifices on the pagan altars in the city of Judah.

He removed from the temple the symbol of the goddess Asherah, took it out of the city to the valley of the kindron and burnt it.

Josiah fought against prostitution in Judah by destroying the living Quarters in the temple occupied by the temple prostitutes.

He tore down the altars dedicated to the goat demons near the gate built by Joshua the city governor.

He refused the false priests to serve in the temple but allowed them to eat the unleavened bread provide for their fellow priests.

Josiah stopped the inhuman pagan practices especially that of child sacrifice by destroying Topheth, the pagan place of worship in the valley of Hinnom.

Josiah removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the worship of the sun, and he burnt the chariots used in this worship.

He destroyed the altars which the kings of Judah had built and also tore down the altars put up by King Manasseh in the two courtyards of the temple.

Josiah destroyed all the stars that King Solomon had built east of Jerusalem south of mountain olive for the worship of disgusting idols and Astarte and the goddess of Sidon.

King Josiah broke the store pillars to pieces and cut down the symbols of the goddess Asherah

Josiah tore down the place of worship in bethel which had been built by king jeroboam son of nebat, who ked Israel into sin.

He removed from the tombs bones and burnt them on the altar in order to desecrate the altars that had been used for worshipping other gods.

He killed all the pagan priests on the altars where they served. And he burnt human bones on every altar

King Josiah ordered the people to celebrate the Passover in honor of the lord their God as written I the book of the covenant.

He removed from Jerusalem and the rest of Judah all mediums and fortune tellers and all the house hold gods, idols and all other objects of worship.

THE EXTENT AT WHICH THESE REFORMS CORRECTED THE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ISRAEL

To a greater extent Josiah`s reforms were effective in correcting the religious life of the Israelites;

Josiah`s reforms reduced pagan influence as he cleansed the temple off foreign influences by destroying all what was used in pagan worship.

His reforms created a conducive atmosphere for worshipping of God; this seen when he started by renovating the temple of God.

Josiah`s reforms revived the Israelites culture; he declared compulsory celebration of the Passover which people had forgotten.

The reforms helped the people to observe the law; he ordered his chiefs, officials and all the people to obey and follow the law in order to stop exploitation of the people.

His reforms abolished all diviners, mediums and magicians of Israel; he put to death and chased away whoever got involved in such evils.

They reduced temple prostitution; he destroyed the living quarters in the temple that were occupied by the temple prostitutes.

However Josiah's reforms did not change the religious life of the Israelites in that;

His reform resulted into insincere repentance of the people; the Israelites who repented continued sinning yet they claimed to have stopped doing evil.

They led to false confidence in the temple; the people sinned and hid in the temple with belief that they were safe from God's judgment.

The Israelites continued with Baal worship; they destroyed outward form of religion but continued with the worship of Baal.

They increased external religious formalism i.e. the people attended temple worship, offered sacrifices and fasted but with lies commitment.

His reforms led to decline in nationalism; the Israelites relaxed because they looked at God as their savior instead of fighting for their nation.

THE TEMPLE SERMON (JEREMIAH 7:1-15)

During Jeremiah's time, the Jerusalem temple had lost its original purpose for which it was dedicated to God. It was used as a centre of obscenity and thus greatly abused; many worshippers were using it the way they wanted.

It was against such background that Jeremiah had to give a prophecy concerning the temple.

Jeremiah told the people to change their way of life if they wanted to continue living in Jerusalem. All worshippers were sinful.

He prophesied against the misunderstanding the Israelites had over the temple. They believed in deceitful words, we are safe, we are safe. They were secure that could not destroy the temple and the city.

Jeremiah accused the people of the injustices, adultery, murder and telling lies and sacrificing to Baal. It was therefore meaningless for them to be in the temple.

Jeremiah denounced the mistreatment of the foreigners, orphans and widows as well as killing innocent people and thus their flocking to the temple would not help.

To Jeremiah, it looked like people were worshipping the building instead of worshipping God. He said that such is just annoying God.

Jeremiah expected all people to live to the true teaching of the covenant faith by living a sinless life, however what was in Judah was a disappointment.

Jeremiah added that the temple of God was used as a dwelling place for robbers and all sorts of sinners. This shocked the people who had expected good message from the prophet.

Jeremiah prophesied that if God's temple continues to be used in such a manner, then the temple would surely be destroyed as God did at Shiloh. This was blasphemy to the people.

Jeremiah added that God's call upon the people to go back to him, most of them deliberately refused to change and therefore God would punish them.

He said that people's sins and unwillingness to turn back to God would bring them God's judgment.. He foretold that they would be killed and some be exiled.

Jeremiah therefore called upon the people of Judah to put God's temple to its rightful use and to have a reflection to the teaching of the law.

He added that their burnt sacrifices meant absolutely nothing to God. Therefore the people had to take Jeremiah's message in order to be relieved from suffering.

CONSEQUENCES OF JEREMIAH'S PREACHING AT THE TEMPLE (JEREMIAH 26:7-16)

The temple summon however put Jeremiah in a very bad situation especially before the temple officials, politicians and the majority of the people in Jerusalem. He was considered as a traitor with their enemies to see the down fall of Judah.

Jeremiah was arrested immediately after his speech by the worshippers who were in the temple.

Jeremiah was accused of blasphemy i.e. speaking and acting against the name of God in what he had said about the destruction of the temple.

Jeremiah was tried and sentenced to death by the priests and prophets who were working in the temple. This was because he had spoken evil against their city. However, he was not killed because of Ahikam's support. (Jeremiah 26:24)

Jeremiah was referred to as a trouble maker within in Israel religious setting.

It led to the death of Uriah from Kiriath Jearim who had also spoken in the name of God about the destruction of the city and Judah. He was killed because for him he failed to defend himself like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:20-21)

He earned great enmity from the people of Jerusalem but was only supported by a few sons of the priest.

He was stopped from preaching in the temple for he was branded as a confuser.

It generated a conflict between him and priest purshur the temple priest.

Purshur's name changed to "terror everywhere"

Jeremiah was beaten and placed in chains near the Benjamin gate in the temple

Jeremiah was lowered in the pit.

The city of Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians under their leader Nebuchadnezzar.

The temple of Jerusalem which was highly treasured was also destroyed. Jeremiah 52:12

The people of Judah were exiled to Babylonia where they spent quite a long period of time.

PRIEST PURSHUR AND PROPHET JEREMIAH

The conflict between Jeremiah and pashhur the chief priest of the temple originated from the message which God passed over to Jeremiah instructing him to buy a broken jar. He was to go with the elders and old priest to Hinnom. From where he was given the message which he present from the courtyard of the temple. This message was a direct attack to the priest.

Jeremiah conflicted with purshur because of the following;

He prophesied about the destruction of the nation of Israel as a result of people`s sin which purshur knew was protected by God.

Jeremiah changed the name of the valley of Topheth to the "valley of slaughter".

Jeremiah had pronounced disaster on Israel in that everyone who hears about it will be stunned because of offering sacrifices to gods.

Jeremiah pronounced that the priest would be the first to be judged including pashhur which annoyed him and thus conflicted with the prophet.

Jeremiah condemned pashhur for condoning evils among the priests and worshippers in the temple which angered pashhur.

Jeremiah condemned the Israelites for defiling God`s temple yet to pashhur the temple had not been defiled hence conflicting.

Jeremiah had pronounced judgment to pashhur and his family by saying that they will be captured and taken off to Babylonian exile.

He openly pronounced the evils and weaknesses of the priest and rated them as the most evil people in Judah. This annoyed pashhur and thus creating enmity.

Jeremiah`s prophecy was a shock to the people plus the priest who thought that they are divine and cannot be conquered by gentiles.

Jeremiah`s temple summon had played a big role in causing conflict in which he prophesied that the temple was going to be destroyed which annoyed pashhur.

Pashhur criticized Jeremiah for having preached in the court of the lord`s house without his consent which annoyed him.

Pashhur struck the prophet with the aim of humiliating him which intensified the conflict between the two.

Pashhur chained Jeremiah and placed him near the upper Benjamin`s gate in the temple which annoyed him thus conflicting.

Jeremiah had named pashhur "terror everywhere" which annoyed him hence conflicting. This signified what would happen to Jerusalem and pashhur himself; they would face terror from the Babylonians.

Since pashhur was a priest Jeremiah's condemnation was an indirect attack on pashhur himself for his irresponsibility which annoyed him.

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE ABOUT THE PROPHETS OF JUDAH (JEREMIAH 23:9FF)

Jeremiah was concerned with the issue of the true and false prophets during the time in Judah. He criticized the nature of prophet hood in Judah which was full of satanic influence

The prophets were wicked and failed to utilize their power. Many of them were godless and had no personal knowledge about God.

They were found of doing evil in God's temple i.e. they were guilty of bribery, theft, denial of justice to the poor...

Their actions and behaviors were not co-relating with the demands of Yahweh. They lived their own life style which made no impact to the people of Judah and thus God was ready to punish them.

The prophets worshipped Baal and they let people go away from God.

The prophets of Jerusalem were found of committing adultery and telling lies. They connived with people to sin against God.

They were ill-informing God's people about what God wants. They never passed on what God wanted them to deliver to his people but imagined their own wishes.

Most of them were self appointed but not sent by God to speak for him and wherever they went, they talked in God's name.

They always claimed falsely that God had given them revelation in dreams and thus they told lies to the people which developed false hope among the people of Judah.

They were accused of accepting payments of their oracles so that they can be bought and used the soothing language to the people who went to the by speaking words of peace and comfort instead of challenging them.

JEREMIAH AS A SUFFERING PROPHET

It was a common practice that most of the canonical prophets in Israel faced stiff opposition from the public and this often culminated into beating, imprisonment, abuses, and sometimes death of these prophets.

This was because most of their oracles were found less appealing to most people. They were characterized with impending doom, destruction, famine, foreign attacks, diseases and conquest by the Babylonians.

Such exposed the prophets of God to all sorts of torture by either the politicians or influential religious leaders.

He is referred to as a weeping/suffering prophet because of the suffering that he experienced during his ministry;

After the sermon where he pronounced judgment to his people for failing to obey God's commands, he met opposition from the Israelites.

Having told the people their sins which ere contrary to their expectations he was hated and regarded as a traitor

He was arrested, beaten, tied and was locked up in the prison near the upper Benjamin gate due to the misunderstanding between him and pashhur. Jeremiah 20, 26).

Priest pashhur ordered Jeremiah to be beaten and killed after the broken jar incident.

After wearing the wooden ox-yoke and an iron one to demonstrate suffering/impending danger which was to fall on the Israelites from the Babylonians, he was humiliated by Hannaniah the false prophet by destroying the wooden yoke. (**Jeremiah 27:1-7, 28:12**)

Jeremiah was hurt by the priests behavior and prophets who were sinful and misled by God`s people.

He was denied attend feasts and burial ceremonies which depicted him as a man who was anti-social which brought misery to him.

The people also conspired not attend his sermons and therefore wasted his time because he was preaching to less bothered people **Jeremiah 18:18**

Jeremiah felt pain when wicked people were prospering while God punished the righteous ones and were suffering.

He was forced to pass on the message of judgment to Judah despite the kind of love and attachment he had for them. Against his will Jeremiah was forced to prophecy whatever God gave him.

King Jehoiakim burnt all prophecies/scrolls written by Jeremiah through his secretary Baruch for people to read. **Jeremiah 36:23ff**

God stopped Jeremiah from marrying which became a source of him being looked down which was not his opinion which deprived him of a family **Jeremiah 16**

Jeremiah was stopped from preaching to the people in the temple and yet he had the lord`s message to pass onto the people.

Jeremiah was instructed by God to put on linen shorts and was told not to put them on when in water which subjected him pain during this period. **Jeremiah 13**

He was lowered into a deep pit because of advising King Zedekiah to surrender, because of his advice he made to be treated as a traitor.

He experienced increased heart beating for fear of the forth coming disaster to Judah. He was worried because his people were not bothered about that fate.

Jeremiah was stoned to death when he was preaching the sermon of hope and restoration to his fellow exiles.

JEREMIAH AS A PROPHET OF DOOM/JUDGMENT

During the call, God gave him authority over nations to destroy and over throw. This meant Jeremiah would pronounce judgment of God on nations because of their wickedness.

The vision of the almond tree which was bare and mature meant that God watching to see the fulfillment of his judgment and destruction.

The vision of the boiling point signified the danger and destruction that would come from the north-Babylon as an instrument to punish Judah because of her sins.

The lord instructed Jeremiah not to marry because something bad was going to happen to the children born in that land. There would be great destruction and there will be nobody to mourn and bury the dead bodies. **Jeremiah 16**

Jeremiah's visit to the potters home showed that God would punish Israel and remold them. They were going to be smashed out and made into another vessel just like the potter did. Jeremiah 18

Jeremiah's temple sermon contained message of doom. That's the temple worshippers and Jerusalem would be destroyed due to people's sins **Jeremiah 7.**

Jeremiah's act of breaking a clay jar publically pointed to God's punishment that would send them to exile because people had offered sacrifices to idols. The people of Judah were going to be smashed to pieces when judgment comes. **Jeremiah 19**

The act of Jeremiah wearing an ox-yoke signified the siege of Jerusalem and Judah by the Babylonians. **Jeremiah 27**

Jeremiah describes the great man of Judah as running away to hide in forests and on hills which showed the coming judgment.

When King Zedekiah sent some priests to inquire about the fate of Jerusalem, Jeremiah told him that it will be destroyed and the only way was to surrender.

When the village mates plotted against Jeremiah, he prayed that they be destroyed and he was answered by starving them to death. **Jeremiah 11:18-23**

Jerusalem described as a prostitute who dresses very well forgetting that she had already been abandoned showed Jeremiah's message of doom.

Jeremiah's vision of the basket full of bad fruits signified that those who remained in Judah will be destroyed because of the insincere repentance **Jeremiah 24:2**

God challenged the people of Judah to look for one honest person so that the nation may be forgiven. But Jeremiah discovered that all people were wicked and had to face destruction.

The symbolic sign of repossessing the linen belt which he found damaged. This indicated God's judgment towards sinful Judah.

As a message of doom, Jeremiah said that on the day of destruction, Jerusalem will cry like a woman in her labor pains, she will call for help but no one will rescue her.

He experienced increased heart beating for fear of the forth coming disaster to Judah. He was worried because his people were not bothered about that fate.

He changed pashhur's name to terror to mean that a catastrophe would befall on Judah in which many people would be killed by their enemies.

Without fear, Jeremiah prophesied that Hannaniah the false prophet would be killed for misleading the people.

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE OF HOPE/RESTORATION

Despite Jeremiah's message of doom, he however added that time will come when they will be liberated by God in the following;

He called upon the people to endure the trials and suffering because there is hope for the better. He compared it to a woman in labor pains but with hope that any time will cease when the child is born.

Jeremiah prophesied a day when the kingdom would be reunited and will again become united.

As a prophet of hope Jeremiah purchased a piece of land which signified that Judah would be restored again. **Jeremiah 32:6**

As a prophet of hope Jeremiah prophesied that after exile God was going to re-establish the Davidic dynasty from which a powerful king would come and rule the kingdom.

Jeremiah also said that Israel would be his own people and God would be their God which implied that a theocratic nation would be established.

As a prophet of hope Jeremiah said that there would be a remnant despite national calamity that would live many dead and others exiled.

As a message of hope, Jeremiah promised that God would make a new covenant with Israel and Judah which will establish strong relation with their God. **Jeremiah 32:40**

As a prophet of hope, he uses the vision of a basket of good fruits symbolizing that the exiles would be restored; God would have mercy on them and protect them. **Jeremiah 24:2**

The visit to the potter's house depicted a message of hope. That is God was ready to shape the Israelites into perfection just as the potter remolded the clay to the vessel he wanted **Jeremiah 18:1-12**

As a prophet of hope Jeremiah uses a proverb to show that in the coming new age there will be individual responsibility of sin and not corporate sin and guilty. I.e. everyone will be responsible for his sins.

He said that, "God would provide guidance and demonstrate love to his people as it was in Egypt. That is a new exodus will take place.

Jeremiah's letter to the exiles gave them hope that the exile is not forever but a means of reforming so as to have proper relationship with their God after repenting.

As a prophet of hope, Jeremiah said that "the restored people were to rebuild their city that was destroyed in 586BC".

In Jeremiah 33:6, God promised to give good health, healing, peace and security to his people.

As a prophet of hope, Jeremiah promised the exiles that they will never be enslaved by foreigners any more.

As a man of hope, he compiled his prophecies through Baruch, such that those who get a chance of reading them would repent and get saved from the impending calamity.

He called upon people during his temple sermon to cleanse themselves and seek for forgiveness from God in order to be saved from the calamity.

Jeremiah promised the people of Judah that God would revenge against their oppressors and enemies. They would be oppressed and taken as prisoners.

He said that God would make a new covenant with his people, whose laws would be written on the hearts of the people. God would forgive all his people of their sins and they would know him.

JEREMIAH'S TEACHINGS IN CHAPTERS 29-33 ABOUT THE REMNANTS

(Message of hope as outlined in Jeremiah 29-33)

Jeremiah wrote a letter to the priests, the leaders, and to all the others whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylonia.

Jeremiah says that God's people would be liberated from slavery. In **Jeremiah 30:8-11**, it is noted that God's people received consolation as they realized that God was going to be liberated.

The prophet said that through all endurance they would be free like a mother endures labor pains hopefully that after delivering the pain would cease. **Jeremiah 30:4-7**

The Israelites were consoled when Jeremiah told them that their oppressors would be punished and that the Israelites would be restored to their land.

As a prophet of hope he said that the remnants would be restored to their home land to worship God again.

Jeremiah said that God would send his people a king from the line of David to restore the fortunes of Israel after exile. This would be appointed by God himself and the restored people would live in peace and justice during his reign. **Jeremiah 33:15**

Jeremiah prophesied individual responsibility of sin. According to Jeremiah's prophecies no longer the whole nation will suffer for the sins but every individual will be responsible for their own sins.

Jeremiah said that the only city of the land would be rebuilt and the exiled people of God will come back and fill their land.

The remnants will be God's people and God will show them his mercy, love and commitment.

Jeremiah prophesied restoration of health, land, property, ideal king and God's fellowship.

Jeremiah said that, exile was God's instrument of judgment i.e. they were there because of their sins and that the lord will heal them and make them free men. **Jeremiah 30:12-17**. he also advised the Israelites to pray for their captors for they would be helped by the prosperity of the country.

Jeremiah said that exile was not to be the end of Israel's religious strength, God was still in charge.

The lord promises to maintain his covenant made with David and the priests by increasing the number of descendants of David and the number of priests from the tribe of Levi. **Jeremiah 33:32**

Exile was only being used by God to bring his people into total repentance.

After exile, there was great hope, renewal and restoration i.e. the remnants would return in great joy and happiness and forget all their past sufferings. **Jeremiah 31:1-4**

The visit of the potter indicated that there is hope for Jerusalem. It meant that Israel will be sent into exile and molded into a nation which God wanted but this will come only if they stopped rebelling.

The symbolic buying back of the field by Jeremiah during the troubled days of Judah indicated that the people will come back from exile and possess their land. **Jeremiah 32:1**

In **Jeremiah 31-43** Yahweh said, "I will be their God and they will be my people..., I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs".

Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant. In **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, the prophet stresses that a time is coming when God will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah hence a message of consolation.

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God promised to be there and attend to his people every time they call upon him and pray to him he will listen. **Jeremiah 33:3**

God promises to make Judah and Israel prosperous again and will rebuild them as they were before, purify them from their sins that they had committed and will forgive their sins and their rebellion. **Jeremiah 33:7-8**

God promised the exiles that he will heal the city and its people and restore them to health and show them abundant peace and security. **Jeremiah 33:6**

Jeremiah says that Jerusalem will be a source of joy, honor, and pride and every nation in the world will fear and tremble when they hear about the good things and prosperity that God would bring to the city. **Jeremiah 33:9**

People would receive God's love; they will sing and rejoice on their return with shouts of gladness and joy and the happy sounds of wedding feasts. **Jeremiah 33:11.**

Jeremiah consoled the Israelites by saying that after their return God would give guidelines to his people and give them a new exodus.

The lord said that time is coming when I will fulfill the promise that I made to the people of Israel and Judah. **Jeremiah 33:14**

That God would make a new covenant with the day and the night, so that they always come at their proper times; and the covenant can never be broken. **Jeremiah 33:19**

As a message of hope, God said that is going to gather the people from all the countries where he had scattered them in anger and fury, and is going to bring them back to their place and let them live in safety. **Jeremiah 32:37**

God would give the remnants the ability to obey him and remain faithful to him.

The lord said, "In this land that is like a desert and where no people or animals live, there will once again be pastures where shepherds can take their sheep and they will once again count their sheep. **Jeremiah 33:12.**

JEREMIAH'S TEACHING ABOUT THE OLD COVENANT (JERE 11)

Like other prophets before him, Jeremiah was called to defend the covenant faith. All his prophetic activities and words before exile rotated around the covenant demands.

He taught the following about the Sinaic covenant. (Contents of the old covenant)

It was between God and Israel's ancestors. Jeremiah understood the covenant as a binding agreement made between Yahweh and the Israelites' ancestors at Mount Sinai after the liberation for Egypt.

It was made to show that the Israelites were God's elects. God planted the people of Judah and Israel and they become his beloved nation/vineyard.

It was a conditional covenant. They were given laws that they had to obey, God would continue showing them mercy and protection if they remained obedient.

It was characterized by the confirmation of the earlier made promises. By the Sinaic covenant, the land of Canaan was assured to the Israelites the land flowing with milk and honey.

The covenant defined what was right and wrong. It therefore specified the rewards and blessings given to a righteous person and so the punishments to a disobedient person.

The old covenant had promoted a wrong notion that external religious observance (religious formalism) was right for Yahweh. People frequented the temple, fasted and offered sacrifices, but all this was empty and insincere worshipping.

The people ignored God`s warnings, being a God of love, Yahweh had sent them signs that He was not happy with their deeds but the people did not take heed.

It was a broken covenant, the people of Judah had worshipped Baal and other gods and there existed many gods and Baal altars in the towns of Judah and streets of Jerusalem.

Due to their persistent breach of the covenant, Yahweh was going to bring total destruction to his people of Judah.

God was no longer going to answer people`s prayers under the prevailing circumstances and the false gods would not help them.

God instructed Jeremiah not to plead for such people who were stubborn. **Jeremiah 11:14**

JEREMIAH AND THE NEW COVENANT (JEREMIAH 31)

This message is contained in Jeremiah's message of consolation to the Israelites who were assured of the Babylonian capture of their city and country of Judah.

He prophesied that God would make a new covenant with his people and it had the following contents;

He prophesied that God would make a new covenant that would supersede the old Mosaic Law that had failed to put the people right with God.

In the old covenant there was corporate sin and guilt but in the new covenant there will be individual responsibility of sin.

The new covenant will bring hope. In this covenant Israel and Judah will be re-united and they will worship the only God on mount Zion.

The new covenant would be written on the hearts of the people, this was because the old covenant that guided by laws had failed.

The new covenant would be universal that is, even gentiles would be God`s people. It was intended for salvation of all mankind.

The new covenant will be from the least person to the greatest person irrespective of sex and external appearance.

In the new covenant the people`s response to the covenant will be absolute faith and obedience.

There will be a personal relationship between God and his people. That is, he will be their God and they will be his people.

In the new covenant each person will have his own encounter with God because personal faith cannot be taught as one can teach the law.

The covenant will bring about reconciliation and brotherhood unlike the old covenant which was characterized by revenge.

The new covenant will be based on sincere repentance and this will lead to individual reconciliation with God.

The covenant will not be made until Israel is restored to its land from the Babylonian exile.

In the new covenant there will be no need for priests and prophets because no one will teach the other to know God. It will be learnt by faith and obedience.

In the new covenant God will deal directly with each member of the society which means there are no mediators in the covenant

The covenant will be characterized by gentility and humility.

The covenant will change people's hearts and the whole community will remember monotheism.

In the new covenant one's commitment to God will be internal based on inner response of the individual through circumcision of the heart.

In the covenant, God's knowledge by an individual will be internal and automatic unlike the old covenant which based on sacrifices.

The new covenant will be a reflection of light, initiative and authority of God. That is, the covenant would be initiated by God.

The new covenant will be built in the greatest commandment of love. That is, they will be in position to show love to the community by loving one another.

In the new covenant there will be no need for written laws, the worship of God will be automatic since it would be written on individual hearts.

The new covenant will be an everlasting covenant. It will not be like the old covenant which was broken over and over again.

The old covenant was sealed with blood but the new covenant would be sealed with human blood.

The new covenant was fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ. He became the human being who sealed the covenant God initiated to bring man closer to him.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NEW COVENANT AND THE EARLIER/OLD COVENANT

OLD COVENANT(EARLIER COVENANTS)	NEW COVENANT
It prophesied the coming of the new covenant	It was everlasting
It emphasized community responsibility for sin	Emphasized individual responsibility for sin.
It was written down on stone tablets for people to read	It was written on people's hearts.

It was basically for the people of Israel	It was universal i.e. the new covenant will be for all people and nations even the gentiles.
It involved external signs like circumcision of the body	It was based on purity of the heart.
There was promise of holiness to the people	It promised forgiveness of sin. God will provide a way for reconciling sinful man to him.
It required sacrifices as a way to express commitment	It referred to Jesus as the final sacrifice.
It was compulsory to all people	It would be free choice and to only those who would be faithful and obedient to God's command.
God used mediators between Him and His people	God directly worked with his people.
It was broken over and over again	It would be permanent and could not be broken
There was community relationship between people and God	Personal relationship between the people and God.

Always use WHILE in all your paragraphs

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYMBOLS OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was ordered not to marry

Jeremiah was commanded by God not to marry as a sign to the people of the forthcoming punishment to befall on them with the following significance;

It intended to warn the Israelites about impending disaster that was about to befall the children born in Judah and God did not want Jeremiah's children to face the trouble.

There would be one to mourn for the dying children of Judah, so it was not necessary for Jeremiah to marry and have children

Children born in Judah were going to die of a terrible disease and calamity and would leave no one alive.

Many children would die in Judah and no one would be there bury them because everyone would be dying and others running.

Parents and children would be killed by an advancing enemy from Babylonia in a very brutal way.

Parents and children would die and many dead bodies would pile on the streets and later to become manure on the ground

The children would be slaughtered and those who would escape death would be dragged into exile to mark the end of family life in Jerusalem.

The sign signified that the people of Judah would be defeated by the Babylonians.

Not marrying showed that there would be no joy but only disaster.

[Type here]

He was to remain a celibate and not grieve for marriage, in the same way he was not supposed to mourn the dead because the future of Judah was to be like that.

Jeremiah was to stay away from burial ceremonies because deaths were to become deaths were to become so common and no one would get time to bury the other.

Those children of Judah and Jerusalem would be killed and their dead bodies would be food for wild birds and animals.

Jeremiah was not supposed to enter a house where there was feasting, eating and drinking because all people were sinners waiting for their punishment.

The children of Judah who would escape immediate death and exile would die of starvation when parents would almost turn to their own children for food.

Jeremiah at the potter`s house (Jeremiah 18:1-12)

God was the potter and clay were the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

As the clay was in the potter`s hand and so the people of Judah were in the hands of God.

As the potter molded the clay, he would find out that some items were not perfect and so he would change his mind about them and he re-shaped or destroyed them.

The potter would shape the clay into any object he wanted, in the same way, God would take the people of Judah in exile and re-shape them again.

In the potter`s hand, clay would not dictate its size to be made, thus the people of Judah had no option but to do what God wanted them to do.

The potter expected and wanted perfect objects thus God expected good, loyal and faithful people of Judah.

As the potter would mould the wet clay and get perfect objects, he would be happy. This is the way God would spare people who would turn to Him faithfully.

According to Jeremiah, God would reshape the people of Judah and Jerusalem and make them perfect because they were his people.

The purpose of this was to warn the people of Judah about the punishments that were approaching them so that they would change

Jeremiah and the broken jar (Jeremiah 19)

The sign represented Judah and all the people of Jerusalem while Jeremiah who was carrying it represented God.

He went with the elders, priests and ruling council to witness what would happen to the people of Judah in reference to the broken jar he was carrying.

Jeremiah bought the jar with his money which signified how God had bought the Jews from the wilderness in Egypt.

The elders who accompanied Jeremiah represented the arrogant leaders and the Jewish culture on which people were basing to defy God.

Jeremiah went to Hinnom where the city rubbish was always dumped, this showed that the people of Judah were like rubbish which needed to be burnt and destroyed.

This valley of Hinnom was later to be known as the valley of slaughter where all the plans of Judah and Jerusalem people would be frustrated by God.

When they reached Hinnom, Jeremiah smashed the jar and it indicted how the people of Judah would be smashed.

Jeremiah never had mercy while dropping the jar which he bought with his money. This signified that God would have no mercy upon His own people whom he brought out of Egypt.

The broken jar could not be put together again meaning that the nation of Judah would be destroyed beyond repair.

Jeremiah's witnesses who were the priests, elders and leaders were amazed with the total destruction of the jar. This meant that whoever would hear about the destruction of Judah would be astonished.

The jar did not resist Jeremiah's destruction, in the same way; the people of Judah would have no resistance against the Babylonian attack.

The broken jar symbolized the broken covenant relationship between God and his people.

The pieces of the jar were left in the valley of slaughter meaning that the people of Judah were to be left everywhere without burial.

Jeremiah named pashhur "terror everywhere" which symbolized the destruction and terror that would befall Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah offered wine to the Rachabite clan who were not allowed to take wine; this symbolized the unfaithfulness of the Israelites who did not stick to the covenant faith.

Jeremiah bought a field in Judah and this symbolized hope and restoration of the land of Judah.

The basket that had rotten figs symbolized that the people still in Jerusalem were going to be destroyed starved and faced with diseases. **Jeremiah 24:9**

The basket that had ripened and good figs symbolized how God would treat the exiles with kindness, watch over them and bring them back to their land. **Jeremiah 24:4-7**

The almond tree branch which was bare and mature meant that God was waiting to see the fulfillment of the message of his prophesy.

The buying and wearing of the linen belt symbolized that God had bound to Israel and Judah.

The buying of linen shorts which he wore and later told to hide it when it got spoilt symbolized the way God was going to destroy the pride of Judah and Jerusalem. **Jeremiah 13:1-11**

God told Jeremiah to bury the linen belt which symbolized the captivity and exile of Judah. **Jeremiah 13:7**

PROPHET EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was both a prophet and a priest. He ministered during the darkest days of Judah's history, that is to say the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel is a Hebrew name meaning, "God strengthens" or "strengthened by God". He was indeed strengthened by God for the prophetic ministry for which he was called.

Ezekiel was a son of buzi. He lived with the Hebrew exiles besides River Chebar in Babylonia.

He was an exile prophet and his prophecies were directed to both exiles in Babylonia and Jerusalem.

THE CALL OF PROPHET EZEKIEL (EZEKIEL 1-3)

Vision of the Cherubim in chapter 1

While in the exile, besides River Chebar,

Ezekiel had a vision and in the vision he saw a storm coming from the north towards the south. This symbolized Yahweh to the exiles.

He saw unusual glowing and flashing lightening. This symbolized God's glory and majesty.

Ezekiel saw four living creatures which symbolized God's omnipotence, holiness and majesty which are recognized by all creatures in their sizes.

The fire that was seen moving back and forth among the creatures and on the whole chariot throne was a reflection of God's holiness.

The chariot throne moved in all directions and each animal faced the four direction signified that God's presence can't be limited.

One of the creatures had a human face and he saw a figure like that of a human being. This signified man being created in God's image.

Ezekiel saw a chariot throne above all the four creatures. This signified God as a sole creator and above all.

The four creatures depended on the chariot throne. This showed the need to worship God.

The wheels in the vision were full of eyes signifying that God is all seeing.

The fact that the chariot moved in all directions and that God appeared in the foreign land signified the universality of God.

The movement of a storm to exile signified that God left his holy place to the exiles. I.e. God is caring.

The noise of their wings was like the noise of great waters indicated the voice of the almighty.

As the appearance of the bow in the cloud in day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness around. This showed the likeness of the glory of God.

The great thunder cloud from the chariot throne appeared was to reveal to the exiles the omnipresence of God

GOD CALLS EZEKIEL AS A PROPHET (Ezekiel 2 and 3)

In the vision of the cherubim, there was something that looked like a throne and sitting on the throne was a figure that looked like a human being. This meant that God was a king.

The figure which he saw seemed to be shining like bronze and there was bright light which had in it all colors of the rainbow. This was the dazzling light which signified God's presence.

When Ezekiel saw the dazzling light, he fell face down wards on the ground.

While on the ground, he heard a voice saying that, "mortal man stand up, I want to talk to you."

While the voice was speaking, God's spirit entered Ezekiel and raised him to his feet and he heard the voice continue.

Ezekiel heard the voice saying, "Mortal man, I am sending you to the people of Israel, they have rebelled and turned against me."

God told Ezekiel that He was sending him to the stubborn people and he was supposed to deliver his message to the people of Judah.

God told Ezekiel to listen to what He was going to tell him. He told him not to be rebellious like the Israelites he was being sent to.

God told Ezekiel to open his mouth and eat what he was going to be given.

Ezekiel saw a hand stretched out towards him and it was holding a scroll.

The hand unscrolled (opened) the scroll and Ezekiel saw that there was writing on both sides-cries of grief were written there, and wails of groans.

God told Ezekiel to eat the scroll and then go and speak to the people of Israel.

Ezekiel opened his mouth and God gave him the scroll to eat, when Ezekiel ate the scroll, it tasted as sweet as honey.

The Ezekiel was instructed by God to go and prophesy to the Israelites. He was told that none of them would be willing to listen and all of them are stubborn.

God promised to make Ezekiel to make him as stubborn and tough as the Israelites and as hard as a rock. He was told not to fear the rebels.

God's spirit lifted him up and Ezekiel heard a loud roar of a voice that said, Praise the glory of the lord in heaven above".

The power of the lord came to him with great force and God's spirit carried him off. He felt bitter and angry.

Ezekiel spent seven days at Tel Abib besides River Chebar, where the exiles were living. He was preparing himself to begin his prophetic ministry.

After seven days, Ezekiel received a new message from. He was commanded to be a watchman to his fellow exiles.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CALL OF EZEKIEL AND MOSES

The calls of Ezekiel and Moses had similarities and differences.

Both calls were vassal in nature. They were between a superior party and inferior parties. God was superior while Moses and Ezekiel were inferior.

Both calls restored people back to the promised land for instance Moses' call from the Egyptian slavery and Ezekiel to the Babylonian exile.

Both were sent to hard hearted people for example Ezekiel was sent to the rebellious people of Israel just as Moses was sent Pharaoh.

In both calls God's power is depicted for example the theophany of God (burning bush incident) and the cherubim vision.

In both calls God promises his protection and assistance i.e. God promised to make Ezekiel as firm as a rock, as hard as diamond and Moses was given powers to perform miracles.

In both calls God appeared in form of visions for example a burning bush and the cherubim (chariot throne) for Moses and Ezekiel respectively.

Both were given difficult tasks to accomplish. They were to give hope to the disappointed group of people. Moses to the Israelites in Egypt and Ezekiel to the exiles in Babylon.

Both were given hard tasks for example Moses had to liberate the Israelites from Egypt while Ezekiel had to restore hope to the exiles in Babylon.

In both cases, the calls were initiated by God who kept on guiding both Ezekiel and Moses.

Both Ezekiel and Moses were to deal with people in exile though from different places. Ezekiel was to deal with the people in Babylonia and Moses was to deal with the Israelites in the Egyptian slavery.

Both received their calls from foreign places for example Moses was in Median while Ezekiel was in Babylon.

Both Ezekiel and Moses took up God's mission. They responded positively to God's call and they carried out God's mission respectively.

DIFFERENCES

Moses asked for a spokesman and was given Aaron while Ezekiel was to speak by himself.

Moses took off his sandals because he was instructed by God while Ezekiel remained as he was.

Moses was hesitant to take up God's mission while Ezekiel responded positively without hesitating.

During Moses' call, he asked for God's name and God said that, "I AM WHO I AM" while Ezekiel never asked for God's name because he knew about God

Moses was sent to people who knew nothing about God while Ezekiel was sent to people who already knew about God but were just rebellious.

Moses was a law breaker for example while in Egypt, Moses committed murder while Ezekiel was pure and thus sinless.

Ezekiel was given a scroll to eat which scroll had God's message and helped him to get strength to prophesy God's message while Moses was given a stick to help him to perform miracle.

Moses was addressed by his name while Ezekiel was addressed as "mortal man".

Moses was given powers to perform miracles while Ezekiel never requested any power to perform miracles.

SYMBOLIC SIGNS PERFORMED BY PROPHET EZEKIEL

God told to perform some symbolic signs to signify the punishments which would befall on Israel if they were not ready to repent and to God.

These signs showed that the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the city were not accidental.

God withdrew Ezekiel from the public and took him into a house and was unable to talk which meant that God had nothing to say to or tell the people who didn't listen. **Ezekiel 3:22-27**

God told Ezekiel to get a brick and on it sketch a map of Jerusalem under siege/attack as a sign of a city that was to be attacked and it was God's plan. **Ezekiel 4:1ff**

Ezekiel was told to lie on his left side for 390 days to show that the people of the northern kingdom of Israel would suffer in exile for 30 years. **Ezekiel 4:4-5**

Ezekiel was then commanded to turn over on his right side and suffer for 40 days implying that Judah will be in exile for 40 years as their punishment. **Ezekiel 4:6**

Ezekiel was commanded to measure and eat very limited quantities of grain and drink little water to symbolize the food and water shortages during the siege of Jerusalem. **Ezekiel 4:9**

The prophet was told to make food out of dried human feces, bake bread on that fire and eat it in the presence of all people. This signified how Israel would be unclean or eat unclean food in foreign land after the overthrow of Israel. **Ezekiel 4:12-14.**

The prophet was instructed to shave all the hair on his body. The shaving was a sign of mourning for the destroyed Jerusalem and people. **Ezekiel 5:1ff**

Ezekiel was told to weigh the hair and beards, burn a third of it, destroy another third using a sword and scatter the remaining a third to be blown by wind. This signified that a third of the people would be killed, a third would die of famine and the other would be scattered into exile. **Ezekiel 5:12**

Ezekiel was told by God to eat food hurrying and trembling. This symbolized terror during the days of siege in which people would eat and drink hurriedly and fearfully. **Ezekiel 12:17-20**

God told Ezekiel to dance with swords striking them downwards again and again. This signified how the Israelites would be slaughtered and all would be the work of God.

God told Ezekiel to carry out a ritual of divination. This symbolized what a pagan king (Nabylon) would do when attacking Jerusalem. The king would carry out divinations to find out the best route to use when attacking Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was refused to attend burial service and when his wife died he never did so for her. This signified that during the destruction, dead bodies would be so many in Jerusalem to the extent that burial services would be ignored. **Ezekiel 24: 15ff**

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God told Ezekiel to boil meat from a pot until everything was destroyed including the bones. This signified that Jerusalem and her inhabitants would be destroyed completely. **Ezekiel 24:1**

The prophet was commanded to pack all his belongings, dig a hole through the walls of his mad house and pass through it to escape from the city. This signified the way the Israelites would run away from the city during attacks.

The prophet was commanded to pick two wooden sticks and write and name Judah on one of them and Israel on the other. He was then told to hold the two sticks together. This signified the re-union of Israel and Judah.

HOW WERE THE SIGNS FULFILLED IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem was attacked and besieged for about 3 years before it fell.

The Israelites were starved to the extent that they had to surrender.

The well protected and fortified Jerusalem was attacked by shooting of the arrows over the walls.

The people of Judah and Jerusalem were carried off into exile by the Babylonians.

The scattering of Israel came true when the Israelites were scattered over the whole world.

The sword he used symbolized war which was destroyed Jerusalem between 587 and 586 B.C.

During the siege of Jerusalem food supplies became scarce and people had to gather food from different corners to make a meal.

While in exile the Israelites did several things which were considered to be against their laws such as worshipping foreign gods which was against the covenant hence fulfilling the sign of baking bread on fire made from faeces.

The people of Judah had limited supplies during the time of siege.

The people of Judah and Israel were killed by their enemies at God's command. Ezekiel 9:5ff

EZEKIEL'S TEACHING ABOUT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY OF SIN

(CORPORATE SIN AND GUILT) EZEKIEL 18

The Israelites throughout the Old Testament believed that the sins of an individual affected the whole society that is they strongly believed in corporate punishment.

They believed that God punished the whole community regardless of whether one was a sinner or not.

Examples of corporate guilt; (Not Examinable)

Eli and his family disobeyed God by dishonoring him. He decided to punish the entire family of Eli and those who survived were reduced to beggar. **1 Samuel 2:36.**

When King Saul sinned against God, he was rejected and denied a dynasty and none of his members was to become a king of Israel. **1 Samuel 13:13-14**

When King David committed adultery with Uriah's wife but God decided to curse the whole family; he said a sword would never depart from his house. **2 Samuel 12:10**

When Solomon sinned against God and God decided to punish Israel by dividing up the kingdom into the northern and southern kingdom.

Priest Amaziah tried to stop Amos from prophesying to the northern kingdom and Amos passed on Amaziah family God's judgment. His children were to die in a foreign country and his wife would become a prostitute.

The Israelites in exile therefore believed that they were being punished for the sins committed during the reign of King Manasseh and not their own.

They always blamed God for punishing them for the sins they had not committed and looked at God as being unfair.

As a result of the misconception, they came up with proverb, *"the parents ate the sour grapes and children got the sour taste"* **Ezekiel 18:2**

THEREFORE TO THIS EFFECT EZEKIEL TAUGHT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CONSEQUENT PUNISHMENT AS FOLLOWS;

To Ezekiel God cares for them individually therefore this proverb was not to be repeated in Israel any more. **Ezekiel 18:2**

Ezekiel said that everybody is responsible for his/her own sins and not for their parents i.e. everyone will be judged individual according to what he has done.

God commanded that this proverb should not be repeated because the life of every person belongs to him. That is, life of parents, children therefore the one who sins is the one to die.

Ezekiel said if the person is righteous he would live and enjoy God's blessings.

To Ezekiel the righteous will live and a wicked will die; that is if the righteous man has a wicked son then it is the son who will be responsible for his punishment not the father. **Ezekiel 18:10-14**

Likewise if the father is immoral but the son is not then the son will live and his father be punished. **Ezekiel 18:14-18**

Ezekiel said that a good man would be rewarded for doing well, and an evil man would suffer for his evil he does. **Ezekiel 18:20**

Ezekiel said "the wicked man who repents will be forgiven and none of his sins will be remembered because God does not enjoy seeing an evil man die but rather repents and live. **Ezekiel 18:21-23**

To Ezekiel an individual who follows the law of God will live while that one who chooses to disobey God will die.

Ezekiel challenged the Israelites who believed that being descendants of Abraham they were assured of salvation. He said that they can only be saved if they repent and follow the covenant.

Ezekiel further challenged them emphasizing that they are not blameless because they were practicing social injustices and syncretism.

Ezekiel said that both the father and the son are created by God and he cares for them individually.

Ezekiel then challenged them to change their minds and have new hearts and turn to God who will forgive their sins.

To Ezekiel a man who worships only one God has mercy and love for the widows will surely live and be safe.

Ezekiel challenged them that even the restoration of Israel will be based on each person's change of attitude and personal commitment to God.

Ezekiel was appointed by God to be a watch man such that he warns the Israelites of the pending danger. This shows that God cares for his people and if they don't listen they will be responsible for their blood.

To Ezekiel a righteous man who stops doing good and opts for evil, none of the good things will be remembered. **Ezekiel 18:24**

To Ezekiel God gives life to one individually, he also judges everyone individually. Ezekiel 18:30

Ezekiel shows God's justice that he is a just God and therefore, he cannot punish the for the sins of their ancestors.

To Ezekiel blessings will come if they obey the lord and curses will follow anyone who disobeys God's commands and he concludes by saying that they should repent and live.

RELEVANCE OF THIS TEACHING TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians should repent their sins to God just like Ezekiel called upon people to repent off their sins because God will judge them individually.

Christians should accept the mistake they make other than accusing other people just like the Israelites blamed their ancestors.

Christians should be humble and polite when expressing their disagreements before God unlike the Israelites...

They should follow the law of God in order to live unlike one who disobeys and opts for evil and dies.

They should be righteous in order to receive God's blessings because blessings are individual and depends on one's behavior like Ezekiel emphasized.

They should think critically before taking on certain slogans or ideas unlike the Israelites who developed such sayings which were misleading

Christians should have confidence in God because he judges justly and individually.

Christian children should develop independent opinions from parents because God considers every one as an individual.

They should accept any conditions they find themselves in because no man will suffer from the sins of the other like the children of the Israelites with their proverb.

EZEKIEL'S TEACHING AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH EZEKIEL 34

Ezekiel first saw the restoration of Israel in an image of a shepherd and his flock.

The leaders of Israel were the shepherds and the people of Israel were the flock. The leaders were responsible for the fall of Israel and Judah.

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The shepherds were doomed and took care of themselves but never tended the sheep.

The shepherds of Israel were guilty of drinking milk, wear clothes made from wool, kill and eat the finest sheep but never tended to the sheep.

The shepherds of Israel never cared for the weak ones, healed the sick, bandaged those that are hurt, looked for those that were lost.

They were negligent and never looked for the animals which scattered and wounded all over the mountains.

The prophet saw the above behavior as a failure and neglect of the shepherds and because the sheep had no shepherd, were scattered and animals killed and ate them.

Due to the misconduct of the shepherds, God was annoyed and declared the he is the enemy of the unfaithful shepherd.

That the shepherd will lose their jobs because God himself will take care of them hence shepherds will no longer have a right over the sheep.

That God will rescue the sheep from the bad shepherds and will bring together the sheep and protect them from wild animals.

That God will take them out of foreign countries, gather them and bring them back to their own land.

That God will lead them back to the mountains and the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures.

That the lord himself will find them a place to rest

God will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wonder off, bandage those that are hurt and heal those that are sick.

He will judge each of the shepherds and separate the good from the bad, the sheep from the goat. **Ezekiel 34:17.**

The fat and strong ones will be destroyed because God is the shepherd who knows what is right.

God will no longer all the strong to cause suffering to the weak ones by trampling on the grass and disturbing the water.

God will give them a shepherd like his servant David to be their one shepherd and he will take care of them.

God will make a covenant with them that guarantees their security and will get rid of all dangerous animals in the land so that the sheep can live safely in the fields and sleep in the forests.

God will bless them with showers of rains when they need it, trees will bear fruits, the fields produce crops and everyone will live safely on the land.

That God will give them fertile fields and put an end to hunger in the land and other nations will not sneer at them anymore. **Ezekiel 34:29**

All in all, everyone will know that God protected Israel and that they will be his people. **Ezekiel 34:30.**

WHY JESUS IS CONSIDERED AS A GOOD SHEPHERD (JOHN 10)

Jesus is a good shepherd because he provides entrance for all his animals. They can go in and come out freely. Jesus Christ provides a way to God's kingdom.

Jesus is ready to expand on the size of his flock. Jesus also converted the gentiles into God's salvation/kingdom.

He builds confidence in his sheep. They respond to his calls because they know his voice and when Satan calls them they don't respond.

He knows his animals by name and they know him. We are children of God through him.

He makes sure that his sheep are gathered together and does not allow them to scatter and wonder off.

Jesus protects his sheep from being eaten by wild animals. Jesus protects us from the powers of Satan.

Jesus knows the problems of his animals. Jesus knows our problems and ready to solve them

He is ready to lie down with his flock. Jesus is ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the sheep.

A good shepherd obeys his father's commands. Jesus obeyed the demands of his father in heaven during his ministry.

The good shepherd gives life and hope to his sheep.

THE VISION OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES (EZEKIEL 37:1-14)

Ezekiel felt the powerful presence of the lord and his spirit took him to the valley of the dry bones.

God made Ezekiel move around the valley and he could see that the bones were very dry.

God asked Ezekiel; mortal man, can these bones come back to life?"

Ezekiel replied that it is the sovereign lord who would answer that!

God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones so that they could come back to life. He told him to tell them to listen to the word of the lord.

Ezekiel prophesied as he was instructed, while speaking, he heard a rattling noise and the bones begun to join together.

While he watched, the bones were covered with sinews and muscles and then with skin but had no breathe in the bodies.

God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the winds to come from every direction to enter into the dead bodies and bring them back to life.

Ezekiel prophesied as he was told, breath entered the bodies and they came back to life and stood up and they were enough to form an army.

God told Ezekiel, mortal man, the Israelites were like the dry bones which never had hope and future.

God told Ezekiel to prophesy to people of Israel that He was going to open their graves and take them back to the land of Israel.

God told Ezekiel that he will put breath in them, bring them back and let them live in their own land. Then they will know that I am the lord.

God promised that since the dry bones had come back to life, there was hope that the Israelites were going back to their land.

MEANING OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

The dry bones were equivalent to the Israelites who were in exile, because they had lost hope of going back to their land.

The dry bones were for the dead bodies; therefore the vision showed that the Jews in exile were dead like the dry bones.

The Israelites had no hope because they had lost it after looking at the forms of suffering they had experienced in the Babylonian exile.

The vision meant that God was going to restore the Israelites both physically and spiritually.

The vision signified the idea of life after death because the bones received life after listening to the prophecy.

It meant that was to be saved from exile the way the dry bone received life and were saved from death.

The vision confirmed that God keeps and fulfills promises, because He had promised that Israel would last as a kingdom.

It showed that those who listen to God's word received life and God's mercy because the dry bones received life when they listened to Ezekiel's prophecies.

The bones gained flesh and life which meant that the Israelites in exile would soon go back to their land and be free.

It meant that God is the source of life. He was able to put his spirit and breathe into the dry bones.

It showed God as loving and forgiving and therefore he cannot abandon his people. He finds a way of having them repent and forgive them.

It showed God's omnipotence. H lifted Ezekiel and carried him to the valley of dry bones.

EZEKIEL` TEACHING ABOUT THE FALSE PROPHETS

He accused them of providing their own inspiration and inventing their own visions instead of seeking for God's visions.

They failed to correct the mistakes of their followers, they therefore greatly misled them

They were found of slandering in order to get what to eat and for that reason, they would be destroyed.

They were self appointed and not acknowledged by God. They were therefore self- proclaimed and their prophecies were from their own minds.

They used to make false statements which often misled people.

They stole oracles from God's prophets in order to make themselves appear good.

They disregarded the covenant faith which was the foundation of Israel's religion.

These prophets challenged God's providence and power. This implies that they often performed strange miracles using magic or satanic influence.

They greatly live an immoral life.

They killed people who were innocent and kept the wicked ones.

They brought God's judgment to the innocent people who were misled by these prophets.

EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE OF HOPE (Ezekiel 36 and 37)

God gave the message of hope (good news) to the Israelites who were in exile and those still in Judah.

Ezekiel prophesied that the Israelites in exile were to be restored to Canaan despite the suffering they passed through in exile.

He consoled the people by telling them that after exile, they will know more about their God, his power and God will bring the mockery and insult of the enemies to an end.

Upon reaching their land the exiles would be prosperous again. That is there will be socio-economic development.

The vision of dry bones reflects the restoration of the Israelites. Just as God gave bones life is symbolic of how Israel was to be saved.

To Ezekiel God will make the population of the Israelites grow; there will be more people and children than ever before.

Ezekiel joined two sticks which represented the re-union of Israel and Judah hence good news to the exiles.

Ezekiel teaches that God would make a new covenant with Judah and Israel would guarantee their security.

He preached to the exiles about the individual judgment which will be based on individual repentance.

Ezekiel saw the restoration of Israel in the image of a shepherd and the flock which signified that God would bring together the Israelites and protect them again which was good news to the exiles.

God promised to put a new and powerful king from the line of David which gave the exiles hope hence good news.

Ezekiel prophesied about the building of a new temple in the land because God would guide them which aimed at giving the Jews a hope for the future.

He said that the Israelites would come back soon, plough their land because God would be with them hence a message of good news to the exiles.

Ezekiel assured the exiles of a very bright future after restoration; the Israelites will be prosperous again and will never starve.

He showed to the exiles that no individual would be punished for the sins of others because every individual is responsible for his/her sins.

Ezekiel preached to the exiles that the rest of the world would come to respect and fear the Israelites.

Ezekiel said that the surrounding nations will be humiliated because they captured Israel's land and to possession of its pastures.

That God would gather his people from the distant lands where he had scattered them. This gave hope to the exiles for a better future.

Ezekiel promises to save the Israelites from everything that defies them. This was a message of hope to the exiles.

Ezekiel teaches to the exiles that God would increase the yields of their fruits trees and fields so that there would be no more famines to disgrace them among nations.

The people of Israel will live safely in Israel and build their homes and plant their vineyard.

In his prophesy, he consoled the people by saying that the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit to prepare for the return of God's people.

Ezekiel teaches that their God and they would be his people. This was good news to the exiles.

Ezekiel informs the Israelites that they were taken into exile because of their sins but God would restore them to show his holiness and they will be aware that God is responsible.

To Ezekiel God was going to cleanse the exiles by sprinkling water and make them clean from idols and they would never be considered as sinful people.

To Ezekiel God was ready to hear Israel's prayers and grant their requests and he will multiply their population.

FEATURES PRESENTING EZEKIEL AS A TRUE PROPHET OF GOD

He acted as God's messenger. All true prophets of God acted as God's mouth piece, speaking without favors, material gains fear and bias.

True prophets received their calls directly from God just like Ezekiel did which was through a vision of the Cherubim in chapter one.

True prophets of God received God's message through visions like Ezekiel's vision of God's throne, vision of the dry valley bones making him a true prophet.

True prophets gave the right message to the right situation for example they would prophesy doom just like Ezekiel pronounced God's judgment upon Jerusalem which makes him a true prophet.

The prophecies of true prophets always came true just like Ezekiel's prophesy of Israel's exile came true and they were restored after exile hence a true prophet.

True prophets followed the traditions and teachings as well as the ideas of Moses just as Ezekiel referred to the Sinai covenant and promised that God would make a new covenant with his people.

True prophets gave free prophecies just as Ezekiel did, he never worked and prophesied for any pay and thus making him a true prophet.

Ezekiel used symbols just as the true prophets did for example eating food in a hurry, drawing the map of Jerusalem under siege.

He got direct revelation from God and acted as a spokes man of God. His message was received through powerful manner just like the other true prophets of God.

As a true prophet of God, he spoke contrary to what people wanted. He was welcomed because of his behavior and character which reflected morality.

Ezekiel acted on behalf of God for God had promised to work and speak through him.

He advocated for monotheism by condemning syncretism and apostasy.

Ezekiel wrote God`s message on a scroll like other true prophets.

He called upon the Israelites to repent and turn away from their evil ways.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of job talks about a rich man who lost all his wealth, his children and even got serious skin disease. However, despite all the challenges, he was faithful and remained hope to God.

Job`s suffering was different from the Israelites understanding of the causes of suffering because they believed that suffered due to their wickedness but job was a righteous man who suffered seriously.

Chapters 1 and 2 shows a good man, righteous and faithful suffered a lot when God was testing his faith.

It started when heavenly creatures appeared before God, and Satan came along. When God asked whether he had seen His servant Job who was honest and faithful, Satan replied that job loved God only because the almighty God had blessed him with a lot of wealth, but if lost such wealth, job would curse Him

This kind of contest between God and Satan exposed job to terrible suffering because God permitted Satan to bring disaster to job`s life which ended up into the following forms of suffering:

FORMS OF SUFFERING EXPERIENCED BY JOB

Job experienced physical and psychological torture since he was struck by disasters which brought a lot of pain in his life

Job's oxen and donkeys were attacked by Sabeans who killed all the servants who were attending to them before carrying all the animals away.

Job lost all his sheep and all the shepherds who were taking care of them when lightning struck them dead.

Gangs of the Chaldeans attacked and stole all the camels which belonged to job after killing all the servants who were in charge.

Job`s children were killed by a windstorm which blew from the desert and crushed the building over them during a party.

Job was affected by a terrible disease of boils covering all his body and he had wounds all over the body.

Job`s wife convinced him to curse the God and die other than living in pain. In this case she became a bigger problem to him because she was tempting him to do what was wrong.

The wife deserted him because he had lost wealth and his health was disappointing.

Job`s pain increased so much all over the body, that flies began feasting on him (feasting on the wounds which attracted the flies).

His friends worsened his suffering when they began blaming him for being the cause of the suffering, thinking that he had seriously committed certain sins hence demanding from to seek God`s forgiveness.

Job lost his appearance and it became very difficult for people who knew him before to notice him because of the terrible suffering he experienced.

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Since job believed that he was innocent, the insistence of his friends in forcing him to repent increased more pain.

Job`s suffering went beyond imagination when he became useless and began seeing everyday as a burden because of the too much pain.

He became hopeless, helpless and miserable he could not even assist himself in anyway a part from scratching his body.

Days and nights became longer than usual so that a mere day seemed like a century of a glory.

He got so exhausted seeing no meaning in life an existence. He had no time to rest and whenever he turned, he felt arrows of suffering/pain piercing him.

NATURE OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JOB

Man is weak. His sinful nature is realized easily, job`s suffering was not because of sin but his complaints him in a suffering state.

Man`s understanding of God is low. God did not want to punish job but it was just a trial which made job curse the day he was born.

Human nature finds out the cause of any effect; for instance job`s friends tried to blame him that he had sinned by oppressing the poor which was not the case.

Man is God`s creature, so he should pray during times of joy and sorrow just as Job conducted himself.

Man avoids responsibility of sin, for instance even if job had sinned against God he would not accept.

Man is emotional i.e. job lost his temper before God because he had suffered for long.

Man has limited understanding i.e. job and his friends failed to find out the cause of his suffering.

Man suffers; job was subjected to suffering of all circumstances for instance he lost all his animals and developed a skin disease.

Man is caring and loving; for instance job`s friends felt pity and encouraged him to endure all his suffering.

Man is faithful to God; for instance job was faithful to the extent that God knew and however much he suffered he never cursed God.

Man is vulnerable to sin i.e. within a short time of Job`s suffering; his wife encouraged him to sin against God by cursing Him.

Man is mortal i.e. he can die, Job wished to die before the end of his suffering.

NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JOB

God is powerful. He controlled and tamed job. All his wealth and health were destroyed and restored later.

God is the creator. He created the universe and told job that he had no power as a creature to challenge his creator.

God is the source of blessings. He blessed Job with all the wealth and children which were destroyed and later restored in multiples by God's grace.

God is all knowing. He knew the reason for Job's suffering, he was the only one who could interpret the reasons for Job's suffering.

God is the source of wisdom. He knew the end result of Job's suffering and also told Job to ask if he wanted wisdom.

God loves man. Even in the state of suffering God still loved Job and rewarded him in the end by doubling his wealth.

God is the overall controller of the universe i.e. He controls life, blessings and suffering for instance He authorized Satan to torture Job.

God is the source of protection. However much Job was tortured by Satan, God protected him and did not permit Satan to kill him.

God is omnipresent. He was in heaven with the heavenly creatures and he was also on earth monitoring Job, Satan and Job's friends.

God is a provider. He gives strength and wisdom. He replaced Job's wealth and his suffering.

REASONS FOR THE SUFFERING OF JOB

It was to show the works and powers of Satan in the world. Job suffered in order to show that Satan is present and active even in the lives of the faithful.

Job suffered because of the need to console the suffering Israelites; therefore Job's suffering was to ease the tension and stress of all the Israelites who were suffering.

The need to demonstrate the inadequacy of human knowledge; Job's suffering clearly shows that human wisdom is limited. None of Job's friends could understand why Job was suffering.

Need to teach the meaning of suffering in life. Job's suffering shows that suffering is part of life even to the faithful ones like Job suffered as a way of testing his faith.

To show the nature of God. God is presented as caring, provider when he rewarded Job again, creator evidenced when God asked Job whether he was there when he created the universe.

To show the danger of spiritual pride. Job had spiritual pride to the extent that he tried to question God's justice and prove that he was innocent.

It was to show that sin according to man wisdom means rebellion against God as it was proved by Job's friends who insisted that Job must have sinned against God.

Job suffered in order to show that suffering is a great challenge to man to the extent that human wisdom cannot understand and clearly explain the meaning of suffering.

Job suffered in order to show the need for faith not the law; Job did all what the law required but still he suffered.

THE FRIENDS OF JOB AND THEIR ROLE IN HIS SUFFERING

Negative contributions

They indicated that job was responsible for his suffering for he could have oppressed the poor.

Eliphaz said that job had sinned against God and that's why God is punishing him.

Eliphaz challenged job and asked him to mention any case where a rebellious man had ever met with disaster.

They asked job to repent of his sins because the lord was unhappy with him.

They harassed job and blamed him for self righteousness.

They disagreed with Job that he had committed no sin. To them even if job had not sinned his children must have sinned.

Eliphaz blamed job for having complained against God that job was weak that's why he was complaining against God. **Job 4**

Eliphaz blamed job for complaining bitterly against God. He informed him that no man has never made mistakes before God. **Job 4**

Eliphaz challenged job to look back into the Israel of history. "Think back now, name a single case where a righteous man met with disaster..." he informed him that according to the history all good men received rewards while the wicked met disaster. **Job 4:7**

In **chapter 4:7-11** Eliphaz continues to attack job and charged him of hypocrisy and impatience which increased job's pain.

Eliphaz continued to haunt job that job was paying for the wages of his sins which increased his suffering **Job 5:2**

Eliphaz also told God was a forgiving father as well as a source of morality.

Eliphaz said that man was responsible for all his suffering and therefore, job deserved the suffering he was facing.

Eliphaz said that God was a creator who controlled humanity; and thus blamed job for referring to him as unjust.

In **Job 34**, Elihu instead of consoling job he challenges him of stubbornness and speaking bad words about God.

Bildad said that if job was innocent as he claimed, then his children could have sinned against God and they deserved the punishment. **Job 8:1-4**

Bildad maintained that God is full of justice, never twists justice and never fails to do what is right. **Job 8:3**

Like Eliphaz, Zophar, Bildad, Elihu branded job as a sinner and asserted that Job's suffering is just a punishment from God for the sins he had committed.

However Job`s friends contributed positively and said to him that trouble was expected in this world (Job 5:7).

To Bildad, it was wrong for job to criticize God and he refers to job`s words as a mere wind.

Bildad encouraged job in his agony; that God never abandons the faithful and would soon let job to laugh and shout again and his enemies would be left disgraced.

Eliphaz told to have hope and confidence in God for God will provide him with security.

Eliphaz advised job to repent and turn to God by offering sacrifices. **Job 5:7-8**

Eliphaz comforted that his suffering was short lived and that he would complete with joy and honor and that job had to keep calm because his goodness would finally triumph.

Eliphaz continued to console job by telling him that no suffering comes by chance. And job would not say that he was deserted by God.

Zophar advised job to abandon the claim that he was innocent, because it was a mockery of God and just increased God`s anger.

Zophar also said that God`s greatness was broader than the earth and deeper than the sea, so he could never be in the wrong just as job was saying.

Zophar said to Job that his claim to be pure and righteous was wrong because in case God asked him some questions, he would never be able to answer.

He also advised job to face the world again, firmly and courageously so that his troubles would fade from his memory.

He also advised job to put his heart right, put away evil from his home and reach out to God.

HOW JOB RESPONDED TO HIS SUFFERING

To job, he did not answer anything of God`s creation. He admitted humbly to God that he had spoken foolishly in his earlier criticisms of God and promised that he will never say anything else. **Job 40:3-4**

He realized that his relationship with God is that of a creator and creature

Job wished that God would turn his birthday into darkness and remove it from the year's calendar and never to be counted again.

He wondered why God would let him go on living in misery and never stop groaning yet even tired workers and slaves would also find rest at last.

He understood that his creator cares for him and knows him now in a personal ay.

Job knew that God could be trusted but not to depend on human response.

He said that God had become so inconsistent and unfair to have caused him such endless agony, yet he was innocent.

He admitted that he questioned God`s wisdom as a result of ignorance so he talked what he did not understand.

He regretted why his mother had protected so as to live up to old age; perhaps he would not be suffering.

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Job responded by wishing to have died in his mother's womb or on the very moment he was born. **Job 3:11-12.**

Job observed that even prisoners were better off than him for they are free from shouts and harsh commands. **Job 3:18**

Job complained of peace, no rest and his unendless troubles. **Job 3:26**

Job responded by cursing the day and night he was conceived. He became impatient in his suffering. **Job 3:1-12**

Job acknowledged that in the past he knew only what others had told him but now he had seen God with his eyes. **Job 42:5**

God's answers to job made him embarrassed of what he had said against God due to his suffering.

Job was ashamed of all he had said repented in dust and ashes of his former ignorance of God. **Job 42:6**

Job wished to die because he would be resisting like kings and rulers who rebuilt ancient palaces. **Job 3:13-14**

He realized that he had sinned against God i.e. he had talked about things he didn't understand which are great for him to know. **Job 42:3**

Job's humble response to God earned him more blessings from God; God gave him seven daughters, 600 camels...

GOD'S ANSWER TO JOB'S SUFFERING

God challenged job whether a creature can criticize his creator on whom his existence depends.

God made it clear to job that they were in a creator-creature relationship that job had to listen to God's questions.

God asked job whether he was there when He created the world; God asked, "Where were you when I laid a foundation of the earth, who set its measurements?" **Job 38:8-5**

God told job that he alone is the creator and sustainer of the universe.

God asked job about the animals he had created and where they get life.

God asked job whether he has ever in his life commanded the morning and caused the dawn to know its place. **Job 38:12**

God attacked Job's claim that God is unjust. He challenged Job to take over the moral rule of the world. **Job 40:7-14**

God told job that there is always a purpose for any one suffering therefore job's suffering had a purpose.

God told job of his inability to control the world and the great wild beasts.

God informed job that there is no man who can control nature or the sea monsters apart from God himself.

God challenged job to stand up and answer his questions but job could not instead he felt shy and guilty.

God cautioned job about pride saying that if any man become proud God can always humble him.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GOD`S ANSWER TO JOB (CHAPTER 38-41)

The answer showed God as the sole creator of the universe and all the creatures; God declared that Job was there when He created the universe and determined its size.

The answer signified the omnipotence of God. He controls and tames all the creatures i.e. wild animals, mountains, seasons and even human beings.

The answer showed God as being just, he loves those who suffer and He has a purpose for each of them.

The answer made Job realize his inability to question God and only to realize the wonders of God.

The answer showed God`s omniscience; He knew the reason as to why Job was suffering unlike Job who did not know and continued to claim that he innocent.

It showed that God is the source of wisdom and while he gives it some creatures, to others he does not. If job wanted wisdom he had to pray for it.

It showed that God hates pride; He resists the pride and brings them down.

It showed that in order for one to understand God, one should reflect on the wonders of creation.

It showed man`s inability to recognize the wonders of God.

The answer showed Job that man has no authority to question and challenge God His creator.

The answer showed that God is omnipresent, he is everywhere i.e under the sea, on the earth and in heaven.

The answer showed that suffering is not for only the guilty; even the righteous people like job suffer.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS FROM JOB` EXPERIENCE

Christians should have faith in God. Job had faith despite the suffering he experienced.

They should praise God despite the suffering they may experience. Job praised God despite the misfortunes that befell him.

They should pray for God`s assistance. Job prayed to God to intervene in his suffering but he did not turn to other gods.

They should be exemplary in life. Job showed good example when he remained faithful during his suffering.

They should live a righteous life. Job lived a sinless life therefore he was righteous despite the suffering.

They should trust and have confidence in God. Job did not lose trust and confidence in God despite the suffering he experienced.

They should visit those in suffering. Job`s friends visited him when they heard about his misery.

They should care and have special concern and comfort those suffering unlike job`s friends who friends who failed to comfort him but instead caused more suffering to him.

Christians should be careful when passing judgment upon other. God was annoyed with Job`s friends who blamed job for the suffering he was experiencing.

They should provide constructive advice to their friends in whatever circumstance. Job`s friends advised him to be pure and righteous.

They should associate with friends in all circumstances. I.e. trouble and joy. Job`s friends were with him when he was rich and even during times of suffering.

They should sympathize with those in agony just as Eliphaz comforted Job

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

ORIGIN OF PSALMS (Examinable)

The word psalms is derived for the Greek word "PSALMOI"...meaning songs accompanied by musical instruments. Psalms were sacred songs with musical accompaniment.

They were used in praising God.

Among the Jews, it was common to express their love for God through music, dance and drama.

There are 150 psalms in the bible which are said to have been written by various people including King David, Solomon and prophets.

These psalms covered moments of jubilations, wars, peace, worship, judgment, messianic prophecy, praises and lamentations.

These psalms originated from the historical revelation of one true God.

They came into existence because of the feelings that people had about the goodness of God and the wonders of God's creation.

These psalms were mainly used in the worship of God in Solomon's temple.

There were five major; royal psalms 2, individual thanks giving psalms 20, the hymns of praise 22, and lamentation 137.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY PSALMS IN THE LIFE OF THE ISRAELITES

They were used by the Israelites to praise the nature of God. I.e. omnipotence and universal character of God for instance **psalms 47**

Psalms like 137 were used to call upon Yahweh's intervention for instance in hard circumstances.

Psalms were used on special circumstances such as coronation of kings in Israel for example psalms 2 reflected that these kings were to be respected since they were God's representatives.

Psalms were used for commemoration of important feasts and historical festivals for example Passover and the feast of Tabernacle.

Psalms used in the liturgical prayers especially when instruction during worship.

Psalms were used by King David when praising and praying to God.

They were used to express the feelings of God's people at the given time for example **psalms 137** shows the mood of the exiles in Babylonia.

Through psalms the Israelites expressed their faith and commitment to God; when David sinned against God he confessed his sins by singing **psalm 57**.

Psalms were used for national repentance. That is the Israelites acknowledged their sinful nature and asked for forgiveness from God through psalms.

Psalms sung to show the messianic nature of the kingdom the Israelites were expecting for instance **psalm 2, 20 and 47** are referred to as messianic psalms.

Psalms were used to show peoples experiences (joy and sorrows) for example **psalms 132** show how people searched and yearned for God.

Psalms were used to show national pride of the Israelites as a chosen nation superior to others for example **psalms 47** show how the Israelites showed their divine nature to the neighbors.

They reflected a monotheistic nature of Israel. That is the Israelites in respect to God as the only God.

Psalms showed the theocratic nature of the Israelites (ruled by God) for instance praised and thanked for providence and protection.

They contributed to the spiritual development of the Israelites. By singing such psalms the Israelites developed their relationship with God.

Psalms were also composed by prophets to carry their messages to their people. That is why many psalms were attributed to prophet Isaiah like **psalms 37**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PSALMS TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians should endure all suffering because it's for a short period of time just as the exiles in **Psalms 137**.

Christians ought to be ready to express our deep commitment to God at all times just like the exiles.

Christians should worship God in whatever circumstance just like the exiles did in exile.

Christians should remember God even in times of suffering just like the exiles did.

Christians should be faithful to God even in difficult conditions like the exiles remained faithful to their God.

They should pray to God for forgiveness and protect them from their enemies.

They should show a sense of nationalism and patriotism in support of leaders in hard situations.

They should thank God for what he has done for them in all circumstances. For instance psalms 20 is referred to as a prayer for victory.

They should seek protection from God because he is powerful instead of seeking for protection from pagan alliances and witchcraft. **Psalms 20**

They should have confidence in God as the supreme king who can't let them down. The Israelites prayed to God in **Psalms 20**.

They should ask for favors from God in form of blessings just like the Israelites asked God to grant them victory.

They should acknowledge the greatness of God's kingdom. They should therefore spare time to glorify his name just as the Israelites used to do.

PSALMS: 2 CORONATION PSALM/MESSIANIC PSALM

This psalm is a pre-exilic one which is believed to have been used during the coronation of a king descending from David.

The psalmist wanted to imply the close relationship that existed between God and the kings of Judah.

However as time went by, this psalm came to be understood as a messianic psalm looking forward to the rule of God in the world and the appointment of his messiah to act on his behalf.

Meaning and message

The psalmist presents God as the only true king who appoints his messiah to lead his people into the blessings promised to them.

The psalmist says that all earthly kings including the messiah are to serve under God's mercy.

The psalm shows the messiah was appointed to rule and act on behalf of God in the universe.

The psalmist shows that the messianic king is chosen and anointed by God.

It shows that God is the supreme king of the universe. The psalm acknowledges the sovereignty of God as a supreme king and all kings are below him.

The psalmist shows that the king who would be rebelled against is the adopted son of God.

Despite the attempted revolts, Yahweh intervened and no human can overthrow the king because of God's protection.

The psalmist advises all the kings of the world to serve and obey this king because he is the king of kings.

The psalm shows that it is unwise and devilish to ignore the sovereignty of God through his servant.

The psalmist shows that no king has ever been resisted like this king.

The king will be victorious throughout his reign despite the resistance from the nations.

All earthly kingdoms and nations should tremble and bow down before this king.

PSALM 20: PRAYER FOR VICTORY

Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king of Israel who was going to fight a war on behalf of his people

It qualifies to be a royal psalm because it has its background from a kingly setting.

The psalm is attributed to King David and its background is the pre-exilic period before 586 BC.

It involves the request to God to assist the nation of Israel overcome her enemies from Mt. Zion.

It was part of the temple prayer spoken by an individual and several others putting all their hopes in God to help their King David.

The Israelites used to offer sacrifices before going to war. Therefore the psalm is calling upon God to accept the sacrifices which would in turn bring victory on the Israelites side.

The message in this psalm 20 is to call the Israelites to be confident in their God the supreme king because he will not let them down.

The Israelites were called upon to trust in the power of God by recalling his victories against their enemies. **Psalm 20:7**

The psalm was to bring out the theocratic background of Israel which cannot be abandoned by God.

It contains prayers, sacrifices and offerings from people and priests asking for God's mercy, protection and blessings to the king.

The psalm called upon people not to rely on war chariot and horses but rely on God who is powerful.

Psalms 20 has a message of encouragement to the Israelites i.e. some people would stumble and fall, but will rise and stand firm. **Psalm 20:8**

Since all people were involved the psalmist indicated that the victory of their king meant victory of themselves and God.

The psalm emphasizes the fact that it is only God who can lead his people to war and make them victorious.

The psalm emphasized that without the help of God the Israelites are weak and not strong enough to face their enemies.

The psalm promises that when God grants them success, they will sing for joy and give praise to him.

PSALMS 137; A LAMENT OF THE ISRAELITES IN EXILE

Psalms 137 is an exile psalm sung by the Israelites while in exile.

The psalm showed the community of the exile Israelites as a nation lamenting for the destruction of Jerusalem their city.

The psalm showed that the community of the exiles Israelites as a nation lamenting for the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

It showed their sad moods and sorrowful act without their religious symbols.

The exiles were being forced to use their harps and sing their religious songs to the leaders of Babylon with the very songs they used to praise God before they were taken in captivity.

The exiles remembered their city Jerusalem which was in ruins. They therefore wept because they could not praise the gods of the Babylonians when their city was destroyed.

The Israelites saw no need of sitting down to enjoy themselves without their God who had helped them.

They realized their past mistakes by refusing to play the harp to their captors

The Israelites had lost all their tempers, were mourning and their state of being was more like a funeral.

The exiles were unhappy because of the increasing mockery exerted upon them by their captors.

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