**INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE**

The word Bible is translated from a Greek word “Biblia” meaning books. A Bible is a collection of many books under one cover, compiled over many years bearing God’s message to man kind. Today the Bible has been translated to many languages to suit it’s audience. Originally, it was written in Hebrew language, then English.

A Bible is regarded as a holy book under the guidance of a holy spirit and also regarded as single authority that teaches God’s word.

**HOW THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN**

The 39 books of the Old Testament were written during the period of 1000 years beginning with 1100 BC. The Old Testament begins with Genesis and ends with Malachi. There were another group of books which came from the Greek and this was known or Septuagint and these were written from around 250BC and completed in the 1st century. This group of books was intended for the Jews who didn’t understand the Hebrew language and were living outside the original homeland of the Jews i.e. Palestine. Such books include; Tobit, Judith and books of wisdom written by Solomon. Ecclesiastes

There are other books called Apocrypha which were

**INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE**

The Bible consists of two parts namely;

Old Testament

New Testament

**THE BIBLE**

The Bible is quite often to mean the Christian holy book. It is at times referred to as the Holy Scripture.

However it’s very important to note the English word “Bible” is derived from the Greek word “Biblia” which means translated means.

It’s against the above background that the Bible is a book of many books as search the many books present in the Bible qualify it to be called a library of books. It’s also because there’s no single another named at the beginning of the Bible as it’s always done with any other book. Hence meaning that many writers contributed to the writing of various books in the Bible which have something to add to religious believers.

**TESTAMENT**

The word testament is derived from a latin word “testametium” which is a translation of a Greek word “Diarteke” meaning either the “past will” or an agreement or the covenant or the pact.

Therefore the term Old Testament is used to mean the old covenant made between God through Moses at mountain Sinai (Exodus 24) on the other hand the fresh new testament the new covenant made between mankind and through Christ on the cross at the place called Golgotha meaning the place of the skull.

**OLD TESTAMENT**

There are 39 books which fall under the following categories.

**Pentateuch (first five books);** Numbers, Exodus, Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy

**Historical books;** Judges, Joshua, Ruth, 1st and 2nd Samuel, Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles

**Poetic (wisdom books);** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs

**Prophetic books;**

* Having major prophets, Isaac, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
* Minor prophets, Jonah, Micah, Haggai, Obadiah, Zachariah, Malachi

**PENTATEUCH**

The Pentateuch is derived from the Greek word “Pentanteuchos” which means five volume books. In the Biblical context the term refers to the first five books including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Because of their emphasis on law these books are commonly referred to by the Jews as the law books or the Torah. The Pentateuch is basically concerned with the importance of the law to the chosen nation of the Yahweh i.e. Israelites which they received it through Moses at mountain Sinai.

The question of the authorship of the Pentateuch has raised a lot of controversies. There are two views as to the authorship of the Pentateuch in terms of its composition including;

* The traditional view comprising the Jewish and the Christian theologians who hold that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.
* The second one is the modern or critical scholars who oppose the traditional view.

**MOSES AS THE AUTHOR OF THE PENTANTEUCH**

Moses is regarded as the writer of the Pentateuch by the Jewish and the Christian theologian because of the following reasons.

To both the Jews and the Christian theologians Moses is at the center of the Jewish tradition especially the law and Israelites rituals. This has made some scholars to believe that he could have had a hand in the composition of the Pentateuch.

Moses is well known as the law giver and the fact that the first five books consider the law as the linking theme, the argument is that Moses could have written these laws that he himself gave.

Moses’ call by God makes him to appear to have had a hand in the writing of the Pentateuch. In this case God is seen to have called and inspired Moses to do such wonders in the light of salvation of the chosen people with regard to this and the fact that the Bible is an inspired word of God, Moses is believed to have been inspired to write the Pentateuch.

There is internal evidence that Moses knew how to write. This is because of the Egyptian education which he received while at the palace of Pharaoh that God commanded and inspired him to write every word that he had said.

In exodus 17:14-15 God is presented instructing Moses to write an account of the victory over the Amalekites so that it could be remembered.

In Deuteronomy Moses is said to have written God’s law in a book taking care not to have stopped out anything.

Moses’ role at mountain Sinai as a covenant mediator has made him so significant as having had a hand in the writing of the Pentateuch. This is because the covenant is a point of references in all books of the Pentateuch.

The existence of oral traditions has made many people to believe that Moses played a role in the writing of the Pentateuch. These people are convinced that Moses used the existing oral traditions of his people to write about all the events that took place before he was born. Creation story.

The personality of Moses has been regarded so significantly in the New Testament because the man who enjoyed close relationship with God e.g. Christ approved the Mosaic Law and during the transfiguration of Christ Moses is seen appearing as an acknowledgement to the fact that Christ fulfilled the law as it was written by Moses.

Moses as the author of the Pentateuch is attributed to his experience of God during the burning bush events. The fact that the burning bush was only witnessed by Moses outs him in a special position to have put down his personal experience.

Some scholars have argued that King Hannurabi had written before the existence of Moses it’s against such a background that we argue that Moses also stood up and wrote the Pentateuch.

**ARGUMENT AGAINST MOSES BEING THE AUTHOR OF THE PENTATEUCH**

Moses lived during the time of oral tradition. This was the period where spoken words were believed being wore important and accurate than the written words hence meaning Moses could not have thought of writing any information down.

There are a lot of contradictions or inconsistencies in the content of the Pentateuch e.g. there are 3 different names for Moses’ father in law. At one time he is called complicated names in the Bible i.e. Revel, Habed, Jethro contradictions are also recorded in the story of Noah and the flood where seven pairs of every clean animal are presented in Genesis 7:2 as opposed to Genesis 7:8 where one pair of every kind is given against such a background Moses could not have repeated himself if he was the author of the Pentateuch.

Deuteronomy 34:8 indicates the death of Moses, burial and how Israelites mourned for him. One wonders how Moses could have written about his death and how people mourned for him and above all how he was buried.

Moses is believed to have been too busy to get the time needed for writing. After his call and the subsequent commissioning, Moses is presented going straight to the Egyptian Pharaoh. This marked the beginning of his long time commitment where he became a liberator, low giver, mediator, religious and pol reader. Hence he had no time for writing because he even died prematurely before reaching the Promised Land.

It’s evident that Moses wasn’t in existence at the time of creation. One wonders how Moses could have written the creation accounts that happened long time before his birth.

There’s also evidence that the Pentateuch only gives reference to Moses as an individual in Exodus 2:14 Moses is referred to as being afraid after killing the Egyptian slave master and in Exodus 3:1 following Moses is presented looking after the sheep and goats when the lord appeared to him. This is an indication that the messages were written by someone who was simply making reference to Moses.

There are many repetitions with in the books of the Pentateuch e.g. the ten commandments were referred to as in the Exodus books and later referred to as in the book of Deuteronomy therefore its right to argue that Moses could not have repeated his own stories if he was the writer.

There is evidence that the books of the Pentateuch were written after sometime of the Babylonian exile which occurred much later after the death of Moses against such a background would not have had the knowledge of the event that occurred.

**GENESIS**

The word is used to mean the beginning or origin. In the Bible Genesis is the first book of the old testament as indicated in the name. the book of Genesis makes an elaborate attempt to explain the origin of whatever exists in the universe.

The creation account

The creation account in Genesis is given in two versions i.e. the first version is in Genesis 1 and the other in chapter 2.

**First creation account (Genesis: 1)**

The chapter 1 shows that God was there before anything existed and God is presented creating heaven and earth. The subsequent acts of the creation are presented following the order of days/ in the form of days where God is depicted creating the earth in 6(six days) with the work of creation being punctuated by the creator admiring the work done.

On the first day God created light using his only word i.e. “Let there be light.” This light is separated from darkness to separate the beginning of days and nights as God named it then.

On the second day God created water and land.

On the third day God created plants and birds.

On the fourth day God created the heavenly luminaries like the stars, moon, and sun.

On the fifth day God created animals in their different sites and kinds

Finally God reached the climax of his work where he created man in his own image using words i.e. “Let us create man in our own image.”

There after God is presented placing man in the Garden of Eden to guard and cultivate it for the survival. Man thereafter was given the command to be fruitful, multiply and fulfill the earth and to subdue.

The second creation account

The second creation story, it dwells much on man whom God created in his own image and for whom the earth was made habitable. This means that God created plants and animals for man to feed on.

According to the writer, after all creation activities God is presented as a Potter taking a dust for shaping a human being out of it and after this God is presented breathing a life giving breath into the man’s nostrils and he begun to live.

Thereafter God is presented placing man in the Garden of Eden to guard and cultivate it.

In Genesis 2:10 there is reference to the possibility of sin being committed in this case God instructed man not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge or what’s good and what’s bad.

All the above occurred at the time when God had already created man and it was a state which didn’t please God. Because of this God decided to create a woman out of the man’s rib (Genesis 2:21)

God then established an intimate relationship between a man and a woman. Following all these Adam is presented being very happy as reflected in his own words. “At last here is one of my kind. Bone of my born and flesh by my flesh. Woman shall be her name.

The creation of a woman from a man’s ribs it gives the religious importance of marriage and it means that right from the creation family life was blessed by God and that marriage was to be permanent.

**COMPARISON OF THE TWO CREATION STORIES**

Similarities

In both God existed before creation

In both God is source of life of all living things.

In both whatever God created was perfectly good.

In this case God is presented being full of gratitude and admiration.

The two accounts present God as a designer because he planned and organized all the creation himself.

In the two accounts God created man and woman to complement each other or live in a person relationship. It means that without the other one’s incomplete.

In both accounts there is no indication of unhappiness, disharmony and imperfection.

The crater of God is not portrayed in both the creation accounts. But God is only portrayed as the provider, loving and the great among others.

In the two creation accounts man is given the responsibility of other features/ creatures.

The love of God for man is portrayed to man in both creation accounts in the first creation story God created man in his own image and in the second account God created a partner for man.

In both the creation stories God is the author of family life. He created all living things as male and female.

**Differences**

Unlike Genesis 1, both male and female were created at the same time yet in Genesis 2 male was created first and then proceeded to creation of woman (Genesis 1:26, Genesis 2:22) from man’s rib.

In Genesis 1 the process of creation involved the use of commands i.e. “let there be some soil to make man and blew air into his nostril to make him live.

In the first creation story God created the universe within 6 days and rested on the seventh day. This element of time isn’t mentioned in the second creation story.

Unlike in Gen. 1 where man is presented to have been created as human beings. In Gen. 2 God clearly distinguished mankind as male and female.

In Gen. 1 the creation of the heavenly bodies e.g. stars, moon and sun are mentioned but Gen.2 doesn’t record those heavenly bodies.

In Gen. 1 no reference is made to the garden of Eden but in Gen. 2 the garden was well planned. Gen. 2:8- ff.

Gen. 1 indicates that God wasn’t alone in the creation activities reflected in the phase of *“let us make”* but in Gen. 2 God is presented as being alone with the phrase *“I will...”* meaning that the importance of the trinity is expressed in Gen 1 but that is a missing element in Gen.2.

In Gen. 1 God is presented as a spiritual and invisible being which is contrary to the second creation story where God is presented as a physical being through his creational activities of making the soil molding it into a human being and breathing into it a life giving breath.

In the first creation story marriage is presented as being procreation while in the second account of creation marriage is for companionship.

The day of resting from work is mentioned in Gen. 1 contrary to Gen. 2 where such is not mentioned.

The idea of time limit is mentioned in Gen. 1 as opposed to Gen. 2 where such is not mentioned.

In the 2nd creation story God prohibited man from eating the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge. This contrasts the first creation story where man is given the freedom to eat all kind of fruits and grains.

In the first creation story God created man in his own image implying that man had a special position among other features/ creatures. This contrast the second account where man seemed to have been created in an ordinary way.

According to Gen. 2 God is presented giving names to all creatures like the birds and animals. This is a missing element in the first creation account.

In the first creation story God is presented being equally concerned about his creatures. This contrasts the second account where God is seen to be more concerned about the welfare of man.

In Gen. 1:2 water appeared to be raging and hostile and engulfing everything in total darkness. This contrasts Gen. 2:6 where water is presented in a friendly way.

**THE SIGNIFICANT OF THE CREATION OF MAN IN GOD’S IMAGE (Gen. 1:26**)

In Genesis 1:26 man is presented being created in God’s likeness to resemble him. It came in the time when all other living beings had been created and the importance of this event include the following:-

The first one means that man had the duty to rule most of God’s creation. Its seen to be in line with God’s command to man when he instructed him to subdue the world(earth)/ bring it under his control.

It shows God’s love for mankind. In this case, God seems to be driven by love to create man resembling him out of other creatures.

It shows that man is a co-creator meaning that man was to continue with the work of creation as God had started. In doing this, man is expected to transform the work and make it more habitable.

It shows that man is unique from other creatures. The uniqueness of man can be reflected in his reasoning among other things hence meaning that man is different from other creatures and that he is the center of God’s creation.

It means that man is God’s representative on earth therefore man is expected to display the same qualities displayed/ possessed by God e.g. love…

It shows that man is to worship God. In this case man is presented being capable to sharing spiritual relationship with God hence worshiping God is a means of cementing man’s relationship with God.

It shows that man was immortal meaning that God had originally wanted man to live forever and ever in eternity just like him. This can be used to explain why God in Gen. 3:1 following is presented punishing man by removing the immortal life following the sin committed.

It means that man is in a better position to enjoy fellowship with God. In such a case man was/ is to share his feeling with God through praising and prayers.

It means that man was given free will and the knowledge to make choice on his own especially between good and bad. This is different from other creatures that are presented to work.

It means that both man and woman are equal before God and that they are all created to complement each other.

**HOW MAN HAS LIVED UP TO GOD’S IMAGE/ FULFILLED?**

It’s important to note that man to a certain extent has lived up to God’s image. It means that in trying to do so man has also registered some failures. However man has lived up to God’s image as given below.

Man is up to date engaged in procreation. So many children are being produced ever on a daily basis. This is a reflection of God’s command as recorded in Gen. 1:28 where man was given authority to multiply and fill the earth.

Man has also taken the initiative to preserve the environment. This is done through re-afforestation, soil conservation and even condemning those creating the emission in it.

Assistance is being extended to the needy people like the poor, orphans and crippled among others. This is being done to bring the world under control by overcoming such tragedies.

Man is worship God with/ in his effort to share the spiritual relationship it’s being done through praying, Bible study etc.

The Christian doctrine of equality is greatly emphasized and practiced. In this case people are treated equally irrespective of their sex, colors.

Man is also working hard to meet his daily needs i.e. food shelter, water.

Man is marrying monogamously. In Gen. 1:27 God created human beings as male and female implying that God meant two people of opposite sex to get married.

Man has softened turned to God especially in times of trouble e.g. sickness, poverty. This is fulfillment of man’s defendant on God for his survival as recorded in Gen. 1:29 where God’s presented providing man with all kinds of grains and fruits.

Man up to date is fighting for a peaceful living in life. It’s being done in a number of ways i.e. strict laws being put. This is because it was God’s original plan that man lived in harmony as reflected in the way man lived peacefully with animals before committing a sin.

Man is also protecting life in possible ways. It’s a fulfillment of God’s command of procreation.

Man’s up to date resting from work. This is a fulfillment of the way God rested from his creation activities as recorded in Gen. 2:3.

**HOW MAN HAS FAILED TO LIVE UP TO GOD’S IMAGE**

Divorce is very common in marriages today. This is going against God’s original plan for marriage which was meant to be permanent.

Sexual immorality is also common today. This is a failure for man to observe sex as being holy and only meant for the married. Such sex abuses include masturbation, fornication, rape, defilement and prostitution among others.

Being idle is failure on the part of man to give up to the expectations of being created in God’s image. God himself worked and so he expects us to do work.

There is an increasing level of discrimination in the society like Nepotism, tribalism, racial segregation. To God all people are equal.

The evils of witchcraft and magic have also invaded man today. This is man’s attempt to trust his own powers instead of trusting God’s Mighty power.

Man is also worshipping idols and other material things like money, leaders and others instead of God.

Selfishness and pride have over showed man’s relationship with one another. This is lack of care and concern for the needs of man.

Individual wastes are polluting the environment making it uncomfortable for man’s living. This shows man’s failure to conquer the world and bringing it under control.

Committing suicide is a failure on the side of man to live under the expectation of being created in God’s image. Instead is to give and preserve life through procreation.

There is also an increasing level of violence like wars, murder, and fights among others. This is contrary to God’s original plans where man was to live peacefully and in harmony with another.

Over exploitation of natural resources e.g. deforestation, depletion of mineral resources that it’s a failure for man. This is because God created man to be a co-creator but not to destroy.

There is exploitation and oppression. This may take the form of beating or form of mistreatment. This is an abuse of God’s image.

**WHAT GENESIS 1 AND 2 TEACH ABOUT MARRIAGE**

Marriage is willed by God. In Genesis 1:27 God is presented creating human beings as male and female and in Genesis 2:18 God was not pleased after realizing that Adam was lonely.

Monogamy is the ideal type of marriage. In Genesis 1:27 God created one man and one woman and in Genesis 2:22 God is presented creating only one wife of Adam.

Pro-creation is the main purpose of marriage in genesis 1:28 God commanded Adam and Eve to go multiply and fill the world.

In marriage both the man and woman are equal this is because they are all created in God’s image implying that they have the same role to play.

Marriage is meant to be between two people of the opposite sex. This is reflected in the way God created human being as male and female implying only that the union of such nature is recognized.

Marriage is an affair based on permanency this is derived from the creation of the woman from the man’s rib genesis 2:21-22.

Sex is a divine gift in marriage this means that it must be enjoyed for mutual comfort expression of love and between people who are legally married.

Marriage is for companionship. In Genesis 2:18 God created a woman to give company to the man after realizing that he was lonely.

In marriage the man and woman are complementary. Meaning that man can’t do without the other as reflected in the loneliness of Adam before the creation of Eve from his own rib.

Marriage is an important aspect of human life. It means that no one can do without it him or her to feel comfortable. This is reflected in the way Adam was perturbed before Eve was created.

In marriage the man is expected to show total love to his woman. In Genesis 2:24 God is quoted as saying “that’s why a man leaves his father and mother to unite with his wife…”

In marriage the man and woman are to work together and trust in God.

God in Genesis 1:28 God is presented instructing human beings to subdue the world.

**THE MEANING OF GENESIS 1:28**

In Genesis 1:28 God is presented commanding man to go multiply, conquer and subdue therefore it means that;

Man had a special and high position of responsibility among God’s creatures to act like a custodian of the earth.

It meant that man was to co-create with God that’s to say man had to continue with the work of creation.

It meant that man had to protect the environment by being creative to make the world more habitable.

It meant that man had a responsibility of producing children. This is a fulfillment of man being created as male and female.

Man had to live in harmony with God and fellow man. Therefore this implies that man was originally created to be happy.

It meant that man had the knowledge of God and man. It was to help improve on his standard in an effort to the bringing the earth under control.

**THE PROBLEMS MAN IS FACING IN TRYING TO LIVE UP TO GENESIS 1:28**

Man is up to date trying to follow God’s commands of multiplying, conquering and subduing the earth. However man is being faced with the following problems;

Wars and political conflicts have left many people dead, stunning, weak and there created unfriendly environment in that pro-creation can’t take place.

Due to financial constraints and economic hardships hence with many children are finding it difficult to support their large families in terms of food, clothing, shelter, school fees and other expenses.

Environmental degradation is also threatening the existence of man. Forests are being cleared to create land for man’s living but this is associated with a lot of problems like erosion, desertification, famine, drought that is due to the increasing population and other factors.

Epidemics diseases like the AIDS scourge are a threat to pro-creation. Some people even fear to get married because of the threats of AIDS.

Certain areas e.g. deserts and arid lands are inevitable and man is finding it difficult to put them under his control.

The modern education system is a threat to God’s command of pro-creation. The longer the people stay in the education system, the greater the reduction of their reproductive age moreover the educated today have fewer children compared to the uneducated.

Modern science has brought in effective use of contraceptives including condoms and pills. This hinder pro-creation. This is why the church is still having conflict as whether to accept such contraceptives or not.

There are cultural and legal requirements which hinder the optimum use of sex for pro-creation e.g. in most African tribes bride wealth has to be paid before the man and woman are allowed to stay together even when they are sexually ripe.

On the other hand legislation has been made to guard against pre-marital sex that would have gone a long way to increase the rate of pro-creation.

Religious believers and practices at times don’t favor the fulfillment of pro-creation e.g the catholic church has always encouraged the priests, nuns and monks to live single life/lives.

Some women for some reasons which may be social or medical have gone to practice abortion. This is a threat to the field of pro-creation.

Natural calamities like floods and earthquakes are threatening man’s life and making it difficult for the world to be brought under control e.g. Tsunami tragedy of December 2004 in the Asian countries would be remembered as one of the world’s greatest catastrophes in man’s history where about over 150,000 people are estimated to have lost their lives.

Currently the rate of population growth is alarming with such population explosion its predicted that without positive checks the world would become too small for man’s living. Some other countries like China and India are already threatened by this population explosion.

There are also changes in weather which affect the levels of food production. This tend to threaten human life.

In view of the current economic hardships, living single life is becoming fashionable. In this case, people find it better to remain unmarried. This hinders the would be good progress in the field of procreation.

**UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**

Marriage was a way of transmitting life i.e. it was meant for pro-creation.

Marriage was built on permanence. Divorce wasn’t recognized

Sex was only meant for marriage.

Marriage was a way of promoting social bond.

Marriage was a way of seeking for divine blessing from the ancestral spirits.

Marriage was a process but not an event.

It was a gateway to maturity.

Marriage was compulsory i.e. it was an obligation that had to be fulfilled. Inheritance of widow had to be inherited.

Polygamy was the ideal type of marriage recognized.

Intermarriages weren’t recognized.

Marriage was made legal through the paying of bride wealth/price.

Love wasn’t a key factor in marriage

Marriage was exogamous (members of the same clan/ family weren’t allowed to marry each other.

Marriage was a communal affair. It involved all people in a given community.

**UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY (importance)**

Children were a seal of marriage.

They were a sign of being normal.

Source of wealth.

Source of labour.

They provided prestige to the men.

Children were blessings by the ancestors to the family.

They provided happiness to the family.

They were a meaning of prolonging the life span of that family.

They provided security.

They were important in cementing love.

They also facilitated giving descent burial to the parents.

They gave company to their parents.

**SUMMARY OF HOW MAN WAS CREATED IN GENESIS 1 AND 2**

The biblical writer of Genesis presents the creation of man into charpters/versions i.e Genesis 1 and 2. These two creation accounts are different but have similar theological messages as observed below.

In Genesis 1 God meditated on how mankind was to be created as reflected in his own words “We shall create human beings to resemble us.” Genesis 1:26, this means that the creation of man wasn’t accidental but rather something planned.

In Genesis 1 mankind was created on the sixth day. It had followed the creation of all other living beings hence meaning that man is above other creatures.

God created human beings as male and female at the same time meaning that the two are equal.

God created man in his own image and likeness hence meaning that man has a unique relationship with God and is possessing some of his qualities.

God blessed after creating them implying the God gave all his fortune and blessing.

God commanded man to multiply and fill the earth meaning that man was to use sex for pro-creation.

Man was also given the authority to conquer and subdue the world meaning that man had the responsibility of co-creating with God.

God gave man the control of over all other living creatures e.g. birds, animals, fish. showing that man is superior and supreme to all living creatures.

God provided man with all kinds of grains and fruits. This is an indication that God is a sole provider and sustainer of human life.

God rested on the 7th / seventh day (sabath after finishing his creation activities meaning that man had to rest from work, worship and glorify God on this day.

In Genesis 2 God is presented picking the soil and molding man from it. This shows how weak a human being is.

Thereafter God breathed into the man’s nostrils and he began to live. This means that God is a source of life.

God is presented planting the garden of East of Eden and later placed man there to guard and cultivate it.

Later on God gave man the freedom to eat all the fruits in the garden except those on the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and bad which was in the middle of the garden.

After the creation of all living beings God brought them to man to name them, it shows that man is the master of all other living creatures.

God later realized that it was not good for man to stay alone implying that man can’t enjoy his life alone but in the company of others.

Following the above God made man into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping God took out one of the man’s rib and close the flesh.

Out of the man’s rib God formed a woman and brought her to the man meaning that marriage is willed by God. It also shows the co-existence of human beings in marriage.

The man is presented being over joyed after seeing a woman. Man was quoted saying “At last here is one of my kind, born from my bone and flesh from my flesh.” Showing that woman is a source of happiness to the man.

The man later named her woman with the reason that she came out of his rib.

Man and woman were both naked but not ashamed. This showed that they were still innocent and their conscience was still clean and neutral.

The biblical writer ends by saying that man shall live his father and mother and unite with his wife to become one.

**SIGNIFICANCY OF A WOMAN BEING CREATED IN A MAN’S RIB**

It means that God is the author of marriage therefore this implies that marriage is a divine institution.

It means that the man and woman are complementary i.e. they cannot do without each other.

Means that man and woman are companions in their marriage relationship

It shows that monogamy is the ideal type of marriage. This is because only one rib was removed from the man’s body to make the woman out of it.

Means that both man and woman are to guide and bring joy to each other. Adam expressed his joy saying “At last here is one of my kind born of my bone and flesh from my flesh.”

It means that woman and man are equal according to God’s plan. Adams response after the creation of Eve helps to show the importance of each human being into the life of another.

It means that man can’t enjoy relationship with any other creature. This is reflected in the loneliness of Adam when he was still with other living creatures before creation of Eve.

It means that man and woman are to love each other. This is because they shared the same body and spirits. It shows that a man is incomplete without a wife. In this case, God pointed out that a man shall leave his parents and be united to his wife.

A man and a woman are to co-exist. This implies that the man and woman are to live harmoniously in their relationship. This is evident in the way Adam was in disharmony with other creatures before Eve was created.

**PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE RIB STORY**

Women are regarded to be a weaker sex compared to men but which is not the case.

Many men look at women as being sex objects meaning that they are there to satisfy men’s sexual desire. Therefore a woman is not expected to say no if a man demands for sex.

Women are treated as being inferior i.e. they aren’t at the same level with men in all spheres of life like politics, economic, social and cultural, religious fields.

Some men have a feeling that the women should obey their commands or should not do anything without the man’s permission.

In some societies women are denied eating certain types of foods e.g. liver, chicken and eggs.

In some cases, they are denied chances of participating in politics because of the belief that they are inferior and therefore would not contribute any idea to govern the society.

Some men beat up their wives because of the feeling that they are from their ribs and can therefore be treated in whatever way they would wish.

Women are also exploited in terms of labour at home. In such a case, a man simply sits and watches as the woman battles with the domestic duties.

In some cases the man is considered the natural head of the family hence the family members think they should first consider the men.

Some men look at women as their subordinate meaning that men are the masters of the women and women are more or less like servants.

**THE TEACHING (NATURE OF GOD) ABOUT GOD IN GENESIS 1 AND 2**

God is the source or the giver of life in both the creation stories. God created everything in their different forms and totality and gave them life.

God is omnipotent. In Genesis 1 God used commands of “Let there be” and all could happen accordingly. This means that God is all powerfull and there is no any other known force about his own.

God delegates works. In Genesis 1:28 God gave man the authority to multiply and subdue the earth in Genesis 12:19 God created all animals and birds and brought to man and named them.

God existed before the creation of the universe. In this case no mention is made of Gods’ origin of the two creation accounts.

God is loving, in Genesis 1:26 God created man in his own image and provided them with all kinds of grains and fruits of their survival and in Genesis 2:15 God put man in charge of the garden of Eden.

God is divine and spiritual. In Genesis 1 God used words to create the universe without being seen physically.

God’s the source of happiness to mankind. In Genesis 1:29 God provided man with all kinds of grains and fruits to use for their happiness and in Genesis 2:8-21 God provided Adam with a partner after realizing that he was lonely and therefore unhappy.

God’s the supreme being because whatever God said and did happened at his will and wish.

God is a designer and a planner. In Genesis 1 God created living and nonliving things following a sequence in the form of days. In the last day God is quoted as saying “And now we will make human beings...” implying that everything had already been preplanned.

God is the Almighty father. In both accounts of creation God is presented as the master mind when he planned and organized for the creation of the universe himself.

God is the source of goodness and perfection. Whatever God created was perfectly good and gave him pleasure and admiration (Genesis 1)

God is a holly being. In Genesis 2:16-17 God commanded man not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge of what’s good and what’s bad. This means that God had already seen the possibility of man committing sins and therefore this sided to guide against in order to keep the holiness of his creatures.

God is a caring being. In Genesis 1:29 God provided man with all kinds of grains and fruits to eat and in verse 30 God provided wild animals and all the birds with grass and leafy plants for food.

God desires peace and harmony. In both Genesis 1 and 2 God made man to live in harmony with animals and other living creatures both home and wild.

**THE NATURE OF MAN/ GENESIS 1 AND 2**

Man is a unique creature. This means that man is different from other living beings because he can reason and can even judge between what’s good and what’s bad among other living beings.

Man’s created in God’s image. This means that among other living creatures, its only man resembling God.

Man’s a weak creature. In Genesis 2:27 God formed man out of the soil meaning that man’s life is fragile.

Man’s a co-creator with God. In Genesis 1:28 God commanded man to multiply and bring the world under control. This implies that man had to continue with the work God had started.

Man needs a companion in order to be peaceful, happy and to become fully a man.

In Genesis 2:18 Adam was lonely and unhappy before the creation of Eve.

In all aspects man and woman are equal in all aspects of life. In Genesis 1:26 human beings both male and female are created in God’s image and this means that none is above the other.

Man needs to rest from work. In Genesis 2:3 God rested from the work of creation, blessed it and set it apart as a special day after creating man in his likeness. This means that man should also rest like his own creator.

Man is a dependent on God. God provided everything he needed in life food and a companion according to both the two creation stories.

God created man to live a pure life. This is why God commanded man not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge of what’s good and what’s bad.

Man’s a responsible being. In both accounts of creation, God gave man the authority to be the master of all other creatures.

**FALL OF MAN**

After the creation of the Garden of Eden he placed there man and he was given the responsibility to be the master of other creatures.

God also provided man with the necessary equipment to sustain his life and above all he was created to resemble God. This means that man held a special position among other creatures. Besides that God commanded man not to eat or even touch the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge of what’s good and what’s bad.

Despite the fact that a man was supposed to be a master of God’s creation, he was expected to realize his dependence on God who gave his life.

However in Genesis 3:1 following man disobeyed God by not following the simple command he had been given. In this case the devil which was portrayed as the serpent (snake) and the most cunning (tricky) animal became jealousy because of the good relationship between man and God. Consequently it deceived man to eat the forbidden fruit.

**The following are therefore the ways how man sinned against God**

Man rejected God’s authority over him. This is because he wanted to act independently without God’s will.

Man sinned by rebelling against God’s command. This is because God had instructed him not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge of what’s good and what’s bad that he unfortunately ate (Genesis 13:6).

Man also sinned by worshipping the earthly creatures instead of God his own creator. This is contrary to God’s original plan of creating man in his own image where he only had to worship the Almighty.

Man sinned by seeking equality with God his own creator. This is why the snake deceived man that after eating the fruit he would be like God (Genesis 3:5).

Man lacked trust in God. This is because man didn’t listen to the command that God had already given him.

Man sinned against God by lying. In Genesis 3:10 man lied to God by saying that he was hiding from God because of his nakedness but not of the sin he had committed.

Man also abused God’s intention of creating him in God’s image which demanded man to behave in the same way like God. Unfortunately man ignored.

Man sinned against God by being greedy. In this case God had already done everything possible to man to the extent of creating him in his image but man still wanted more.

Man was proud in other words he wanted to make a name for himself by acting independently and thinking that he would be wise like God.

Man sinned against God by refusing to subdue the earth as God had instructed him to do so. In such a case, instead of man allowing the snake to control his feeling man should have been the one to bring the snake under his control.

Man lacked respect for God because man refused to respect the simple command God had given him.

Man sinned against God by hiding away. This is because he had to enjoy a closure relationship with God.

**GOD’S JUDGEMENT ON ADAM, EVE AND THE SNAKE**

Man was to struggle and sweat for his survival hence the free provision that man enjoyed from God was no longer in existence (Genesis 3:17)

Man was chased from the Garden of Eden and he became a slave.

The world that was good for the man’s living became under curse. It was to produce weeds and thorns and the man was to work harder in order to make the earth produce what he wanted.

The woman became miserable because God cursed her by increasing troubles in pregnancy and pain during delivering (Genesis 3:16)

God brought enemity between the woman and the offspring’s of the snake. This means that the dominance of man over other creatures was removed (Genesis 3:15).

The immortal life which was given to man for the time of creation was taken away. Therefore man was to die and go back to the soil that from he was formed. (Genesis 3:19)

The good relationship between man and God was also broken. It means that man’s relationship with God was no more and the blessing that man enjoyed from God changed to the fear of God. This was as a result of the guilt that made man to hide away from his own creator.

The good relationship of natural understanding between the man and woman was completely broken. In this case the man denied responsibility of his sins and blamed the woman for her failure to resist the temptations by the snake/ Satan (Genesis 3:12)

The man and woman lost their state of innocence i.e. they came to know what’s good and what’s bad consequently they realized that they were spiritually naked and this was because the grace the Lord had left them (Genesis 3:10)

The woman were made subordinate and submissive to the man and above all she was to have desire for him (Genesis 3:16)

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

However God also demonstrated his love to mankind despite of the punishment. He’s presented as a loving father who punishes his children out of love.

**NATURE OF SIN AS PRESENTED IN GENESIS 3**

Sin is attractive, persuasive and pleasurable. In Genesis 3:6 Eve was lured to eat the fruit because it appeared beautiful and good.

Sin creates a sense of guilt in man. After eating the forbidden fruit they went hiding (Genesis 3:10)

Sin is judged and punishable meaning that God tolerates no disobedience or sin. This is clearly shown by the fact that God had to punish man because of his disobedience.

Sin destroys the relationship between man and God and man and man. God punished man after eating the forbidden fruit and Adam blamed Eve for the sin they had committed (Genesis 3:14 following)

Sin makes man defenseless and helpless. In Genesis 3:10 Adam failed to defend himself and instead blamed Eve for the sin committed.

Sin brings lack of confidence in one’s self. In Genesis 3:10 Adam and Eve became afraid and went into hiding.

Sin leads to loss of human dignity. This is deflected on the way Adam and Eve felt ashamed after eating the forbidden fruit.

Sin causes suffering Adam and Eve lived a miserable life after being sent out of the garden

Sin doesn’t mark the end of God’s love for mankind. Even after man had disobeyed and sinned against God, God continued to show his love and care to mankind. In this case God looked for man from their hideout and also clothed them.

Sin is a product of man’s disobedience. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command by eating the forbidden fruit and eventually sinned.

Sin moves from one individual to another i.e. it moved from Eve to Adam meaning that an individual can lead another into sinning.

Sin deprives man of joy, happiness, freedom and harmony. Adam and Eve lost their happiness and freedom after eating the forbidden fruit which led to their punishment.

Sin originates from man’s inner heart and mind. Its influenced by an attitude other than the external evil act. In Genesis 3:6 Eve had a feeling that it was good to eat the forbidden fruit.

Sin creates awareness of one’s self. As soon as man had eaten the forbidden fruit they came to realize that they had done something wrong and even felt that they were naked (Genesis 3:10-11)

Sin makes man do act in secrecy and darkness. This explains why Adam and Eve went into hiding.

Sin creates a sense of denying one’s responsibility. Man denied the responsibility of being the master of all creation and allowed to be deceived by the snake. Adam also denied the responsibility of eating the forbidden fruit and instead blamed Eve.

**LESSONS CHRISTIANS ARE LEARNING FROM THE FALL OF MAN**

Christians depend depend on God instead of seeking for self-independence the way Adam and Eve did but ended up by sinning.

Christians should fellowship with God and one another other than other living creatures because Adam and Eve fellowshipped with the snake but ended up by sinning to God.

Christians ought to have faith and trust in God. Adam and Eve lacked faith and trust in God’s command of not eating the forbidden fruit and the provision God had given them.

Christians should ought to avoid sins in order to be in good relationship with God. As soon as man had eaten the forbidden fruit, the good relationship enjoyed with God came to an end. This means that God hates evil.

Christians should be God loving. God looked for Adam and Eve from their hide out and even clothed them. This means that God cares and protects all the time.

Christians should be contented with what they have. God had provided Adam and Eve with everything they needed for their survival but they showed greediness by eating the forbidden fruit.

Christians should accept their mistakes and responsibilities. Adam blamed Eve for the sin of eating the forbidden fruit but still God had to punish him.

Christians should obey God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command and ate the forbidden fruit but this later turned out to be a sin.

Christians should avoid lying. Adam and Eve lied God after eating the forbidden fruit that they hide because of their nakedness.

Christians should treat each other equally. God pronounced equal judgment on Adam and Eve after eating the forbidden fruit and consequently punished them equally.

Christians should avoid from seeking equality from God. They should realize that they are created by God and the fact that they are created in God’s image, it doesn’t put them on the same level with the creator.

Christians should avoid hiding away from God. Adam and Eve went into hiding after sinning but God knew where they were. Therefore this implies that nothing is beyond God’s knowledge.

**HOW MAN HAS CONTINUED TO SIN AGAINST GOD TODAY**

Man is still greedy in many ways. He wants anything that way appear good. This explains why some people tend to marry many wives and others still among other aspects of greediness.

Lying is quite common today. In this case people don’t stand for the truth majorly because of the fear of losing in one way or another.

In some cases woman are blamed for almost all evils in society. In many families women are regarded to be responsible for the indiscipline of the children.

Man is up to date disobeying God’s command. Among others people are stealing, fighting and adultery.

Many people deliberately denied the responsibilities of their sins instead they use for excuses to justify their wrong doings/ deeds.

Pride is also common today. In this case some people tend to put themselves above the others and even consider themselves being unique.

Man is still an agent of sin. In this case an individual way be forced to sin by another like giving and accepting bribe.

There exists distrust or mistrust in families. In this case both the husband and the wife have a tendency of doubting each other on their relationship like being faithful having love for one another etc.

In some cases there are people who take themselves to be right in all ways. This is being self-deceptive the way Eve thought it was right to eat the forbidden fruit.

Man is a slave to whatever seems to be beautiful. They go into such things with no feeling that its fashionable and therefore good for consumption. This may explain to why girls bleach their faces and even wear provocative dresses which in the end promotes sexual immorality.

In many ways man is trying to do without God. In such cases people have a feeling that they are capable of doing things on their own.

**SPREAD OF SIN**

After the fall of man, sin became a common thing. Man didn’t only stop rebelling against God but he continued to wage wars against his fellow man. It’s depicted from Genesis 4-11 Cain killed his brother Abel because Abel who was a shepherd offered the best lamb to God with humility or respect and God accepted. Meanwhile Cain who was full of brobe didn’t please God with his offering. From this story the following theological messages can be derived.

Once man broke his relationship with God also the human relationship is broken. This is justified by the fact that Cain who had broken relationship with God decided to envy his brother and killed him.

Selfishness is a sin. Cain was selfish and this made him not to sacrifice to God properly. This explains why God rejected his offering.

Jealousy is also a sin before God. Cain’s jealousy made him to kill his brother.

Pride is a sin,Cain put himself in a special position and consequently offered the bad part of his harvest.

Cain committed a sin of murder because it was an abuse of God’s creation. In this case, Cain being a co-creator would have preserved God’s creation instead of destroying.

God is a loving father because after punishing Cain, he provided protection.

In Gen 6:1 – following man sinned against God by having sexual relationship with the heavenly beings (Angels). This was a serious disobedience before God. Its showing a man attempted to be independent from his creator by deciding to do things on his own and floods (Genesis 7 following) and the consequently God punished man by sending floods however God didn’t destroy the whole world but spared some livings through Noah who was the only righteous man.

In Gen 11:1 following man again sinned against God by building the tower of Barbel. This came after the flood when Noah’s family had multiplied and had become proud because of their ancestor (Noah) whom God had saved from destruction.

Because of the above pride, Noah’s descendants decided to build a city with a tower reaching the sky.

**HOW MAN SINNED BY BUILDING THE TOWER OF BARBEL**

It was a sin of self pride. In this case man wanted to seek for a false name as having done something great without depending on God meaning that man had forgotten that God only up holds the humble and brings down the proud. This may be used to explain why the builders never succeed in their plans (Gen 11:4)

Man was selfish. In Gen 4 man is quoted saying “now lets build a city with a tower that reaches the sky.” Meaning that man had decided not to share his wisdom with God.

Man sinned by seeking equality with God. It explains why they wanted to build the tower such that they could be in touch with God (Gen 11:4)

Man misused the freedom having given him despite being created in God’s image man had to recognize and use his dependence on the creator instead of choosing his own life.

Man misused work. In (Gen 2:15) God placed man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and guard it. It means that by man building the tower to reach the sky he was trying to neglect his earthly duty of pro-creation.

By building this tower man was unrading God and his right as the creator. If one wanted more in his life man would have consulted his creator. On this case man decided to build on his own.

Man was also greedy. God had initially given man everything he needed for his survival but still wanted more by reaching God through the tower.

Man sinned against God through idolatry. In this case man wanted to adore the own self fishes effort at having done some great for themselves without God’s assistance.

Man sinned by trusting their own wisdom instead of trusting God’s wisdom. This implies that man used false wisdom to satisfy his own selfish ambitions because it lacks originality from God.

Man disobeyed God’s command which was to multiply and fill the earth instead they choose to build the tower reaching the sky where they could probably lived if God had not interceded by destroying it (Gen 11:6)

Man sinned by trying to forge false unity among themselves. God had already created human beings both male and female in his image implying that they were one but still man under looked to what God created.

Man misused God’s resources to bring the world under his control and make it a better place to live in instead man chose to destroy the soil by making bricks (Gen 11:3)

Man abused God’s image in them by being hostile to the earth which was meant for their survival and to God who created them. In this case man was created in the likeness of God could have behaved like God himself.

**THE SIGNIFICANT (LESSONS) OF THE TOWER OF BARBEL TO MODERN CHRISTIANS**

Christians should rely on God in all circumstances therefore they should avoid challenging God’s authority.

Christians should be contended with what they have in other words Christians should at all time be satisfied with what God has given them instead of being greedy.

There is a need for Christians to avoid misusing their tongues in order to be peaceful among themselves and with God.

Christians should fulfill their human obligations or responsibilities unlike the builders of the tower of Babel who had tried to neglect their duties of controlling the world.

Christians should accept God’s love for them and for that matter love him. God showed his love to the builders by only destroying the building and preserving human life.

There is a need for Christians to accept and acknowledge that God is all knowing and can therefore se whatever his creatures are doing in any place.

Christians should avoid gossiping among themselves with the false pretence of forging unity.

Christians should at all times consult God in their daily activities in order to guarantee success. The builders of the tower of Babel failed to consult God and their work became meaningless and useless when God finally destroyed the building.

Christians should acknowledge God as the supreme being therefore there is a need for Christians to accept that they are dependants on God.

There is a need for Christians to recognize and accept God as a judge and therefore can punish accordingly.

Christians should avoid idleness which is the source of evil. The builders of the tower of Babel were tempted because they were confined in one place in an idle way (Gen 11:2)

Christians should humble themselves before God instead of seeking for self pride. This is because God upholds the humble and brings down the proud as evidence when he destroyed the tower of Babel which building was based on pride (Gene 11:4)

Christians should avoid too much ambition based on selfishness in order to succeed in their work. The builders on the tower of Babel were ambitious to make a name themselves through the building program but they were turned out to be meaningless.

**GOD’S SALVATION FOR MANKIND THROUGH THE PATRIARCH (Genesis 12)**

The word patriarch means the head of an extended family. In this case it refers to Abraham and his immediate descendants Isaac, and the great grand descendants. Therefore the patriarch were the ancestors of those who later came to be called the Israelites.

It was by the call of Abraham by God to move to a strange land (Canaan) that the salvation history of mankind begun. Therefore the important biblical theme of elections of being chosen begins with the story of Abraham who responded to the voice of God with obedient trust and love.

From Gen 3 to 11 its indicated that God hadn’t got somebody who was faithful to cooperate with, God tried with Noah who was a good man at the beginning but later broke the relationship with God so God couldn’t continue with him although he was a savoiur of the remnants at the times of the floods.

After the floods sin continued to spread and God took the initiative to rescue mankind by calling Abraham to start off his main plan for salvation. It shows that God never wanted to leave man in such a fallen state.

**CALL OF ABRAHAM (Gen 12:1 following)**

The call of Abraham marked a new beginning in the history of mankind. God took the initiative to begin the work of salvation to bring mankind in fellowship with him.

Abraham was the son of Terah in the city of UR/ Ur in Babylon. By the time of his call Abraham was an old man of 75years.

Abraham was originally known as Abram. The change of his name came later during the course of his relationship with God.

Abraham had a beautiful but barren wife by the names of Sarai and was later named Sarah by God.

Abraham was a wealthy man. He had a number of domestic animals and slaves.

Abraham was a worshiper of many gods (polytheist). He worshiped the gods of the moon, weather, sun etc.

Abraham had many relatives with whom he was living with together.

During his call God told Abraham to leave his native land and relatives to go to a land he was going to be shown. When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with faith, obedience and trust.

Besides Abraham didn’t mind on his personal comfort and the risks he would encounter on his way.

In the same way God told Abraham to change the form of his name from Abram to Abraham. He then moved from the city of Ur to the city of harann where he settled for a while. This city was highly civilized and because of this Abraham even acquired more wealth before even he started moving to Canaan together with his father Terah wife Sarah and his nephew Lot.

**REASONS FOR THE CALL OF ABRAHAM**

God wanted to use Abraham as a means of reconciling with mankind. Right from Gen 3:11 man had continuously created a gap between himself and God. Therefore the call of Abraham was an avenue of reconciliation between God and the sinful man.

God wanted to use Abraham as a means of salvation to mankind. In Gen 3:15 God had promised that the offspring’s of the woman would crush the devil. Therefore the call of Abraham was an instrument God intended to use for salvation.

God wanted to restore his image into man and man’s fallen dignity. These had followed the continuous disobedience of man where he had been behaving contrary to God’s expectation.

God called Abraham to restore joy, happiness, freedom and harmony which man had lost after eating the forbidden fruit in Gen 3.

God called Abraham to be the father of monotheism. Man was created to worship God only but unfortunately he had started worshiping other beings in the cities where Abram was living people were worshiping many gods e.g. sun and moon.

God called Abraham to enter into a new covenant relationship with him. This covenant would mark a new beginning in the life history of mankind. This is evident at a later stage through the sinatic and danidic covenant that reached the climax through the birth of Christ.

God called Abraham to create a model nation. In this case God wanted to use the Israelites to serve to the rest of other races, races of the world such that they may realize his love for mankind.

God wanted to show that he calls anybody irrespective of his background. Abraham was a moon worshiper and never a sinner but in spite of all this, God decided to use him to serve his purpose.

God called Abraham to remove and save him from the sinful environment he was living in. this explains why God instructed Abraham to leave his native land and go into a land he was going to show him.

God wanted to show the power of faith and obedience. Right from Gen 3:11, man has failed to be faithful and disobeyed. God therefore had intended to show that through faith and obedience one could be blessed just as Abraham received blessings.

God called Abraham to establish a permanent kingdom on earth in which his reign would be forever.

God wanted to show his love for the fallen man through the call of Abraham. In this case God intended to show that he doesn’t leave a sinner in a fallen state completely. It’s because of this that God chose one person in the name of Abraham to be achieved through that man would repent in the name of Abraham for his sins.

God called Abraham to extend his blessings to mankind. This is evident during the course of the call when God told Abraham that through him the whole world would be blessed.

**ABRAHAM AS A MAN OF FAITH**

When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with faith, obedience and trust. This was a positive attitude which became instrumental in showing his faithfulness considering that he had no knowledge of the God calling him.

Abraham accepted to move into a strange land which God was going to show him even when he was an old man of 75years. To man of Abraham’s age, status, cultural background and economic stand, it was practically difficult to accept such a call.

Abraham believed in God’s promise including blessings, land, son and a great nation. This means it would have been very difficult for Abraham to believe in all these promises if he wasn’t man of faith.

Abraham abandoned the worshiping the visible traditional gods and started worshiping the invisible God who spoke to him. In other words Abraham embraced monotheism at the expense of polytheism.

Abraham built alters for worshiping his new God in many places like schechem and bethel showing that he had faith in the new God.

Abraham accepted and made a covenant with God. He believed and trusted that God would fulfill his promises.

Abraham accepted the custom of circumcision of all the male children i.e. he’s descendants i.e. it was to act as an outward sign of the covenant faith he had made with God.

Abraham offered several sacrifices to God. In this case he sacrificed the best animals and birds. This explains why God accepted his sacrifices.

Abraham’s faith made him to change the form of his name. He was originally called Abram but later changed to Abraham after making a covenant with God even the name of his wife changed from Sarai to Sarah.

Abraham willingly accepted to sacrifice his only son called Isaac when God tested his faith. Had it not been his faith he could have hesitated God’s demand for sacrificing his only successor.

Abraham prayed to God to spare the weaked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was Abrahams faith that made God to reveal his plan for destroying these cities (Gen 18:16 – following)

**HOW CHRISTIANS CAN DEMONSTRATE THEIR FAITH TODAY**

Accepting baptism

Helping the needy

Following the ten commandments

Giving offertory in the church

Fasting

Meditating upon God’s wonders

Praying consequently

Repenting

Accepting to suffer innocently e.g. persecution, discrimination

Preaching the good news

Fellowshipping

Accepting God’s call through serving others

Embracing the idea of reconciliation and forgiveness

Going for holly wedding

**GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**

Abraham was promised a land which was unknown to him. He was to leave his native land and go into his land which later became known as Canaan.

Abraham was promised very many descendants. These descendants were to occupy the Promised Land.

Abraham was promised a child and that the child would be a son. This came as good news considering that Abraham who was already 75years.

God promised him divine protection. In this case God was to curse whoever would curse Abraham.

God promised Abraham to be the source of blessings to all other nations. God is quoted as saying “I will bless those who bless ‘you’” Gen 12:3

Abraham was promised a famous name. his name would be known all over the world Gen 12:12

God promised that Abraham’s descendants would become a great nation (Gen 12:2)

**GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (Gen 15:1 following)**

A covenant is a binding agreement which can either be made between 2/ two individuals or a group of individuals. A covenant made between two equal parties e.g. man and man known as Bilateral Agreement. Meanwhile a covenant made between equal parties e.g. God and man is known as Sovereign Agreement. Various types of covenants are found in all societies and cultures. In some societies a covenant is sealed with an oath while in others they have the blood packed showing that agreement is permanent.

In the same way God couldn’t use Abraham without making a covenant relationship with him and this was a covenant between two equal parties. In this case God took the initiative to bring Abraham closer to him through a covenant by asking him to offer sacrifices.

Abraham had to bring some animals (goats, cows, ram) all of 3years old and some birds (dove, pigeon) to which he responded positively.

Abram cut the animals into two halves and placed each half opposite the other into rows but did not cut the birds. Then Abraham waited for the Lord to act (Gen 15:10)

Late in the evening smoky firepot and a flaming touch suddenly appeared and past in between the halves of the animals. This shows God’s presence and acceptance of Abraham’s sacrifices then Abraham had God’s voice promising that the land of Canaan in which Abraham was to go could be given to his descendants.

* This covenant between Abraham with God marked a new beginning of divine human relationship with God that became very important to all nations. In this case, it became a foundation of Israel’s faith. As an outward sign of the covenant relationship. Abraham and his descendants were to follow the custom of circumcision of the male children.

Abraham ‘s call to enter into a new relationship with God who had chosen him demanded a break away from the past life. God decided to use him besides human weaknesses and limitations to bring changes in Abraham’s life as seen below;

Abraham changed from polytheism to monotheism when he became a worshiper of holly mighty God.

Abraham changed his homeland. He left his birth place as Mesopotamia in Ur and moved to the unknown land promised to him (Gen 12:4)

Abraham left his relatives and became a friend to God.

Abraham changed the form of his name. he was originally known as Abram but after he became known as Abraham meaning the father of many descendants. The name of his wife also changed from Sarai to Sarah meaning the mother of many descendants.

Abraham changed his status. He was an ordinary man but after the covenant he became a source of blessing to all mankind.

Abraham experienced circumcision which was to act as an outward sign of the covenant he had made with God.

Abraham started offering sacrifices to God as a sign of trustworthy and worshiping him.

Abraham built alters as a place for worshiping of his creator God.

**MAIN FEATURES/ CHARACTERISTICS OF COVENANT**

* This covenant is binding agreement between two equal parties. In this case God who is the creator is supreme and Abraham who is the creature is inferior.
* The covenant was sealed with sacrifices offered by Abraham to God (Gen 15:9). In this case Abraham sacrificed a cow, goat and a ram with each of them being 3years old and a dove and a pigeon.
* This covenant was characterized by a confirmation of promises. In this case God promised Abraham the possession of the Canaan land, blessings, many descendants and divine protection etc.
* This covenant involved change inform of names. In this case Abram came to be Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. This shows a new life and beginning.
* The physical sign of the covenant was that Abraham and his descendants had to follow the custom of circumcision of all the male children including the slaves in their community. This was to show that Abraham and his descendants were the chosen people and belong to the covenant relationship. It was also to show that God was going to fulfill his promises to Abraham.
* The covenant was characterized by faith, trust and obedience on the side of Abraham. In this case Abraham responded positively and willing to all instructions God gave him.
* The covenant was characterized by God’s presence. In this case God appeared to Abraham inform of smoky fire pot and a flaming torch (Gen 15:17)
* This covenant was God’s personal initiative. In this case God played an important role of revealing himself to Abraham to mark the beginning of his salvation plan for mankind following the disobedience of man from Gen 3:11
* This covenant was conditional, whatever God put in place was without any restriction and God appeared to be willing to fulfill all his obligations.
* This covenant involved a direct command between two parties. There wasn’t intermediary i.e. God came into direct contact with Abraham.
* The birth of Isaac was the final sign of the covenant between God and Abraham.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FALL OF MAN (Gen 3) AND THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 12)**

* In the story of fall of man, there was lack and loss of faith in God. When God revealed himself and called Abraham. God intended to restore his faith in mankind. Its rightly proved when Abraham responded with faith during his call.
* As one of the punishments after the fall of man in Gen 3 God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. In the call of Abraham, God promised him a new land which later came to be known as Canaan.
* After the fall of man in Gen 3 man lost his joy, freedom and harmony. In the call of Abraham God intended to bring salvation to mankind. Therefore this was a state towards restoring the lost joy, freedom and harmony.
* The fall of man in Gen 3 brought him a lot of curses like the soil producing weeds and thorns and the woman delivering in pain. In the call of Abraham God brought blessings with a new land, child and may descendants among others.
* Mans disobedience in Genesis 3 annoyed God as reflected in the judgment pronounced and the subsequent punishment. In the call of Abraham God aimed at forgiving the sinful man and bringing him more closer.
* Adam and Eve and even their descendants sinned against God by worshiping other gods. In the call of Abraham God started a new type of worship based on monotheism. In this case God instructed Abraham to abandon his traditional gods like the moon and the sun.
* God called Abraham to begin his salvation plan for the sinful man which started with Adam and Eve.
* After the disobedience man lost his human dignity and shame came into existence as reflected in the way Adam and Eve thought they were naked. In the call of Abraham God restored his lost dignity because Abraham responded to God without fear as it was the case with Adam and Eve.
* Adam and Eve sinned against God because of their greediness and the desire for material things however during the call of Abraham God instructed him to leave his wealthy city and go to the land he was going to show him
* God punished man after sinning against him. Therefore the call of Abraham was intended to bring reconciliation between the sinful man and God.
* Man lost God’s love after sinning in Genesis 3. Through the call of Abraham God proved and revived his continuous love to the sinful man.
* Man sinned against God by disobeying his command through eating the forbidden fruit. When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with obedience hence meaning that God revived the obedience that Adam and Eve lost in the beginning through the call of Abraham.
* After the fall of man, Adam and Eve lost God’s glory and holiness. Abraham’s response indicated repentance and restoration of God’s glory and holiness.
* Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 sin by being rebellious. However when God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with humility. This is an indication of man transforming his sinful nature which begun with the fall of man.

**IMPORTANCE OF ABRAHAM TO THE JEWS/ ISRAELITES/ HEBREWS**

* Abraham who was the son of Terah became the great ancestor of the Jews. On several occasions, the Israelites refer to themselves as the descendants of Abraham. This was because if the close relationship God was having with them and that God had with Abraham during his call.
* Abraham’s call marked the beginning of the salvation history of the Jews. It explains why the Israelites could time and again could call on the God of Abraham to help them especially during difficulties.
* The Jews shared the blessings and promises which God made to Abraham. Among others the Israelites were able to acquire the land of Canaan which was first promised to Abraham. God also provided protection against their enemies like the Canaanites.
* Through God’s choice of Abraham, the Jews became the chosen people and therefore superior to others around them. This became a source of pride among the Jews that started with Abraham.
* The custom of circumcision of all the male children in the Jewish society began with Abraham. Therefore this means that by following circumcision the Jews belonged to the abrahamic covenant. In other words, the ritual of circumcision became a physical sign of the Jews as the descendants of Abraham.
* Abraham’s response to move to a strange land gave a meaning to the later necessary movement of the Jews in the wilderness. Just as their grandfather wondered in the wilderness to reach Canaan, the Israelites also wondered on the wilderness after leaving Egypt before reaching Canaan. The land promised to their grandfather Abraham.
* Abraham’s construction of the alters to sacrifice to God like in Genesis 20:9 became an important aspect of the Israelites religion. Therefore to the Jews, Abraham is the founder of their religion.
* Abrahamic covenant became a basis for future covenant among the Jews. Just as God initiated the Abrahamic covenant so is the case in the sinatic covenant. All of which involved sacrifices and building alters. So the Jews it means that God was doing the same thing he did with their grandfather Abraham.
* Abraham’s faith in God laid a strong foundation of faith among the Jews. This is reflected in the later history when the prophets preferred to the humble beginning of Israel as having their roots in Abraham’s faith (Isaiah 51:1-3). The prophets also called upon the Israelites to be as righteous as their grandfather Abraham (Ezekiel 33:22-23)
* To the Jews Abraham is the founder of monotheism to which they were always constantly called for in Exodus 22 the Israelites were called to worship only Yahweh the God that delivered them from their Egyptian slavery.
* The call of Moses in Exodus 3:1- following was an avenue God intended to use in order to fulfil his promises in the Abrahamic covenant of (Gen 15:13-16). In these verses the descendants of Abraham were to be strangers in a foreign land and to be treated like slaves but God was also to punish their masters. This eventually came true when Moses finally delivered the Israelites from their slavery and the Egyptians punished.
* Through Abram, the Jews learnt how to be obedient to God. Therefore its right to argue that the Jews freely accepted to enter into a covenant God had initiated at the foot of Mountain Sinai because of their knowledge of Abraham’s obedience to God during his call.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF ABRAHAM’S RESPONSE TO/ FOR MANKIND TODAY**

* Abraham is the great ancestor of Christ who is the saviour of mankind. Therefore mankind is able to get/ to restore the blessing and the promises made to Abraham through Christ their savior.
* After the covenant relationship Abraham became a close friend of God because of his belief and therefore became the father of all believers. This means that Christians can only build a good relationship with God through following the examples of Abraham’s belief and faith.
* Abraham set an example of a belief in one God (monotheism). So when God calls a Christian one is expected to live out the past experience and begin to worship only God by believing in Christ his son.
* Just as God instructed Abraham and his descendants to follow the right practicing of circumcision which was a sign to confirm Abraham as a member of the covenant relationship, Christians today have to follow he rights of baptism and confirmation in order to qualify as members of the new covenant through Christ the descendant of Abraham.
* God took the initiative towards the universal salvation following the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore Abraham’ response to God’s call marked the beginning of the universal salvation of all human beings. This shows God’s concern and mercy towards human beings in a personal way.
* Christians are entitled to enjoy God’s promises and blessings to Abraham through Christ whereas Abraham was promised the land of Canaan; Christians today are promised heaven through their union with Christ who is the descendant of Abraham.
* The sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sin of man was final and it replaced the sacrifice of animals which Abraham did following the sinful nature of man from Gen 3:11. Therefore Christians are expected to sacrifice their lives for the service of God.
* Through Abraham God started the institution of divine calling. Therefore to Christians this marked the beginning of taking up religious vocations (calls) in the service of God e.g. being a pastor, bishop, priest etc.

**LESSONS/ SIGNIFICANCIES/ RELEVANCIES TO CHRISTIANS**

* Faith which is practical is called for among Christians among others Abraham accepted to offer his only son Isaac when God tested his faith. Therefore Christians could accompany their faith with good work.
* Christians should acknowledge God as a loving father and should therefore extend their love to the neighbours. God’s love is revealed not only to Abraham but to his descendants as exemplified by God’s promise which had to be fulfilled in the future.
* Christians should know that God can choose any one for his service regardless of his/her social economic or religious background among others. Abraham was a worshiper of many gods but God decided to use him to serve his purpose of bringing salvation to mankind.
* Christians should worship God only. After his call and the subsequent covenant with God, Abraham left his traditional gods and embraced monotheism.
* Christians should forgive and reconcile with one another. Through the call of Abraham God forgave the sinful nature of man and initiated a covenant intended to bring salvation to mankind.
* Christians should give material support to their churches. Abraham built many alters and later offered numerous sacrifices to God.
* Christians should live holly and pure lives. Abraham left all his traditional practices and got committed to the union he had entered into with God.
* Christians should accept to endure suffering in the service of God. Abraham’s call involved breaking away from the past life which he was used to and beginning a new life.
* There is need for Christians to be patient in life. In the course of making a covenant, Abraham had to wait for God to respond to his offerings which came late in the evening (Gen 15:9-17)
* Christians should always pray to God for themselves and for others. Abraham prayed for cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when God revealed his plan of destroying them (Gen 22-27)
* Christians should give their lives to God in trust and obedience just like Abraham believed in God’s protection as he moved to the Promised Land. This meant that Christians should forget about their personal comfort while serving God.

**ABRAHAM AS PRESENTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Abraham is presented as the grandfather of Christ who begun the salvation history of mankind (Mathew 1:1)

Christ presents Abraham seated together with Isaac and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven awaiting people with faith (Mathew 8:11-12) and (Luke 13:28-29)

Abraham is referred to as the ancestor of the Israelites whom God had shown mercy beginning with him and to his descendants (Luke 46-55)

Luke 1:68-79 looks at Abraham enjoying a close relationship and friendship with God who had made a solemn promise to rescue his descendants from their enemies.

Abraham is referred to as a man of faith. St. Paul points out that he was able to receive God’s blessings because of his faith (Roman 4:1- following)

Christ referred to himself as having been in existence before Abraham was born. He is quoted as saying “Before Abraham was born I am.” (John 8:50).

St. James called upon the masses to put their faith in action like their ancestor Abraham. He points out that Abraham was put right with God through his faith when he accepted to sacrifice his only son Isaac (James 2:14-26)

The pharesses/ teachers of the law referred to themselves as being the grandchildren of Abraham. This kind of feeling made them to become hostile to Christ whom they thought was trying to disassociate them from their ancestor by under mining his importance (john 8:31-47)

St. Paul acknowledges all the believers and faithful as the descendants of Abraham who were to receive what God promised through him.

**THE BOOK OF EXODUS**

The word Exodus means departure/ going out in the multitude. It comes from the Greek word Exodus.” In the Biblical context it refers to the mass movement of the children of Israel from Egypt where they were slaves to Canaan the Promised Land. This land was promised to their ancestor Abraham, who was a friend to God.

The Exodus event rests upon God’s power over his creation and natural forces as well as his unending/ undying love for mankind. In this case God used Moses as an instrument through whom his power could be demonstrated.

In the last chapters of the book of Genesis there is the story of the rise of Joseph who was the son of Jacob in Egypt (Gen 37 -50). As time went on, there was severe famine in Canaan and Jacob with his family moved to Egypt and settled at Goshen East of the Nile Delta.

This was during the time of Joseph the son of Jacob was sold off to the Egyptian traders by his brothers. At the same time it was a period of the rule of hymyksos who were anti-immigrant group of people.

Since Joseph the son of Jacob was given a high post in Egypt, the family of Jacob was well catered for during their stay in Egypt. They continued to multiply and became many in fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham their ancestor.

But as time went by Joseph died and also the rule of the immigrant hyksois was over thrown. The hyksos were then replaced by the house of rulers Pharaoh (kings). One of the first pharaohs was Seti and who was the father to Remeses II.

These two pharaohs embarked on building project which needed a lot of labour. Pharaoh Remeses II succeeded his father Seti and knew nothing about Joseph and the Hebrews/ Jews/ Israelites. Added to that the pharaoh and Egyptians had a general anti semitic feelings.

Because of the anti-semitic feelings, the Israelites found themselves in an unpleasant situation after their brother Joseph had died. Pharaoh Remeses II became so much aggressive to the Hebrews. This was because the Israelites had become a threat to the king and the Egyptians.

The pharaoh suspected that in case of war in the future the Israelites might join the immigrant group who were already spelt from powers and fight the Egyptians where they might even decide either to rule or to escape from the country. Consequently the pharaoh constricted the Israelites to hard and forced labour on the building project especially the cities of Pithorn and Remeses which were the supply centers for the king.

The above was done to crush the Israelites spirits and their rate of production. Unfortunately they even became more and more and this threatened the pharaoh even more than it had been consequently the pharaoh ordered for the killing of all male Hebrew children at birth through the midwives.

At such a critical moment were the Hebrews had lost hope in survival Moses was eventually born Exodus 2:1-10. Therefore the book of Exodus is a story of the birth of Israel as a nation and the chief character is Moses who led the Israelites out of the house of slavery out of Egypt. It was also through Moses the spokesman and the mediator of God that the Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites. God had also clearly declared to Abraham that his descendants would be strangers in foreign land and that they would be taken back to the land promised to him.

**THE BIRTH AND BRIEF BACKGROUND OF MOSES**

Exodus 2:1-10 talks about the birth and the planned faith of Moses. He was a Hebrew boy from the tribe of Levi who was born in Egypt.

The name Moses means saved from water i.e. after Moses was born, he was hidden in a basket by the mother at the Banks of River Nile and this was to save him from being killed by the Egyptian soldiers.

From his hide out, Moses was discovered by the pharaoh’s daughter and brought to the palace were he became an adopted child. He grew up under the pharaoh’s cave and once able to understand both the Egyptian and Israelites cultures. Its because he was an Israelite by birth.

He was educated under the Egyptian system and later he came to know how his people the Hebrews were being mistreated. Because of this knowledge and the love Moses had for his people he killed a task master in charge of labour and consequently fled for fear of being killed in revenge.

He took refuge in the medianite desert where he was accepted by Jethro who was a priest later on he was given zipporah in marriage and therefore became a son in law to Jethro and while he was there he became a shepherd of father in law.

**CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE BIRTH OF MOSES**

The Hebrews had been conscripted to hard and forced labour. They were meant to work overtime involving laying bricks through the day, collecting other building materials and erecting the building itself.

The Hebrews were being starved. They were given very little or no food at all and they weren’t allowed to complain. Consequently many of them died.

The population of the Hebrews was growing at a much faster rate and had become so strong. This threatened the pharaoh who feared that the Hebrews could at onetime join the immigrant group and fight them or escape from the country.

The immigrant hyksos had just been over thrown and replaced by a house of rulers known as the pharaoh. This means that Moses was born at a time of political transition when the pharaoh was just trying to consolidate his authority over the Egyptians, hyksos and the Hebrews.

Moses was born at the time when the pharaoh had ordered for the killing of all the male Hebrew baby boys. The midwives had to kill the male children at birth and the Egyptian soldiers had the responsibility of checking the Hebrews house to ensure that any baby boy was killed.

Moses was born at the time when the Hebrews had lost hope in survival. They knew that there was no one to rescue them from their slavery following the death of their brother Joseph.

Moses was born at the time when the Egyptian had a general anti-sematic feeling towards the Israelites i.e. the Egyptians hated the Hebrews and this explains why Moses had to kill the Egyptian slave master.

There was economic prosperity among the Egyptian and poverty among the Hebrews. The Hebrews had nothing for themselves but had to supply enough labour towards the building of the pharaoh’s cities.

**THE CALL OF MOSES (EXODUS 3:1 following)**

After Moses had fled the king’s palace in Egypt to the medianite desert, he then became a shepherd of his father in law Jethro.

While Moses was looking after the flock in the desert at the foot of mountain Sinai (Horeb), he had an extra ordinary vision in the form of the burning bush but which was not being commanded.

The burning bush captured Moses’ attention and as he moved closer to see what was happening. He heard a voice calling him by his name twice.

The voice instructed Moses to stand still and remove his sandals because he was standing on a holy ground.

The being calling Moses revealed himself as being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This terrified Moses who then covered his face with his hands and God is quoted as saying that “I have seen the suffering of my people; I have had them cry out.”

At this point God instructed Moses to go back to Egypt and rescue his people (Israelites) from the bondage of slavery that Moses never responded positively.

Its important to note that Moses was called by God at the foot of mountain Sinai that the later sons of Israel also found him. Therefore this means that the mountain became a place for God’s encounter with his people.

**MEANING OF GOD’S SYMBOLICAL APPEARANCE TO MOSES ON THE FOOT OF MOUNTAIN SINAI**

God’s appearance to Moses on the foot of mountain Sinai was symbolical. The vision he saw inform of a burning bush but which was not consumed changed the course of his life. God’s symbolical encounter with Moses is as explained below;

The burning but unconsumed bush reveals God’s unchangeable nature. Therefore this means that God keeps his promises and he is permanent. The fire signified God’s presence. In the later history the Israelites came to recognize God’s presence among them after seeing fire (Ezekiel 1:8 following)

God’s transcendence (un approachable nature) is revealed by the burning bush. This can be seen when God told Moses not to more nearer to the burning bush.

God’s holiness is also revealed in the burning bush. In this case God instructed Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holly ground.

The burning bush signified the immortal nature of God. Therefore this means that God is everlasting and can never die.

**MOSES’ OBJECTION TO THE TASK GIVEN TO HIM**

When revealed his intension to Moses to go and release the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, he responded negatively. He feared and gave excuses including the following;

Moses argued that he was too inferior to begin a dialogue with the pharaoh of Egypt who was the most important figure in the country.

Moses was a criminal in Egypt because he had killed an Egyptian in charge of forced labour and felt that going back to Egypt it would result to his arrest probably because of his killing. Besides, Moses had also been rejected by his own fellow Israelites. This rejection had its route from the criminal offence Moses had committed by killing the Egyptian slave master.

Moses also complained that he himself and the Israelites did not know the name of the being behind the liberation process and as such he expected the Israelites to demand for the name of that being. To this, God revealed his name saying “I am who I am” and gave Moses an extra ordinary power to perform miracles by the use of his stick (Exodus 4:1-9)

Moses later complained that he was not eloquent enough to convince the Israelites and the pharaoh about the liberation process. To this God assured Moses that his brother Aaron would be his spokesman (Exodus 4:10-17)

**THE MAIN FEATURES/ CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BURNING BUSH INCIDENCE**

The burning bush incidence refers to the encounter Moses had with God during his calling. It occurred at the foot of mountain Sinai as he was looking after the sheep of his father in law Jethro (Exodus 3:1 following). This event was characterized by the following;

God was physically present. In this case God appeared in the form of fire.

In this event God’s name is revealed as being quoted “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:13-14)

This event was characterized by God revealing his identity as being God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:15-16)

In this event God called Moses’ name twice. This was because God wanted Moses to be urgently aware of his presence (Exodus 3:4)

This event was marked by God giving instructions to Moses to go back to Egypt ad deliver the Israelites from their slavery (Exodus 3:10)

In this event Moses first objected the task God gave him. In this case Moses gave various reasons to justify his inability to deliver the Israelites from their Egyptian slavery including being too inferior to the pharaoh and not eloquent enough to convince the Israelites and the pharaoh (Exodus 3:11-13)

The burning bush event was characterized by God showing his holiness. In this case God instructed Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on a holly ground (Exodus 3:5-6)

In this event God gave Moses extra ordinary powers to perform miracles by the use of his stick which had to turn into a snake. This was intended to show Israelites and the Egyptian pharaoh the power of the being behind the liberation process of the Israelites (Exodus 4:1-6, 7:8-13)

The burning bush incidence was characterized by God giving assurance to Moses. In this case God made it clear to Moses that the Israelites would listen to him. And the Egyptians would also give him respect. (Exodus 3:18-22)

God’s love for his people was revealed through the burning bush incidence. God is quoted as saying “.. I have seen how my people are being mistreated … I have heard them cry out..” (Exodus 3:10)

This incidence was characterized by God getting annoyed/ hunger. This came after Moses had continuously objected God’s instruction of going back to Egypt (Exodus 4:14-17)

In this incidence God gave Moses a helper who was his own brother Aaron (Exodus 4:14-17)

**THE IMPORTNACE OF THE BURNING BUSH INCIDENCE TO THE PEOPLE OF (ISRAELITES) HISTORY**

The burning bush event completely changes the life of Moses. Moses who had been a shepherd became the leader of the Israelites.

Through this event God’s power or nature is revealed. In this case God appeared in the form of a burning bush but strange enough the bush was not eaten up by fire.

Israel became an elected or priestly nation of God through the burning bush incidence. This was because it became a gate way through that the Israelites came to worship their God (Yahweh)

God’s love for the Israelites is manifested through this event in his own words as he was quoted as saying”.. I have seen the suffering of my people.. I have heard them cry out..” this means that God hates to see people suffering and it was because of this that God decided to rescue the Israelites from bondage of slavery.

Through the burning bush incidence, God was a personal God. In this case God identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore to them it showed that God was always willing to meet their needs.

God’s promises to Abraham was fulfilled through the burning bush incidence (Exodus 15:12) God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land and that they would be set free.

This event proved to the Israelites that the God who appeared to Abraham was the same God behind their liberation meaning that the God was the God of their fore fathers and therefore historical God to them.

The Israelites came to realize God’s omnipotence and pre-existence of God and through the burning bush incidence. In this case God revealed his name to Moses saying “ I am who I am” this could have probably meant that his origin wasn’t defined, he is self existence, self existent and that everything on earth is under his control.

The burning bush incidence showed how God could manifest himself in various ways. God appeared to Moses in the form of fire and a voice. To the Israelites this means that they had to get ready to God’s revelation to them that was not limited.

God reconciled with the foreign Israelites. The Israelites had blundered after the disappearance of their fore fathers and Moses himself was a fugitive at the time of the incident and helped to increase the Israelites faith in God.

The burning bush event marked the liberation movement process of Israelites from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. This was because through this incidence God revealed his plan of delivering the Israelites from slavery as he said “..and so I have some down to rescue them from the Egyptians..” now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of this country (Exodus 3:10-8)

This event marked the beginning of struggle between the evil and divine forces in the history of the Israelites and God eventually showing his powers over his creation. In this case the divine powers which were manifested to Moses defeated the evil forces/ powers manifested through the pharaoh (Exodus 7:14 following), (11:1 following) and (12:29 following)

Through this burning bush event, the Israelites came to realize that their liberation from the Egyptian slavery was the workmanship God. In this case God’s effort was paid off when the Israelites were finally set free from the bondage of slavery.

The burning bush incident changes the status of Moses from being an out law to being an influencing life in the Egyptian politics and eventually it marked the beginning of the political history of Israel.

**JUDGEMENT AND DELIVERANCE (Exodus 5:1 following and 6: following)**

When Moses approached the pharaoh about the release of the Israelites, he did not acknowledge God’s authority in Moses. The request rather intensified the slavery conditions instead of liberty being granted.

Because of the above new development, the Hebrews turned against Moses their leader who then became frustrated.

The pharaoh’s hardened heart made God to begin showing his authority over his creation. He did this by striking Egypt with the Nile primary plagues (disasters).

In that case the pharaoh and his magicians tried to counter fit but they were unable to control these disasters and in the end they became powerless to overcome the situation. These plagues include the following;

The Nile which was the heart of the Egyptian economy turned into blood when Moses struck the surface of the water using his stick. This polluted the water, killed the fish and other animals and eventually left a bad smell. Other than this the water became bad both to human and animal consumption (Exodus 7:14-24)

Seven days later frogs driven from the Nile bank by the bad smell jumped out to seek for shelter in the Egyptian houses.

Following the above, mosquitoes and flies infested the all area and this made people to suffer even the more.

Both animal and human diseases cropped out. This could have been caused by the presence of frogs and insects among people.

Later on Hailstone and thunderstorm destroyed the crops in the Egyptian gardens/ fields and even their animals. (Exodus 9:13-15)

Egypt was also envaded by locusts which destroyed all the remaining crops and any given plant around and this made people to suffer from starvation (Exodus 10:1 following)

A strong storm from the Ethiopian highlands stripped Egypt naked of any green stuff and for three days the sun was blocked by a thick darkness and no body went out of the houses.

Despite of the above disasters the pharaoh continued to harden his heart and even worsened the working conditions of the Israelites. God also continued to worsen the intensity of the disasters and it was from here that God’s victory was highlighted.

**DEATH OF THE FIRST BORN AND THE PASSOVER FEAST (EXODUS 11: Following and 12:1 following)**

The word Passover means to “protect” or to “spare”. In the biblical context it refers to a time when the angles of God “protected”, spared, passed over or jumped over the first borns of Israelites when the last disaster hit Egypt where all the first borns of the Egyptian and their animals died.

The Passover came after the 9th refusal of the pharaoh to release the Israelites to go to the land promised to their grandfather Abraham. This refusal annoyed God who then instructed Moses to announce the death of all the first borns of the Egyptians and their animals. This was to demonstrate God’s might power.

**HOW MOSES INSTRUCTED THE ISRAELITES TO CELEBRATE THE PASSOVER**

As preparation for journey God instructed Moses and Aaron to command the Israelites to prepare and offer sacrifices. They were to celebrate the Passover feast which marked the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. These instructions included the following;

The Israelites were to choose an animal on the 9th day of the month.

Each family was to choose either a goat or a lamb which must have been one (1) year old without any defect/ deformation and a male one.

The animals were to be slaughtered on the 14th day of the month during the evening hours.

The blood of the slaughtered animals was to be smeared on the door posts or beams and on the frames above the house in which the meat was to be eaten. This was to distinguish the Israelites houses from that of the Egyptians. This means that any house which did not have the mark of the blood had to fall a victim of the angle’s destruction.

Then the meat of the animal was to be roasted and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made with out yeast.

The bitter herbs signified the bitter experience of slavery Egypt and suffering ahead of the Israelites in the wilderness to the Promised Land. The unleavened break signified lack of time to allow the making of the leavened bread.

The meat was not to be eaten raw but anything in the animal had to be eaten.

The bones of the animals were not to be broken. This meant that the covenant God was going to make with the Israelites was not to be broken.

The Passover meal was supposed to be eaten the whole night until the meat was finished.

If a family was small, such a family was to share the meat with the next door. This was to show the unity expected among the Israelites.

If there was any reminder/left over it was supposed to be burnt off before morning.

The Israelites were to dress ready for the journey with sandals on their feat, walking sticks at hand while eating the Passover meal.

The Passover feast was only to be celebrated by the Jews and foreigners were not allowed unless they were circumcised and adopted into the Jewish cultures.

The Israelites were to spend that night indoors and this was meant to safeguard them from the deadly plague which would hit Egypt at that very night.

At night a deadly plague hit Egypt where the deathly angles of the Lord killed the first born of both human beings and animals of the Egyptians. In this case the angles passed over the Israelites houses after seeing the blood on the door posts and went to the Egyptian houses.

This last plague finally broke the pharaoh’s arrogance and the Egyptian gods and their magicians remained/ became powerless. There was a cry in the whole of Egypt because each family had lost a first born.

Following the above the pharaoh quickly sent for Moses and Aaron and told them to take away their people. Moses then called the people together and instructed them to leave immediately and this was the beginning of the Israelites liberation which eventually marked the end of their slavery in Egypt and their movement to the Promised Land through the wilderness.

**SIGNIFICANCY/ IMPORTANCE OF PASSOVER TO THE JEWS**

The Passover marked the formation of the Jewish theocratic nation (a nation headed by God).

The Passover confirmed Moses as the leader of the Exodus chosen by God. This is because through Moses had been struggling to release the Israelites and it was during this plague that he succeeded that eventually made both the Israelites and Egyptians to know him as the leader of the exodus.

The Passover feast separated the Israelites from the Egyptians. In this case the blood of the sacrificed animals which the Israelites put at their posts saved them from God’s destruction and the Egyptians who didn’t have it suffered the disaster.

Through the Passover celebration God’s divine power revealed both to the Israelites and Egyptians. In this case God’s divine power broke the arrogance of the pharaoh and the Egyptian magicians.

The Passover became a big historical event that was to be celebrated annually by the Jews to remember their deliverance from slavery.

The Passover meal joined the Israelites to God and created unity among themselves. In other words as the Israelites came together in their celebration, the spirit of brotherhood that was shattered (broken by slavery) was promoted.

The Passover fulfilled the promises made to Abraham by God. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be mistreated in a foreign land under slavery and a punishment to the offenders at a later stage (Exodus 15:13-14). This was eventually fulfilled when the Egyptians were finally punished during the Passover meal as the Israelites celebrated the beginning of their liberty.

Through the Passover, the Israelites became the chosen people of God. This is based on the fact that it was only those circumcised who were to eat the meal.

The Passover marked the end of Jewish exile and slavery like in Egypt and marked the beginning of their deliverance.

It marked the beginning of Jewish religious year. The Jews became monotheistic community, in this case the Jews kept on remembering their deliverance from slavery through the Passover that became a tradition.

It marked the day when the Israelites first born were detected from the deadly plague.

Through the Passover, the Israelites came to realize God’s love towards them. Even the later generation got to know of his love through the Passover celebration that was annually.

The Passover signified the power of faith and obedience. Through their faith and obedience, the Israelites were eventually set free.

**NEW TESTAMENT VIEW ABOUT THE PASSOVER**

At the time of feast the Passover had become a tradition and celebration among the Jews. It was a feast to make the Jews remember the suffering of their ancestors in Egypt.

Christ recognized and observed this feast e.g. at the age of 12 he went to Jerusalem with his parents to celebrate the Passover feast (Luke 2:14 following). Also during his ministry together with his disciples went to celebrate the feast in Jerusalem.

From the above examples it means that Christ had a positive attitude about the Passover. But unfortunately the Jews had misinterpreted and commercialized the Passover feast. This is why Christ in Mark 11:15 following had to drive out money changers and those who were buying and selling animals in the temple.

In the cleansing of the temple Christ wanted to give a new meaning to the Passover celebration and show its holiness he therefore interpreted the Passover feast to mean the following;

Christ transformed the feast into a new covenant relationship to mean the new Israelites - Christians who are to remember their deliverance from the slavery of sin. Therefore this means that Christ replaces the old covenant lamb who brings a new relationship between man and God.

The death of Christ on the cross is presented as a sacrifice like the death of the animals whose blood was smeared on the door posts of the Jews which saved them from the angle’s destruction and marked the beginning of their liberty or freedom.

The death of Christ also came during the Passover (last supper with his disciples). This implies that he is the replacement of the sacrificial lamb bringing salvation to mankind.

Christ interpreted his last supper as the ritual of the Passover where he called the bread his body and the wine his blood. With this, his followers had to eat and drink for their salvation just as the Israelites had to eat the Passover meal. Before their liberation.

The blood of the sacrificial lamb united all the Israelites while in Egypt celebrating the Passover. Similarly the blood of Christ and his body unites all Christians making his family.

Christ as a sacrificed lamb was crucified once and for all on the cross and the new life gets on its climax on Easter day celebration. This means that the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of a new life in spirit. Similarly after the Passover, the Jews set out for a new life of freedom.

For Christians Christ becomes the leader of believers replacing Moses. Christians are therefore called upon to live according to the new Passover which has made them free from being enslaved by their sin.

The crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ became an opening way for Christians to the Promised Land which is heaven. Similarly after the celebration of the Passover, the Jews set out their journey to the Promised Land which was Canaan.

**RELEVANCE OF THE PASSOVER TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

Christians to be faithful to Christ and show obedience to him for having saved them from their slavery of sins just as the Jews had faith in their leader Moses.

Christians should always celebrate the Eucharist as instructed by Christ himself just as the Israelites had to celebrate the Passover.

There is a need for Christians to enter into a close relationship with God through Christ who saved them from being enslaved by their sins.

Christians should acknowledge the crucifixion, death and the resurrection of Christ as an opening gateway to the Promised Land, which is heaven.

Christians should be united to each other through the blood and body of Christ.

Christians should live holly lives so as to obtain the salvation Christ brought through shading his blood on the cross that washed away their sin.

Christians should celebrate good Friday i.e. the day Christ died that marked the beginning of their deliverance from the slavery of sins.

There is need for Christians to keep the new covenant which Christ started by shading his blood at Calvary.

Christians also celebrate Easter day that marked the beginning of a new life in spirit.

Christians should give material support to the church that forms the family of Christ for it to grow.

Christians should depend on God through his only son Christ for their survival just as the Israelites depended on God through Moses for their deliverance.

There is need for Christians to accept God’s call in the service of others. Christ as well as Moses accepted God’s call to serve others.

**THE EXODUS – THE JOURNEY TO CANAAN**

After the Israelites had left Egypt, they began to struggle down to the Sinai peninsular. However the pharaoh and his army made a final attempt to recapture them. This was because the pharaoh realized that he was losing the manual labour necessary for his building programs.

Despite God’s promise to protect the Jews, they still panicked, they had feared the armed forces because they themselves weren’t armed. Because of this and the red sea a head of them they became harsh on Moses questioning him as to why he led them out of Egypt.

Moses then prayed to God who then instructed him to lift up his stick and hold it over the sea which then divided its self into two creating a dry path and the Jews past through. As the Egyptians followed ,Moses held out his stick over the sea again and the water drove back drowning the Egyptians. This marked the beginning of the Jewish wondering in the wilderness.

**In the wilderness the Jews faced a number of problems including;**

The Israelites suffered from lack of water particularly in SHUR where they had to move for 3 days looking for it and to make it worse, the water found was again bitter. Because of this they complained to Moses who then prayed to God and God responded by instructing Moses to strike a rock once with his stick and water came out for the people to drink (Exodus 15:22 following) and (Exodus 17:1 following)

The Israelites lacked food especially in the desert of sin which was between ELIM and Sinai. However God later provided food in the form of manna and quails when Moses prayed following the complain he had received (Exodus 16:1 following)

The desert conditions which was characterized by hot temperature was too harsh to the Israelites.

The Israelites were attacked by hostile tribes in particular the Amalekites attacked the Israelites while camping at Rephidim (Exodus 17:8-16)

The Israelites had conflicts and quarrels among themselves. It broke the unity they had entered into the Passover celebration.

The Israelites suffered from long distance they could move during day and night with little time to rest. They wondered in the wilderness for 40years before settling in the Promised Land.

The Israelites backslide, at the foot of mountain Sinai; they made a golden calf to represent God when Moses had gone up the mountain to meet him.

The Israelites rebelled against the leadership of Moses the son of Izhar from the Levite clan staged a rebellion because of the feeling that Moses was misleading God’s people.

**THE SINAITIC COVENANT/ MOSAIC (Exodus 19-23)**

The Israelites after leaving rephidim on the first day of the 3rd month in the desert of Sinai where they set a camp at the foot of a mountain. Moses then went up the mountain to meet God during that God initiated a covenant.

This covenant was intended to bring the people closer to God. God also wanted the Israelites to recognize and realize that he was their father. During this covenant, God gave some commands that later came to be the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) that the Israelites were to obey.

**HOW GOD COMMANDED MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE MAKING OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT (Exodus 19: following)**

God through Moses first reminded the Israelites of how he carried them out of slavery in Egypt, protected them and brought them to the holly mountain.

God called on the Israelites to be obedient to his covenant if they were to remain his children.

On coming down the mountain, Moses gathered the elders and told them God’s demand and all the people agreed at once.

The Israelites had to purify themselves for worship they were to bath and wash their clothes in order to meet the holly God.

The Israelites had to gather on the third day waiting for God to come down where all the people would be able to see him physically.

A boundary had to be drawn around the mountain and no one was to cross that boundary. However could cross had to die.

The Israelites were to abstain from sexual intercourse. These formed part of the purification process.

The Israelites had to go up the mountain after the trumpet was blown. On the morning of the 3rd day mountain Sinai was covered by a thick cloud and then thunder and lightening that was later followed by a loud trumpet blast. This made all the people to tremble with fear.

Moses had to talk to God and the Israelites again after God’s appearance. Indeed after the trumpet God spoke to Moses instructing the Israelites to go up the mountain to that Moses objected on the ground that the mountain was holly and therefore the sinful Israelites couldn’t climb.

God then instructed Moses to take Aaron up the mountain but to leave all the priests behind.

The Israelites had to build an alter at the foot of the mountain where they could sacrifice their animals as they worship God.

Moses then built an alter and set up 12 stones one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The people burnt sacrifices to the Lord. A half of the blood was put in the bowls and the other half was thrown at the alter.

Moses then took the book of the covenant in that God had written his laws and he read it aloud to the people who then promised to obey.

To seal the covenant God had made with the people, Moses took he blood in the bowls and threw them onto the people.

God also gave commandments/ laws in order to guide the Jews. There were also some laws concerning the treatment of slaves. God thereafter promised to remain their father if they would also remain his people.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT**

The sinaitic covenant was made between two un equal parties or the superior and the inferior beings. In this case God is the Supreme being and the Israelites the inferior being.

Sinaitic covenant involved the use of a mediator. In this case Moses acted as a link between God and the Israelites.

The sinaitic covenant was characterized by God showing his holiness. The Israelites even including the priests had to purify themselves before meeting God.

God was physically present in the sinaitic covenant. God manifested himself in the form of thunder, smoke, lightening and a blast of trumpet.

God gave his identity in the sinaitic covenant. He indentified himself as the God who liberated the Israelites in Egypt, protected them in the wilderness and brought them to the foot of mountain Sinai.

In the sinaitic covenant God gave some conditions to the Israelites i.e. the Israelites had to obey God if they were to be called his children following the commandments.

The sinaitic covenant involved preparations. They had to bath themselves and wash their clothes in order to keep clean as they wait God to come down so as they could make the agreement.

Sacrifices were offered in the sinaitic covenant. The Israelites gave sacrifices as a way of worshiping God, showing their obedience to him and sealing the agreement already made.

The sinaitic covenant was characterized by the giving of commandments. God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to guard the relationship between him and the Israelites and the relationship among the Israelites themselves.

The sinaitic covenant was characterized by the symbolic representation of the parties involved. In this case Moses built an alter to represent God and to set up 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes in Israel.

**OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT**

Following the sinaitic covenant both parties (God and the Israelites) had some obligations and responsibilities to fulfill as discussed below;

The Israelites were to obey and be royal to God, they were to put God at the center of their daily activities at the signing of their commitment to the covenant made.

The Israelites had an obligation of passing on their covenant faith to the children i.e. they had to teach their children and bring them up properly by giving good examples basing on the covenant faith.

The Israelites were to make other nations to know about the divine grace and the promises of God. Right from the time of Abraham, God had been promising to male Israel a great nation and as such Israel was a chosen nation which was to serve as an example and a holly priest to other nations.

The Israelites had obligations to remain holy just as their father God was. Therefore this means that they were to avoid any situation that would lead them into sinning.

The Israelites had the obligation of living as a the holly nation. In other words, their economic, social, political and religious way of living had to be determined by the laws of God.

The Israelites had an obligation to keep their part of the covenant by obeying all the laws. In other words, the covenant laws/ Decalogue were absolute and the Israelites were simply obliged to respect them.

The Israelites were to serve God and their fellowmen faithfully. In other words, the laws given were to help them in their service of man and God.

**On the other hand the sinaitic covenant also had some responsibilities including the following**

God was responsible for the welfare of the Israelites. He had to save them from their enemies and he was to take care of them, give them what to eat and to drink.

God had to keep his promises and give the Israelites the land of Canaan which he had promised to Abraham their grandfather. Right from the Israelites escape from Egypt, God is seen determined to fulfill his promise.

God had the responsibility of protecting and guiding the Israelites, the laws God gave to the Israelites were to guide them in their man to man and man to God relationship. The first four commandments are absolute and deal with man to God relationship and the other six deal with man to man relationship.

On the other hand the Israelites were to thank God for delivering them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. Therefore they were to celebrate the Passover feast in remembrance of his might act.

The Israelites had the responsibility of serving as priests. They were the chosen nation and were therefore to serve God and minister others.

The Israelites were to love their neighbours as the Lord loved them. In this case they were to be a caring community and to show mercy to others particularly the poor and the disadvantaged.

**SIGNIFICANCY OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT TO THE ISRAELITES**

The sinaitic covenant revealed God’s power to the Israelites, when God appeared in the form of the thunder lightening and smoke all the Israelites trembled with fear.

It signified God’s divine choice. God can choose an insignificant individual/ people for a purpose. In this case God chose Israel as a nation to give light to other nations.

It fulfilled the promises made to the Israelites through their grandfather Abraham. They became special and great people that God had promised Abraham and this also marked the beginning of their blessing.

The Israelites received a code of conduct through the sinaitic covenant. God gave them some laws to guide them in their man to God and man to man relationship. Therefore this means that God is a guide to the Israelites.

The sinaitic covenant portrayed and confirmed God’s love for the Israelites. Even when the Israelites had been turning away from God because of constant and everlasting love initiated a covenant relationship in order to bring them back to him.

The sinaitic covenant revealed God’s character as a jealous God. He doesn’t want people to worship other gods but only him. This showed the absoluteness or oneness of God.

The sinaitic covenant revealed the omnipresence of God. God is present everywhere even on mountains. God appeared to his people in a thick cloud and smoke etc that covered the whole mountain.

The sinaitic covenant established God’s kingship over the Israelites. During the covenant, God promised to be the father of the newly born nation.

The sinaitic covenant sealed the election of the Israelites as God’s people. Right from the time of their liberation in Egypt. God through Moses had always reminded them of his divine choice but this wasn’t confirmed until they met God at the foot of mountain Sinai.

The sinaitic covenant signified and confirmed God as the initiation of everything. God had initiated the deliverance of Israelites from Egypt and he is also seen initiating the covenant relationship with the people he had chosen.

The sinaitic covenant became the basis of teaching among the later generation in Israel. The prophets including Nathan, Elijah, Amos and Isaiah who later condemned the behaviours of the Israelites did so in defense of the covenant demands.

The sinaitic covenant created unity among the Jews, they felt that they were the chosen people of God and therefore had to stay together as one. This created the spirit of nationalism and an eye opener to the Israelites about the land of Canaan was characterized by a lot of evils. This explains why they were given some guidelines intended to help them from sinning.

**RELEVANCE OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY**

Christians need to acknowledge God as a powerful being having control over the affairs of the world. God’s appearance to the Israelites in the form of smoke, thunder and lightening made them to tremble with fear.

Christians should respond with faith and obedience too God’s call which is divine and meant for anybody.

There is need for Christians to worship only one God. This is the only way through which Christians can be called children of God.

Christians should let their lives be guided by God. This calls for obeying God’s laws.

There is need for Christians to be ready to meet God anywhere. This means that Christians should at all times expect to be with God.

Christians should acknowledge God’s ever lasting and constant love for them and should therefore extend this love to others.

Christians should give material support to their churches, it could be inform of offertory to help the church grow.

Christians should always repent of their sins before meeting God. The Israelites had to purify themselves before the sinaitic covenant.

Christians should always be exemplary to others like the Israelites in their community. They should therefore positively influence others towards believing in God.

There is need for Christians to be united as they relate to each other and with God. This calls upon the Christians to realize and recognize the oneness of God and therefore live together as one.

Christians should preach the good news about the kingdom of God in other words they should extend the salvation benefits to all people.

There is need for Christians to be holly just as their father is. This means that they should avoid any situation which can lead them into sinning.

There is need for Christians to reconcile and forgive one another as they try to build the kingdom of God.

**COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ABRAHAMIC AND SINAITAIC COVENANT**

**Similarities**

Both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants were initiated by God himself. In other words in both covenants, God was the brain behind the sinning of the

Both covenants were important steps in God’s salvation plans for mankind.

Both the Sinaitic and the Abrahamic covenant were between unequal parties. In this case God is superior or supreme and man is inferior.

God was physically present in both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenant. In this case God appeared in the form of a smoking pot and flaming bush during the Abrahamic covenant and appeared in the form of smoke, thunder and lightening in the Sinaitic covenant.

In both, alters were built as a way of worshiping and showing obedience to God.

In both covenants, sacrifices were offered. In other words animals were slaughtered as a sign of embracing.

Both involved promises, blessings and privileges. In the Abrahamic covenant God promised Abraham a great nation and a child among others and in the Sinaitic covenant God promised to be the father of the Israelites.

Both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenant signified God’s love, mercy, care and concern for mankind.

Both covenants were sealed with animal blood.

Both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenant involved movements. Abraham was made to leave his native land and go into the land he was going to be shown. In the Sinaitic covenant the Israelites were meant to move to the Promised Land which is Canaan.

**Differences**

The Sinaitic covenant involved some conditions while the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional. In the Sinaitic covenant the Israelites had to obey God if they were to remain his children. This is a missing element in the Abrahamic covenant.

Whereas the Sinaitic covenant involved the use of a mediator, the Abrahamic covenant was face to face. In this case Moses acted as a link between God and the Israelites in the Sinaitic covenant but Abraham came into a direct contact with God.

The Sinaitic covenant involved purification of the inferior party but this is a missing element in the Abrahamic covenant.

The Israelites had to make themselves clean before meeting the holy God but Abraham had nothing of the sort.

Where the Sinaitic covenant was multi-lateral and Abrahamic covenant was unilateral. Sinaitic covenant was between God and many people (Israelites)

The Abrahamic covenant involved changes in names i.e. Abram became Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah. All these changes in names aren’t involved recorded in Sinaitic covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant involved undertaking the ritual of circumcision. This wasn’t the case in the Sinaitic covenant where the male Israelites had already been circumcised.

In the Sinaitic covenant the inferior party was in transit. The Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land Canaan. This is contrary to the Abrahamic covenant where Abraham had to begin his journey after the covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant contained some universal element. Abraham was to be source of blessing to all nations while the Sinaitic covenant contained nothing of the sort and specifically addressed a particular group of people Israelites.

The Abrahamic covenant was the beginning of God making an agreement with mankind while the Sinaitic covenant was the fulfillment of the promises made in the Abrahamic covenant.

The two covenants were made in two different geographical locations.

**THE DECALOGUE (Exodus 20:1 – 70)**

The word Decalogue refers to the Ten Commandments that God gave the Israelites through Moses as the mediator.

Since the Israelites community was formed of various categories of people with different behaviors, it was difficult for the people to live peacefully. Therefore God found it necessary to reduce the rebelliousness of the people in order to form a humble and civilized society by giving the Israelites a constitution inform of a Decalogue to guide them.

The laws consisted of religious liturgical and social regulation. Exodus 20:1-70 contains the summary and climax of God’s agreement with his people.

The ten commandments set up a basic ethical norm which was applicable to everybody in the Israelites community. The laws are found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deurotonomy.

The laws are categorized into two groups i.e. man to God relationship (first four/ 4) mean while the remaining six/6 concern the relationship between man and man.

There are also two types of laws found in the Decalogue i.e. the conditional laws, the Israelites had to obey God if they were to remain his children.

The laws were to be followed and accepted by all the Israelites. The laws showed God’s concern for Israelites as a nation. In these laws God set out standards governing family relationship and respect of human life among others.

**INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMANDMENTS**

God in the first place wants the Israelites to realize that he is the God their Lord who brought them out of Egypt where they were slaves. This means that God is a loving God and a fearing Lord.

Exodus 20:3 brings out the uniqueness and oneness of God and in this case it revealed God’s character. God doesn’t want his people to worship any other god but him alone. This means that God is a jealous God since he tolerates no rival and punishes those who hate him.

In Exodus 20:7 God doesn’t want people to use his name for evil purposes like selfish ambitions. Therefore he is seen condemning Paul’s swearing. This means that God is a holly God and not associated with evil act.

Exodus 20:8 -11 stresses the importance of Sabbath as a holly day which needs to be observed. Work is to be done in 6days and therefore rests on the 7th day. This law reflects back the creation story in Genesis where God himself rested after finishing his creation activities. This means that the Sabbath should be a holly day set aside for worship and glorification of God’s name.

Exodus 20:12 affirms the journey of life through the channel of human parents, who are to be honoured. Those who respect their parents are to live longer. This means that respecting parents is respecting God who gave blessings and the controller and source of life.

In Exodus 20:13 God prohibits man from taking away human life i.e. “Do not commit murder”. This means that God is the only one who can give and take away life from people. This also reflects on the assignment given to man in Gen 1:28 where man is to work and subdue the world, fill it and make it a better living place. Therefore man is required to preserve human life rather than destroying it.

Exodus 20:14 demands respect for the God is given function of sex through which life is to be passed on from one generation to another. Man is not to misuse sex by committing adultery therefore this calls for faithfulness among people and respect for human body as temples of God on earth.

Exodus 20:15 God wants to see good relationship among people and therefore calls for respect for someone’s property. Stealing is presented as a sign of selfishness and lack of love for fellow man.

This means that people should always trust in God’s provision and be patient in whatever they have. It also stresses the importance of work in Gen 1 and 2 where man is supposed to work and subdue the world.

In Exodus 20:17 greediness of any form is condemned. In this case lack of satisfaction and lack of faith in God’s provision put self interests above everything which makes people to convert to their neighbour’s property including wives, slaves, cattle, houses etc.

Its important to note that these commandments were given to guide the Israelites to show then what’s good and bad.

**HOW CHRIST INTERPREATED THE DECALOUE**

When Christ begun his ministry, some people particularly the Pharisees and the scribes (law makers/ teachers of the law). These people time and again criticized him because they believed he was a law breaker.

Because of this belief and feeling they requested Christ with his disciples collected some grains from the garden on the Sabbath day and this marked the beginning of Christ’s teaching about the ten commandments as discussed below;

Christ emphasized that he had not come to destroy the law but to make the law come true, give it more meaning and to make the teachings of the prophets come true. Therefore this means that Christ is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law.

Christ also emphasized that whoever destroys even the least important of the commandments destroys even the other laws. In other words the breach of one law is equivalent to the breach of all. (Mathew 5:19)

Christ stresses that whoever obeys the laws and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven (Mathew 5:19).

However according to Christ, faith is more important than the law in what God requires. He points out that its faith that will make an individual to enter the heavenly kingdom but not obedience to the law.

Christ as the son of man who gave the laws respected the law e.g. he honoured and respected his parents when he asked John to take care of his mother (John 19:26).

Christ recognized the temple as a house of God and prayer. Because of this defended the temple when he cleans it by overturning the tables of many changers (Mark 11:15-18).

Christ summarized the laws into two. He points out that the greatest law is the love of God with all one’s heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest is the love of one’s neighbor as much as one’s self. (Mark 12:28-31)

Christ also restarted some of the laws and looked at it from the grass root. In this case he points out that the Sabbath was made for man but not man for Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Therefore is of the view that doing good on the Sabbath is good.

Christ points out the need to fasting to have its right place and purpose. This is when the disciples had refused to fast together with the pharases (Mark 18:20 -22)

In his teaching about murder Christ emphasized that it’s not only killing alone which makes one to commit sin but even the evil thoughts against someone is as dangerous as the act of sinning/ killing (Mathew 5:21 -23)

According to Christ looking at a woman with desires is as dangerous as committing adultery (Mathew 5:27 -30).

According to Christ, the Mosaic law was re-strengthened by emphasizing its purpose when he said “..it was said but now I say…” (Mathew 5:43 -44)

The law according to Christ wasn’t sufficient otherwise he would have not come (Mathew 11:25 -30)

**ROLE OF MOSES IN THE EXODUS EVENT**

Moses who received his call from God through the burning bush incident was later commissioned by God himself to go and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. He played some roles in the story of Exodus as a political leader, a priest and a prophet, mediator, law giver, a judge and liberator.

Moses after being commissioned by God went direct to the pharaoh and faced him with a lot of courage to talk on behalf of the Israelites and their release from slavery.

Moses led the Israelites in the battle field. Among others Moses prayed to God when the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites.

Moses risked his life and killed the Egyptian slave master. This showed the love Moses had for his people who were suffering.

As a political leader, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, through out the wilderness defeating all hostile tribes.

Moses a military leader recruited people in military services. This was in his attempt to defend the sovereignty of the Israelites (Number 1:24).

Moses played the role of a covenant mediator. He acted as a link between God and the Israelites at the foot of mountain Sinai. In this case, after meeting God, he instructed the Israelites among other things to purify themselves and communicated back to God people’s response.

As a judge, Moses settled disputes over various issues in order to keep harmony. Among others at Mizpa Moses arranged a camp where he settled people’s differences/ misunderstandings (Exodus 18:13)

Moses as a judge promoted justice by doing fair judgment. In other words Moses didn’t favour any one when settling disputes.

Moses played the role of a author. He is believed to have been the writer of the first books (Pentateuch).

As a priest, Moses offered sacrifices on behalf of the Israelites like that recorded at the foot of mountain Sinai.

As a priest, Moses also prayed to God on behalf of the Israelites. He therefore acted as a mediator between God and his people the Israelites.

Moses had an extra ordinary powers and he performed miracles on behalf of the Israelites. Among others his stick turned into a snake, divided the red sea into two.

As a priest, Moses called the Israelites back to God e.g. when the Israelites made a Golden calf at the foot of mountain Sinai to be worshiped. Moses was disgusted and he asked the people to turn back to their own God and prayed to God to have mercy upon them.

Moses encouraged the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation among the Israelites. He showed them the need to live together as one person.

Moses also had the role of appointing leaders. Among others he appointed judges to help him in the settlement of disputes among the Israelites (Exodus 18:24 -26)

Moses as a religious leader had to see that all conditions of the law had to be fulfilled by the Israelites. He was therefore the custodian of the Sinaitic covenant.

Moses fore told what could happen in future and indeed whatever he said came to be fulfilled like the Passover and the plague among others that eventually broke the pharaoh’s arrogance.

Moses received led the Israelites to mountain Sinai where they made a covenant relationship.

Moses received the covenant law on behalf of the Israelites. In this case God gave him the Ten Commandments after which he read them aloud to the people. This therefore means that Moses was a law giver.

**CHRIST AS THE NEW MOSES**

A critical look at the life of Christ would reveal a lot of similarities with that of Moses. This is why some scholars have referred to him as the new Moses. Among others the following should be considered to justify Christ as the new Moses;

Christ just like Moses was born during political crisis. In this case, Christ was born when King Herod had ordered for the killing of all the baby boys among the jaws and so was the case with Moses who was also born at the time the pharaoh of Egypt had ordered for the same.

Just like Jesus and Moses they were hidden immediately after his birth. Moses was hidden in the basket by his mother at the banks of river Nile in Egypt to save him from being killed following the order of the pharaoh. Similarly Christ was also hidden in Egypt when King Herod ordered the killing of all the baby boys (Mathew 2:13-15)

Christ and Moses as well delivered people from bondage of their suffering. Christ delivered mankind from he bondage of sins and Moses delivered the Israelites from the bondage of slavery.

Both Moses and Christ started their missions when they were already old or mature enough. Christ started his work when he was already 30years old.

Christ just like Moses performed miracles. Among others Christ changed water into wine. In the same way Moses performed miracles including his stick becoming a snake.

Both Christ and Moses same into existence during political oppressions. For the case of Moses, the Israelites were under the colonial rule of the Egyptians and Christ appeared when the Jews were under the colonial rule of the Romans and sentimental feelings of the Pharisees.

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to begin their journey to the Promised Land Canaan. With Christ, the Christians are on their journey to heaven.

Both Moses and Christ spent 40days in the wilderness. Moses had his 40days up the mountain and Christ was in the desert for 40days being tempted by the devil (Exodus 24:18) and (Mark 1:12)

Christ just like Moses was a great teacher and advisor of the people on matters relating to religion and morality.

Moses was a great advisor and teacher of the people on matters relating to religion and morality.

Both Christ and Moses interceded on behalf of the people they were serving before God. Before his death, Christ who was already on the cross prayed to God to forgive those who crucified him Luke 23:34. In the same way Moses prayed to God to forgive the Israelites after they had the Golden calf and worship.

Christ just like Moses gave some food to the people they were serving. Moses prayed to God when the Israelites were hungry and God provided them with food in the form of manner and quil. Jesus fed the 40000 people at different intervals (Mark 6:30 following, 8:1 –following) and Exodus 16:1 –following)

Both Christ and Moses used blood to seal the relationship between man and God. Moses used the blood of the sacrificed lambs to seal the Sinaitic covenant and Christ used his own blood by dying on the cross to bring back man to God.

Christ during his ministry recognized the Mosaic law and referred to himself as the fulfillment of the law and that he had come to bring perfection to it.

Both Christ and Moses were prophets. In Mark 6:1 -6 Christ is presented as a prophet even during his day with the Israelites, whatever Moses talked came to be fulfilled e.g. the plague which broke the pharaoh’s arrogance. Just like Moses was called and commissioned by God to perform a special task. As Moses was commissioned to go and liberate the Israelites from slavery, Christ was also commissioned to liberate the new Israelites (Christians) from the slavery of sins.

Just as Moses founded the Old Israel, Christ founded the new Israel. This means that the two led the foundation for chosen people of God.

Both Christ and Moses showed great concern for the people they were serving and even went ahead to suffer for them.

**However the two individuals aren’t entirely the same. A lot of differences exists between them as discussed below;**

Christ was God’s son who was conceived by the Holy Spirit while Moses was a product of human relationship.

The mission of Christ was foretold to the people he was coming to serve (Isaiah 7:1 –following) this is contrary to the mission of Moses which remained unknown to the Israelites until he appeared.

The death of Moses was not pre-planned but to Christ even before his coming it was clear that he had to die.

The resurrection of Christ makes him different from Moses who died and never came back to life physically.

Whereas Jesus Christ did even associate himself with politics of his people, Moses among other roles was deep rooted in the politics of his people.

Whereas Moses didn’t face persecution of any sort, Christ was publically persecuted by the people he was serving.

God never got annoyed with the work of Christ during his ministry while at some given moment God had to get annoyed with what Moses was doing.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE EXODUS EVENT TO ISRAELITES**

The Exodus which was the massive movement of the Jews under the leadership of Moses from Egypt where they were slaves became the most significant event in their history as discussed;

The Exodus event marked the end of the Israelites slavery life in Egypt and therefore the beginning of their freedom as they moved out of Egypt.

The Exodus event led to the birth of Israelites as a nation. In this case Israel became united under the leadership of Moses.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites became monotheistic. They realized the oneness of God and abandoned the worship of other gods including those of the Egyptians.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites came to realize that they were special and the chosen race of God as God was always on their side and they were therefore to serve him as holly priest and be exemplary to other nations.

The Israelites realized God’s constant love and ever lasting for them. God showed them love even when they were breaking away from him and went ahead to make a covenant relationship with them.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites came to know of God’s providence for them. God provided them with everything possible including leaders, food, water among others.

The Exodus event revealed God’s character to the Israelites. In this case God is seen as a God who hates injustice, exploitation, oppression and he is a jealous God.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites cane to realize that God can choose anyone for a purpose irrespective of one’s background. Moses was chosen as the leader of Exodus without considering that he had killed an Egyptian and therefore a criminal.

The Israelites came to realize that God is powerful and sovereign. God has power over nature, death and the earthly kings among others.

The Exodus event became a basis of the Israelites life and culture. In other words, it led to the existence of the Jewish religious days, festivals and rituals like the Passover which was celebrated annually and the feast of unleavened bread and tabernacles.

The Exodus event gave birth to the prophetic institution in Israel. Prophesy that began with Moses eventually became the way of life among the later generations in Israelites.

The Exodus event led to restricting of some of the Jewish cultures like circumcision of all baby boys.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites received a call conduct. God gave them laws in the form of the Ten Commandments at the foot of mountain Sinai and this became the basis of their constitution throughout their history.

The Exodus event fulfilled God’s promises to the Israelites through Abraham. God had promised Abraham a great nation and many descendants among others. Therefore through the Exodus event the Israelites came to know their origin as the descendants of Abraham.

Through the event, the Israelites came to realize that salvation is an act of God but not man. Indeed God delivered them from their slavery conditions in Egypt made them special people and guided them among others.

Through the Exodus event, the Israelites became united as they realized that they were God’s chosen people. It therefore laid a strong foundation of the unity of the Israelites enjoyed during and after settling in the Promised Land.

The Israelites came to realize God as their protector and a guide to them. God protected them in the wilderness against hostile tribes like the Amalekites and even guided them by giving them the Ten Commandments.

**RELEVANCES OF THE EXODUS EVENT TO MODERN CHRISTIANS**

Christians learn of God’s ever lasting and constant love. God cared for his people in the wilderness even when they were breaking away. Today God cares for his people even when they aren’t faithful. The giving of his only son Jesus Christ to die for us revealed his love for his people.

Christians also realized God as a protector. God can protect people against their enemies since he is powerful just as he protected the Israelites against their enemies like the Amalekites.

Christians learn of God as being the provider. God can provide to his people everything including food and water, the way he did to the Israelites while in the wilderness. Christians today who are faced with famine should therefore trust in God’s provision.

From the Exodus event Christians can learn that God calls people for a purpose. God called Moses to go and serve the Israelites the people he had chosen hence Christians should therefore be ready to accept God’s call, the way Moses accepted.

The Exodus event teaches Christians of God’s indiscriminative choice. God can choose anybody regardless of his/her status.

From the Exodus event, Christians learn that he is everywhere. God appeared to the Israelites at the foot of the mountain and to Moses while looking after the sheep of his father in law Jethro. Christians should therefore be ready to meet God anywhere at any time.

The Exodus event reveals the absoluteness/ oneness of God. Therefore Christians need to worship only one God.

From the Exodus event, Christians learn that salvation is for all God’s salvation plan is revealed to the people today through Jesus for which salvation is going to be achieved.

The Exodus event shows that God is the initiator of everything. Its God the Almighty who initiated the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt.

From the Exodus event, Christians realize the importance of prayers. Therefore Christians need to pray to God whenever they are in problems the way Moses prayed before crossing the red sea and when the Israelites wanted food among others.

From the Exodus event, Christians learn that God fulfills his promises. The promises that God made to Abraham were fulfilled through the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and their eventual liberation among others and hence Christians need to have trust in God.

The Exodus event reveals God’s character to Christians. God hates injustices and he is a jealousy God therefore Christians need to show love to others.

During the Exodus event, God entered into a personal covenant relationship with his people Israelites. Christians also made a special and personal covenant relationship with God through the sacrificial death of Christ. This demand Christians to have love for God, trust in him and to show a complete submission.

**THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS**

The book of Leviticus mainly deals with God’s holiness and the way in which his people where to worship and live so as to maintain the relationship with him. Its therefore against this background that God gave the Israelites some laws and regulations to follow.

**SACRIFICES**

These were offerings that people presented to God for various reasons like to show gratitude for what God had done for them, confess their sins and to seek for forgiveness among others. In other words sacrifices involved giving of material things to the Supreme Being in which case is Yahweh among the Israelites.

The priests were responsible for offering sacrifices. They had to ensure that alters were built for this purpose. In this case the alters were built using 12 uncut stones each representing the 12 tribes in Israel.

Israelites sacrifices involved shading of blood because of slaughtering some animals like goats and sheep among others which were considered to be sacred (holy) to be given to their holy God.

However sacrifices among the Israelites also involve some crops like the grain corn turned into flour and sometimes cooked food.

**Note:**

Should be taken that animals which were to be taken for sacrifices were to be without defects or deformation. Offering of poor quality animals was therefore an abuse to God.

**TYPES OF SACRIFICES**

**Holocaust offering/ burning (burnt) (Leviticus 1:3.17, 6:8-13)**

In this type of offering, the whole animal/ whatever the item given as a sacrifice was burnt completely as its being dedicated to God. The worshipers therefore didn’t take part in showing of these sacrifices because everything was given to God.

The sacrifice symbolized the allegiance of the Israelites to their God. It was usually performed when big offences had been committed. It was therefore performed as a way of atonement (repentance) aimed at preventing future calamities.

The sacrifice was performed by a priest who required the offender to bring an animal which could be one of his cattle, a goat, and a sheep. The offender had to put his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal as he confessed his sons. The fire on the altar of the burnt offering had to be kept burning throughout the night. Sin of confessional offering (Leviticus 4:1- 5, 6:24- 30).

This type of offering was intended to take away peoples sins and therefore ask for forgiveness. Its also referred to as the purification offering, offerings for un intentional sins/ the guilt offering. In this type of offering, the pigeon, a dove or any accepted animal e.g. “bull, calf or a ship” had to be slaughtered on the North side of the alter and the blood sprinkled on the alter by the priest.

The sin offering was performed if an individual didn’t intend to commit a sin. **Such cases among others include the following;**

If someone was officially summoned to give evidence in the court but did not give the information about something he or she had seen or had heard.

If someone touches anything ritually un clean e.g. a dead animal which could have had a natural death.

If someone touches anything of human origin that was unclean.

If someone makes a careless vows (promises) no matter what it was about but which eventually created guilt

**Grain offering (Leviticus 2:1- 16 and 6, 14 -23)**

This was an offertory to God inform of cereal crops. It could be made in several forms e.g. unbaked flour mixed with oil/ baked unleavened bread.

This type of offering was either performed by an individual or the whole community. It was intended to give thanks to God for the blessing of one’s garden. It also showed man’s willingness to share his product with Yahweh.

**Community/ peace/ fellowship offering (Leviticus 5:1- 17, 7:11 -36)**

In this type of offering part of the sacrificial meat/ food was given to God while the rest was eaten by the people. The priest on behalf of the Israelites would give the best part of the meat to God through burning to show his supremacy and holiness.

This offering was performed when the Israelites were in search for victory in wars.

**Incense offering**

This involved offering objects with very good smell. The people had to make a sweet smell before God to glorify his name as supreme.

The Israelites believed that as the object was being burnt, the sweet smell would escape into heaven. This offering was also intended to show the respect the people had towards God.

**Tithe offering**

In this type of offering, people could give tenth 1/10th of each and every thing they had. It was intended to give back God’s dues and therefore not cheat him.

**The ritual of ordination**

This was an offertory during the consecration of priests and kings. It was a procedure to sanctify the individuals for the service of God. The animals were therefore slaughtered as a way of purifying the priests and kings before they could begin the service of God.

**IMPORTANCES OF SACRIFICES AMONG ISRAELITES**

Sacrifices were offered for purification services. People who were ritually unclean/ had committed some sins had to give in some animals as sacrifices in order to attain purity.

Sacrifices were offered to give thanks to God. In particular the people had to give thanks to God for the life and the property God had given them.

Sacrifices were offered to repent off sins and seek forgiveness from God. This was done in an effort to reconcile with the holy God.

The Israelites sacrifices showed respect to God and glorification to him. The Israelites believed that Yahweh was above them and earthly gods and therefore deserved respect because of this they had to burn incense for God.

Among the Israelites, sacrifices were avenues of seeking God’s blessing especially in their gardens and in wars. In this case, the Israelites had to offer sacrifices before going to war in order to evoke victory.

Sacrifices were also a form of communication with God. The Israelites had to keep in touch with Yahweh who delivered them from their suffering guided them and gave them the Promised Land. This was achieved through offering sacrifices among other ways like prayers.

Sacrifices among the Israelites were used to mark important historical events in their lives. Events like the Passover which was celebrated annually among others were accompanied by offering sacrifices to commemorate God’s might act during the Exodus.

The Israelites offered sacrifices to give back God’s due by giving tithe. They regarded God to be the giver of everything. God as the owner of all the worldly things.

The Israelites offered sacrifices to award off calamities or dangers. If the community felt guilty for any given reason, the people had to offer sacrifices in order to appease God, aimed at averting the calamities that could have befallen the community.

The sacrifices helped to unite the Israelites as they shared the sacrificial meal, they came to live together as one and realize the importance of each other.

Sacrifices helped to strengthen the Israelites relationship with each other.

Through sacrifices, the Israelites dedicated their lives, lives of their animals and crops to God.

The Israelites offered sacrifices to cleanse their places of worship such as the alters and temples among others which had to be kept pure at all times.

Sacrifices were important procedures in the crowing of a new king and the ordination of priest. Sacrifices gave such people legal authority to begin performing their duties.

Sacrifices according to the Israelites helped to restore the lost image of God in them which was usually caused by sinning. In such cases they had to slaughter animals or give a sacrifice of any form to God with the aim of bringing back the image of God.

Sacrifices formed the basis of worshiping among the Israelites. In other words sacrifices became avenues of people expressing their inner commitment to Yahweh.

The Israelites offered sacrifices to promote peaceful living in their community. This was especially after sensing danger.

**CASES WHERE SACRIFICES COULD NOT BE ACCEPTED/ THE ABUSE OF SACRIFICES**

In these books of old testament offering sacrifices was an important aspect of human life to keep in touch with God, Cain and Abel started it all, followed by Abraham and the later generations of Israel.

However, time and gain the people abused those sacrifices and as such God could not accept them. Such cases among the Israelites include the following;

Sacrificing of skeletal animals and keeping the fatty ones for human consumption like the sons of Eli, 1st (Samuel 2:12 -17)

Sacrifices presented by wrong people or non-priest. For example when King Saul offered a sacrifices before the Israelites went for war. This was a violator of the law regarding sacrifices because he assumed the priestly duties and such, God could not accept the offering (1st Samuel 13:9-10)

Offering of human sacrifices like the case of King Manasseh who offered a wrong place. In this case could perform such rituals in places different from the alters and the temples which were specifically meant for this purposes.

Offering sacrifices for formatting. In other words giving sacrifices for the sake of fulfilling the obligation. This didn’t reflect the inner commitment of the people but rather an outward show.

Offering stolen sacrifices. This contravenes the covenant faith rearing that the individuals were impure.

Offering sacrifices to Yahweh and other pagan gods like the Canaanite at the same time. This was doing doubled standard and therefore

Offering sacrifices while ignoring the needy people like the poor, the sick and the orphans among others.

Offering sacrifices without serious intention to repent especially if they would repeat the same evils which they could have first asked for forgiveness.

Sacrificing animals with defects and deformation. This was a way of despising Yahweh.

Offering empty and aimless sacrifices. In this case, the people offered sacrifices when their hearts were far away from Yahweh (Amos 5:21- 27)

Offering sacrifices with false belief that God would be contented and pleased with the sacrifices inspite of the people’s evil ways of living.

**SACRIFICES IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA**

Sacrifices constitutes to one of the most commonest act of worship among the African people. It involved giving of material things to gods, spirits and living dead or any other being considered to be spiritual.

Sacrifices were therefore one of the ways of approaching God and other spiritual beings by man besides prayers and others.

**Occasions that called for sacrifices among the Africans include the following;**

* Circumcision weddings
* Harvest time
* Planting time
* During wars/ wartime
* Famine
* Birth
* Funeral rights
* Failure for rain
* Like the Israelites, the Africans offered sacrifices for various reasons among which the following should be considered.
* Sacrifice was an act and occasion of making and reviewing contact between God and man and between spirits with man.
* Sacrifice was a symbol of fellowship and recognition that the departed was still members with their human family and therefore a token of respect and remembrance of the meat had to be put in a place of worship especially the shrine.
* Africans offered sacrifices in order to appease the ancestral spirits as a way of venerating. It was intended to avoid punishments or curses from these beings that were believed to possess special powers.
* The Akambas and Kikuyu would give sacrifices to award off future misfortune or suffering that would have otherwise befallen them. This was particularly making it possible for the future calamities to occur.
* Sacrifices among the Africans was an act to express gratitude and joy to God. This particularly came after a blessing of any sort like good harvest and victory in wars. In other words to offer sacrifices was simply to say thank you for the blessings.
* In relation to above, Africans would give sacrifices to their God to solicit for victory in life particularly in a military venture. Among the Banyoro and Baganda the people consulted God through Lubak responsible for war by giving sacrifices.
* Sacrifices among the Africans was a means of reconciling conflicts in a community. Among the Acholi people, the blood for the sacrificial animal was believed to amend the already broken blood relationship.
* The traditional Africans sacrifices were offered as a means of worshiping the supreme God to show that he is superior to the human beings.
* Africans used to give sacrifices for the wellbeing of the people. The Akan and Ashanti people of Africa could build alter in their homesteads that of offering of food stuffs especially events in human life like marriage and child birth.

**THE PRIESTHOOD AMONG THE ISRAELITES**

In simple terms a priest was a person who was consecrated or claimed the service of God.

The priests were and are still believed to connected people to God. The priest among the Israelites like today would ware long ropes which were different from what other people would put on. This was to enable the people to identify the priest.

Until the end of Samuel’s reign in Israel, priesthood combined divine priestly function with theocratic leadership. They therefore had a good influence on the political life of the people.

Priesthood was also hereditary. In other words it was handed on from father to son.

According to Number 3:2-11 the man from the tribe of Levy was chosen to assist St. Aaron and his sons.

The priests were to be supported by the rest of the community so that they would not be diverted from their total dedication to the service of God.

**THE ROLE OF PRIEST AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING PRIESTHOOD**

The priests were to perform the function of mediation between the people and God. This medication was prosperous and in that case the priest had to do it on his behalf and on behalf of the Israelites.

The priest would also offer sacrifices even when the least in the community were excluded but only the part located to him (Right Hind leg).

The priests were expected to live holy lives. They were therefore expected to repent off their sins after realizing that they had committed one.

The priest where to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary. They had to keep it clean and ensure that they were preserved for holy purposes like praying and offering sacrifices,

The priest was to show and maintain justice among the Israelites; he had to display fairness especially when handling sacrifices when he wasn’t expected to be greedy by carrying away meat for all people.

The priest had a duty of carefully choosing one of his sons to assist him to perform his duties this was in the event of sickness or old age.

The priest was expected to observe a high moral standard. In other words he was to show an exemplary conduct in order to influence others into doing the same. In particular he had to be humble and righteous.

The priest was expected to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the entire Israel community. In this case he had to conduct fellowship offering where the best part were burnt for God and the rest shared by the community.

The priest was expected to pray to God on behalf of the Israelites. This was especially in times of difficulties like wars, epidemics which include drought and famine.

The priest was expected to evoke God’s blessing on the people. This was through prayer’s and offering sacrifices to God.

The priest was to prevent any individual who was in a state of legal impurity from teaching sacrifices. Such an individual wasn’t even meant to go the sanctuary through the guidance of the priest.

The priest had the duty of reminding the Israelites about the covenant laws and their relationship with Yahweh.

**AARON AS A PRIEST (Leviticus 9:8)**

In Leviticus 9:2 God commanded Moses to instruct Aaron to sacrifice on behalf of the Israelites. This came immediately after his coordination and was therefore his first offering to God.

Moses who was to preside over the sacrifice instructed Aaron to take young Bull and a Ram without any defects and offer them to the Lord. The bull was for a sin offering and the ram for the burnt offering.

Aaron’s sons and the people of Israel had to be present to witness the offering of sacrifices.

The people of Israel were to bring a male goat for the sin offering, one year old lamb without defect for a burnt offering plus a bull and lamb for fellowship offering and all these were to be offered with grains offering mixed with oil.

Aaron was to offer his sacrifices at the alter to take away his sins and the sins of the people.

At the alter, Aaron slaughtered the young bull which was for his own sin offering and his sons brought blood which was later smeared at the corners of the alter and some poured out at the base of the alter.

In this offering, the fatty parts were given to God by having them burnt completely. Even the kidneys and the best part of the liver were also burnt. The rest of the meat and the skin were burnt outside the camp.

The priest was also to eat part of the sacrificial meat. These included the hind right leg and the breast. The other parts of the sacrifices were to be eaten by the Israelites.

Aaron further presented the people’s sacrifices. He took the goat that was to be offered for people’s sins, slaughtered it and offered it as he had done with his own offering.

Aaron also presented grain offering. He took a handful of flour and burnt it on the alter after mixing it with oil.

Aaron after finishing all the sacrifices raised his hands over the people and blessed them after that he steps down.

Later Aaron together with Moses went into the tent of the Lord’s presence, after which they came out and blessed the people again. Suddenly a dazzling light of the Lord appeared to all people.

Following the above, a flame of fire from heaven came and consumed the burnt offering with the fat on the alter. It was God’s revelation inform of fire (Theophany)

**HOW CHRIST SUPERSEDE AARON AS A PRIEST**

**(WHY CHRIST IS A HIGH PRIEST)**

He supersedes Aaron as a high priest because of the good news of salvation that he brought in the world.

Christ as a high priest is not serving in the manmade temple but he is serving in a new temple (Godly temple) that is greater and more perfect.

Christ created a direct relationship with God in the new covenant he made to the people hence he is therefore a new mediator replacing Aaron and this is why Christians pray through his name.

As a priest, Christ didn’t discriminate in any way but associated with everybody including even those who were believed to be sinners like the tax collectors and the lepers. On the contrary Aaron isolated the sinners from the righteous.

Christ as a priest didn’t sacrifice animals but rather shade his own blood in order to make the people receive eternal life. He therefore offered himself as a perfect sacrifice to God to purify people’s conscience from useless thoughts so that they may serve the living God alone. Aaron on the contrary offered animals hence the cross therefore becomes a sanctuary from where the sacrificial rituals were done.

As the high priest Christ cleansed both the body and the spirit. He cured sicknesses and forgave people’s sins.

Christ introduced Eucharist as a sacrament where Christians are fed on his body and blood for salvation.

**THE DIETRY LAWS/ FOOD PROHIBITION/ LEGA PURITY**

These deity laws were given the Israelites to help keep them holy like their God. Some animals, birds and insects were therefore considered unclean and unworthy for human consumption. (Leviticus 11:1- following)

There was a deep belief that eating of the prohibited food would cause harm and therefore make someone unclean in the spiritual sense and separate the individual from God (Deity laws Leviticus 11:1 – following)

In all this chapter deals with what would be referred to as a purity code governing the Israelites rituals as explained below;

In11:2 any learned animal with divided hooves and those that chew cud were worthy to be eaten as they were considered holly e.g. cows, goats, sheep etc.

However animals like camels, pigs and rabbits which have divided hooves but don’t chew cud weren’t to be eaten. They were considered unclean and the people weren’t even allowed to touch their bodies.

If anyone touched the carcasses of the prohibited animals, such an individual had to undergo the ritual of cleansing.

The prohibited animals were also not presented during sacrifice as they were considered unholy and therefore not fit for God and his people.

Any kind of water creature in particular the fish with fins and scales may be eaten. However those without fins and scales were considered unclean and therefore not to be consumed. (Leviticus 11:9)

In Leviticus 11:13 -19 some birds weren’t to be eaten. These birds including eagles, bats, ostriches, owls were considered unclean because they feed on the flesh of others and even on human beings.

However birds e.g. doves, pigeons and other domestic birds were considered cleaned therefore fit for human consumption.

In Leviticus 11:20 -23 all winged insects are considered unclean except those that hop and have 3 pairs of legs and body parts. They include grasshoppers and locusts.

However all other small beings that have wings but also crawl were considered unclean and were therefore not to be eaten.

In Leviticus 11:29 -30 all reptiles weren’t to be eaten. They included lizards, moles, mice. Whoever would touch them or their dead bodies would be considered unclean until the evening hours.

Animals which die a natural death were also considered as unclean and therefore not fit for human consumption. If anyone would touch the bodies of such animals or eat it, such individuals had to wash his clothing but would still remain unclean until the evening.

Any of the small animals that move on the ground whether they crawl of walk on four legs or have many legs were prohibited such animals like millipedes, spiders were unclean.

It’s important to note that some of these animals like pigs were prohibited because they were used as sacrifices to the Babylonian gods known as tammue. Even the snake was prohibited because it was a Canaanite god of fertility representing Baal.

Some of these animals were also prohibited because of being in hygiene and others because of natural dislike.

**HOW CHRIST INTERPRETED THE DIETRY LAWS (Mark 7:11- 14)**

Christ interpreted the deity laws after some religious leaders came all the way to Jerusalem wishing to test him by asking why his disciples were using unclean hands while eating.

Christ therefore used this opportunity to teach his followers about what makes the person unclean hence;

He begun by challenging the Pharisees for their over emphasize on the ritual of cleansing at the expense of melting human needs and worshiping God. (Mark 70-8)

Christ points out that nothing that goes into a person from the outside can make him ritually unclean. (Mark 7:15)

Related to above, he emphasizes that it’s what comes out of a person that makes him unclean.

Christ further emphasizes that it’s not what goes into a stomach that makes one unclean but what goes into the heart. This is because the spirit of God dwells on one’s heart not the stomach.

Christ thereafter declared all types of food fit for human consumption but after prayers.

To Christ, what makes a person ritually unclean are the evil desires coming deep from one’s heart that leads the individual to do immoral things like robbing, killing, raping.

In his conclusion, Christ emphasizes that God does not make a person ritually unclean but rather his relationship with God and fellow man.

St. Paul in 1st Corinthians 8:8 looks at food being harmless to the life of a Christian. He emphasizes that one loses nothing if he or she doesn’t eat the food and also gains nothing on eating the food that shall have been offered to idols.

However St. Paul gives warning to a Christian having a weaker conscience to be careful if such food is likely to affect his/her faith into sinning. He discourages such an individual from eating food offered to idols (1st Corinthians 8:9 -11).

**CONDITIONS WHICH DEFILED ONE’S HOLYNESS AMONG THE ISRAELITES**

Anybody who consumed any of the prohibited food or food considered being unclean like animals without divided hooves and any kind of reptiles among others defiled one’s holiness among the Israelites.

Eating of animals which don’t chew cud would also defile such an individual’s holiness.

Eating of any birds that feed on the flesh of others and human being defiled one’s purity.

If an individual ate any insect with more than 3 pairs of legs and body parts or that which could not hop, such an individual was unclean.

Touching the body of the prohibited animals would make an individual unclean.

Touching and eating any animals which could have died on its own defiled one’s holiness.

A woman in her monthly period was considered unclean. Such a woman wasn’t expected to associate with others freely.

After a woman has just given birth, she was considered unclean. If she gave birth to a boy, she would be unclean for 7days and after the circumcision of the boy she would again be unclean for 33 more days. If she had given birth to a daughter, she would be unclean for the first 14days and later more 66days. (Leviticus 12:1-following)

A man who had a bodily discharge from the penis or wet dreams was unclean. No body was allowed to touch his bed or seat where such a man had sat on. If it occurred, such an individual had to wash his clothes and bathe but he would remain still unclean until evening (Leviticus 15:1- following)

Having sexual relations with relatives i.e. incest would defile one’s holiness and was strongly forbidden (Leviticus 18:1- following)

Sexual relations with an animal would make such an individual unclean.

Sexual relations between a man and a man would make them both unclean.

Having sexual intercourse with a woman during her monthly periods was considered un holy and would therefore make them ritually unclean.

Among the Israelites anybody with a skin disease (leaper) hence leprosy was considered unclean. Such an individual was separated from others to avoid contaminating them. (Leviticus 14:1- following)

Touching of human corps would make a person or individual unclean such a person had to undergo the ritual of purification.

Worshiping idols would also defile one’s holiness as it was strongly forbidden in he covenant laws.

Among the Israelites anyone who worked on the Sabbath day defiled his/her holiness. Such a day was preserved for the worshiping of God and resting from the daily activities.

To the Israelites marrying foreigners would defile their holiness. They were the chosen people and were therefore to be holy like their father and also they were also forbidden from having any sexual relations with other nations.

**PURIFICATION OF THE LEPERS (Leviticus 14:1- following)**

Among the Israelites dreadful diseases which were seemingly bad to look at were known as the lepers and the victims were known as the lepers.

The victims of leprosy were separated from the rest of the community and the worship of God. It was done to avoid victims contaminating others.

The Israelites considered such a person to be impure and therefore could only be restored to purity and the rest of community after cleansing.

The people also believed that leprosy could attack an individual as a result of sinning.

The leper was required to wear a bell around his neck. This was made to easily identify the victim such that the rest could avoid associating with him/her.

According to the law, nobody was supposed to touch the patient because one could easily be contaminated.

The priest was the only one who could recommend treatment and give some counseling to the lepers.

On the day of purification, the leper was to be taken to the priest who had to take him outside the camp for close examination.

This signified the presentation of the individual before God.

The ritual of cleansing was to last for seven days with special rites being performed each day.

The leper was required to bring two clean birds for the ritual together with cedar wood. (Leviticus 14:4)

One of the birds was able to be killed over a clay bowls containing fresh spring water and the blood mixed with it. This signified the person’s impurity had been presented to God for cleansing.

The mixture of blood and water had to be sprinkled onto the victim of times. This signified the washing away of the sins committed.

The other bird had to be dipped the remaining mixture of blood and water and left away. This symbolized the healing of the evil spirit that had caused the disease and liberation of the leper.

The cleansed leper was thereafter required to wash his clothes and share off and a bath. This signified becoming pure or clean.

The cleansed leper had to enter the camp but had to live outside the camp/ tent for another 7days. This was intended to protect him from being contaminated again by his own tent.

After the additional 7days had elapsed the cleansed leper had to present himself to the priest for inspection after shaving again besides washing his clothes and bathing.

The individual was thereafter required to bring (2) two male lambs and (1) female lamb which was one year old without defect, 3 kilograms (3kgs) of flour mixed with olive oil.

The priest would then take the cleansed leper and his offerings to the entrance of the tent of Lord’s presence where they were offered to allow him re-enter his tent.

After these various offerings, the individual was declared clean and allowed to associate with the others freely.

**NEW TESTAMENT VIEW ABOUT LEPROCY/ THE LAW OF PURIFICATION**

The New Testament maintains the Jewish law of purification of leprosy with Christ being the central figure. He however observed this law in a different but related way as discussed below.

Christ out of mercy and pity cured a leper man and instructed him to follow some regulations. The leper man wasn’t to spread the news and had to go and see the priest for justification. This means that Christ wasn’t against the Mosaic Law. (Mark 1:40-44)

Christ had no fear of the lepers. He associated with them freely and even touched them freely contrary to the Jews who could not touch and were afraid to see such an individual.

The Jews labeled Christ rebellious because of associating with the lepers. He however challenged and told them that it was those who were sick that needed a doctor.

Christ presented himself as a savior and a healer. He therefore showed that helping the leper was part of his duties and pointed out that he had come to serve man and bring him back to God.

By his attitude, Christ emphasized that his physical contract with the lepers had nothing to do with one’s spiritual life and could not therefore make him ritually unclean.

To Christ, mere sickness like leprosy doesn’t mean that one’s a sinner. He therefore calls upon people not to regard such people as social and religious out cast/ misfit.

According to Christ, separating such people from the community is useless, he showed love to the leper man and emphasized that such people needed comfort.

Christ later emphasized that purification is through belief and acceptance to the word of God contrary to the Jewish thinking that required the victim to undergo through some rituals.

Christ emphasized that evil forces had no place in the heavenly kingdom as depicted in the act of curing the leper man.

**RELEVANCE OF THE PURIFICATION PROCESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

Christians have to help and give comfort to those suffering from different diseases especially STD’s e.g. AIDs.

Christians need to teach the hope of resurrection to patients that is to be inherited from Christ.

Christians should avoid passing judgments onto others patients but instead they should help them by bring them to God.

There is need for Christians to acknowledge Christ as their saviour and a healer from their different forms.

Christians learn of the importance of faith and belief. This means that Christians have to believe in Christ if they are to be delivered from their suffering.

Christians have to associate with all people including those who were considered as sinners. They should therefore make such people realize the importance of being close to God.

Christians should always seek hope in their daily life through Christ. This means that they should always pray if they are to be successful in their activities.

Christians need to show love to the destitute or those in problems. They have to treat those people with affection so as to make their lives easier.

Christians also have a role of preaching the good news to the patients to help them understand the idea of salvation which is brought by Christ as a saviour.

To Christians, repentance is an important aspect of coming nearer to God. They should therefore maintain their holiness with their search for a meaningful living.

Christians have to remain obedient to the authorities in place. The leper man recognized that Christ had authority and he requested for assistance.

Christians learn that everything is possible with God. They should therefore trust in him even when they are suffering.

**THE SACREDNESS OF BLOOD (Leviticus 17:10- following)**

This chapter emphasizes the importance of blood among the Israelites as discussed below;

Among the Hebrews, blood was sacred/ holy and was used as a symbol of purification.

Blood was regarded as life and one without it was believed to die. In other words all lives stem from blood and it was for this reason that the Israelites prohibited people from drinking blood and not even eating meat containing blood.

Blood among the Israelites was necessary for atonement (repentance). They believed that sins would subject the sinner to death and the life of the sinner could only be restored by the blood of an animal used to appease God who is the source of life. The Israelites looked at the consumption of blood as interference with the right of God the source of life. They believed God’s intension of life.

To the Hebrews blood was used to sanctify and purify anybody who was regarded to be a sinner. Blood had to be sprinkled onto the sinner that he or she could become holy again.

An animal that died a natural death couldn’t be eaten because it was assumed that the blood had remained in it. If anybody ate such an animal, he would be considered unclean and therefore had to purify himself to drive away the guilt.

According to the Hebrew laws, the blood of animals killed had to be drained off before it could be cooked for human consumption.

Blood among the Hebrews was used to link man with God. To this, the people could first sprinkle the blood of any animal sacrificed on to the alter and later on to the people.

Because of the holiness of blood, nobody other than the high priest was expected to handle any issue related to it. Even the priest had to use blood only for the sanctification, purification and atonement.

**NEW TESTAMENT VIEW ABOUT BLOOD**

According to New Testament blood remained something holy but with a different meaning.

The New Testament stresses human life because animals and human beings are creatures of God but animals were given to human beings as food. Therefore killing an animal isn’t an offence against man.

Christ is presented as a sacrificial animal who shade his own blood for the purification and liberation of man from his sinful nature.

The sacredness of blood also implies that a sinner has to repent and return to God through the blood shade by Christ.

By shading his blood, Christ brought a new life for any repentant sinner and believing in him means having life in its fullness without perishing.

During the last super, Christ referred to the wine as his own blood poured out for many after praying. He called upon his followers to take it in memory of the wonders he had done in human life (Mark 14:24)

The blood of Christ is used as a seal of the new covenant between man and God for salvation of all.

In all, the blood of Christ is presented as having washed away man’s sins. This means that man regained his holiness through Christ pouring out his blood.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**

Blood formed one of the most important aspects of African traditional religion and was therefore regarded to be holly.

Africans used blood from animals to reconcile people with misunderstandings especially relatives.

Blood in traditional Africa was used to signify one’s commitment or royalty in life especially in keeping an agreement. To prove their commitment the Africans could make blood pacts which were meant to be kept if one would/ was to avoid suffering.

The traditional Africans used blood to appease the spirits of the living dead which they believed could have been made annoyed by human behavior.

In African traditional society, blood formed part of human meal as long as the first outflow was poured on the ground for the living dead.

Blood in African traditional society was for purification especially when something had gone wrong. In particular, when a taboo like incest had been broken.

In African traditional society, blood was used to keep in touch with the living dead. Blood from animals, chicken or human beings was poured down to show the people’s recognition of the living dead as being part of human community.

Blood was used to seek blessings in the people’s daily activities like cultivation and also occasional activities including wars.

**THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY**

The book of Deuteronomy deals with the spoken words of Moses to the people of Israel when they were in the land of Moabites.

Moses in his address gave moral instructions prescribed in the Ten Commandments (10) to the Israelites as they prepare to enter and occupy the Promised Land (Canaan). This was also the time when Moses was about to die.

The book of Deuteronomy is an extension of the Exodus event. The major theme in this book includes:-

The covenant relationship

Love

Act of Herem (Deuteronomy 6:,7:8)

Summary of the Israelites obligation toward God and one another (Deut 10,: 12:22)

God’s goodness towards the Israelites

Election

Blessings and curses (Deut: 1,28,46)

Offering of the first fruit (Deuteronomy 26:, 1:10)

Life and death (Deuteronomy 13: 15:20)

**THEME OF LOVE**

Moses in chapter 6 called upon the Israelites to remember the Lord for his great deed which was out of his love.

Moses called upon the Israelites to observe the great commandment of love and make it the basis of their lives. In other words all the activities of the Israelites had to be governed by love.

The Israelites had to exchange his love to the future generation. They were therefore to teach their children about this commandment.

Moses instructed the Israelites to love God alone according to him, this would ensure God’s blessings onto the people.

The Israelites were also to extend this love to their fellow men in an effort to live as one ant to ensure God’s continuous love and care for them.

The Israelites were required to show love to the under privileged and foreigners. The orphans and the widows hard to be treated fairly and the Israelites weren’t to mistreat strangers like their former slave masters (Egyptians). Deuteronomy 10:18-19

Moses emphasized that even the promises God made to the Israelites great ancestors were because of his love for mankind and specifically the people he had chosen.

Its also noted that God out of his love liberated the Israelites from their Egyptian exile life characterized by slavery.

Its further noted that God initiated the Sinaitic covenant out of his love by observing his loving for mankind.

The Israelites were to honour God, worship only him and were to make their promises in his name alone to show their love. Therefore, they were not to worship any other god if they were to escape God’s destruction.

The Israelites were to obey the commandments of love in order for their nation to prosper and also to please God. Chapter 7:1 –following points out that the divine election of Israel as a nation was out of God’s strong love.

The Israelites were to serve God faithfully in showing their love for him. Faithfulness among themselves was also to be manifestation of God’s love towards them (Deut 8:5)

The Israelites were expected to repent off their sins to show their love for him. Faithfulness among themselves was also to be manifestation of God’s love towards them (Deut 8:5).

The Israelites were expected to repent off their sins to show their love for God. This was to be a step towards living a pure and a holy life God himself and therefore a respect to him.

**THEME OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The theme of love is spread all over and is significant in the New Testament as discussed below.

Its pointed out that God out of his love for the world sent his only son to die for mankind and that who so ever believes in him shall have life to the fullness (john 3:16)

The greatest commandment according to Christ is the love of God with all one’s strength, soul and mind (Mark 12:28).

Christ also points out that the second greatest commandment is the love of one’s neighbour as much as one’s self (Mark 12:31)

Christ called for the love of enemies and emphasized need of being/ doing good for them. (Mathew 5:3-5)

Christ, the love of God and neighbour is better and more important then offering animals and other sacrifices to God.

Christ called upon his followers to love one another just as he had loved them. He emphasized that the greatest love a person can have for his friends in to give his life for them. Christ is therefore presented as having laid a foundation of love.

Christ emphasized that God loves a believer because of the love such a believer has for him. He points out that loving him is a means of having a direct access to the fathers blessings.

According to St. Paul, love is the greatest gift a person is given. He looks at love as being unique with no string attached (1st Corinthians 13:13).

St. Paul emphasized that a believer is irrespirable from the love of Christ. Love is therefore a divine victory of believers to reflect in their lives (Romans 8:33-39).

Its also noted that love can forgive and that is characterized by mercy, kindness, patience and truthfulness among others (1st Corinthians 13:4-14)

Love according to St. Paul is a external. It lasts for ever and stands all the test o the world.

**OBLIGATIONS OF ISRAELITES**

The Israelites were to teach each generation the Ten Commandments and were to constantly remind then of their faith.

They also love God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt, protecting them in the wilderness till they reached.

The Israelites were to observe monotheism as the basis of their life. They were not to bow down before any god.

They were to honour and worship God. They were to make their promises in his name alone.

The Israelites were to remain obedient to the covenant laws. Therefore their daily activities had to reflect compliance to the laws. The Israelites were required to love their neighbours. They were to live as one without any misunderstandings.

They were also required to extend love to foreigners or strangers. Therefore they were not to discriminate them but to treat them equally.

Israelites were to carry the act of herem and destroy every nation that the Lord would bless on their powers. They had to show them no mercy and treat them as enemies.

The Israelites had to remain holy just as their father was (God) therefore they were to avoid any situation that could lead them into sinning.

They had to remain as a theocratic nation i.e. their economic, political, social and religious ways of using had to be determined by the laws of God.

**THE ACT OF HEREM**

Herem is an Hebrew word meaning total destruction of people and their belongings. It was one of the obligations that Israelites had to fulfill.

The act of the Herem was also one of the instructions that God gave Moses to pass onto the Israelites as they were about to enter and occupy the Promised Land.

Through Moses, God commanded Israelites to destroy their enemies and all their property completely.

The Israelites were to destroy plants, human beings, animals and houses incase they would face enemies.

During destruction the Israelites were not to spare and have mercy on anything. This was because they would be doing God’s will.

Sparing of enemies would be disobedient and therefore lack of respect for God’s command. It would also displease God which could result into them being destroyed.

The Israelites were to carry the act of herem in order to show their absolute faithfulness to God remain holly and live according to government laws.

The Israelites were also to carry out the act of herem in order to avoid future apostal. (abonding one’s faith) which would be due to foreign influence.

The act of herem was further necessary in order to avoid temptations of worshiping other gods of the conquered people including hitties, Amorites, jebusites among others.

The act of herem would reflect the divine election of Israel as a nation which was not its own set but out of unique strong love (Deut. 7:7-8)

Destroying enemies and other property. It signified Israelites minds and the supremacy of Yahweh verses other gods.

Carrying out act of herem would make God to keep covenant he made with his people and show them his covenant.

The Israelites were also to be blessed inform of prospering in their nation after carrying out the act of herem. They would increase in number and have many children besides their fields producing good harvests and bearing a lot of cattle and sheep among others.

God was also to protect the Israelites from any kind of sickness after carrying out the act of herem. (Deut. 7:15)

**CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ACT ORF HEREM**

To Christians the act of herem is revealed differently depending on the circumstances surrounding the nature of the destruction that ought to be carried out. It implies that Christians have positive and negative attitude towards the act of herem among which these should be considered.

To Christians, its necessary to destroy the pagan alters or the shrines and idols especially if the owners of such things are willing and are ready to accept Christianity.

Christians need to destroy inherited properties which would other wise turn them into pagans especially if such were items from the witch doctors.

Christians ought to practice the act of herem in self-defense. In this case, if the life of such Christians is threatened there is already an impending death he/she can be forced to destroy the enemy.

It also necessary for Christians to destroy pornographic materials like magazines and indecent tapes/ films etc.

Christians have to destroy the sins surrounding them totally. This means that Christians have to help in cleansing of peoples hearts other than their property.

However Christians need to be for merciful and kind to their enemies. This calls for the need of sparing enemies even if such enemies are threatening kill, taking care of Christ who surrendered his life to his enemies.

Christians should show love to their enemies and even pray for them. They have to do good to those hating them and bless those cursing them (Luke 6:27-28)

Christians need to practice the moral ritual of forgiveness. They should at all times be ready to make a fresh start whenever these misunderstandings would have happened like Jesus who forgave those who persecuted and killed him.

Christians are under no obligation to kill according to God’s commandments carrying the act of herem is going against God’s plan for life.

Christians need to realize that they are all sinners and have no right to judge others. Judgment is only done by God because all human beings by nature do fall short of God’s glory.

Carrying the act of herem subjects even the inner people to suffering. This means that such an act is not relevant (necessary) in human society.

**CONCEPT OF DIVINE ELECTION**

The divine election of Israelites as a special nation has its roots in the call of Abraham initiated by God himself to begin its salvation plan for human kind.

Through the divine election, Israel gained the new and special status. The Israelites became the chosen people, the priestly house and the people of God.

The divine election shows God’s greatness and the greatness of the people he had chosen in relation to other nations.

By the divine election, the Israelites were bound to the Sinaitic covenant. They were to be fully committed to it and worshiping only Yahweh – the God of their ancestors.

The divine election involved special blessings. As God’s chosen people they were blessed with Promised Land, God’s protection, provision of food and wealth besides joy and happiness.

Israelites were under the obligation to make choice following their divine election. They had to choose either to obey God and receive more blessings or to disobey him and be cursed.

The later generation of Israel had to acknowledge the concept of divine election. In other words the Israelites had to teach their children those concepts and its requirements.

The Israelites had to continue loving God with all their hearts. This was one way of maintaining a strong relationship with God as the chosen people. God showed his love for the people through the divine election. In other words Israelites had done nothing to be chosen but the choice was out of love that God had for them.

Through the divine election, all activities of the Israelites were to be guided by Yahweh. They weren’t to act out on their own but were to follow what God expected them to do.

The divine election had a moral requirement. The Israelites were supposed to be morally upright and show good e.g. to the other nations.

The success of Israelites in all spheres of life was to depend on their obedience and faithfulness to Yahweh. Turning against him would result into their punishment.

**RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE ELECTION TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

To Christians, Christ is the saviour with whom they share a special relationship and through him they are called/ elected children of God.

Through baptism, Christians acquire God’s love and are therefore under the obligation to love him.

Christians have to realize and recognize that they are members of the church with Christ as their leader hence have to live a pure life.

Christians became divinely elected as God’s children by accepting to follow the teaching of Christ.

The body of Christians is a temple of God and the spirit of God lives in it. There is hence need to live according to the requirement of God.

Christians have to obey God’s commands so as to acquire divine blessings. This is what binds them as a divinely elected people.

Christians have to show good examples to others by being morally upright. They should be the light of a society so as to influence other members positively.

Christians should believe in Christ because he is the truth, the way and live in the kingdom of God who elected them through sending him to die for their sins.

Christians should always take time and pray. Through prayers Christians open themselves to God and therefore maintain the required relationship.

Christians ought to be proud because of following Christ. They have to express this publically for they have been given special gift in the form of wisdom from God.

Christians should always repent their sins to avoid perishing because of being divinely elected through Christ. God is always willing to welcome whoever accepts to renew his relationship with him.

Christians have to prepare themselves for the second coming of Jesus Christ hence be ready for judgment basing on their behaviours.

**BLESSINGS AND CURSES (Deut: 28:1-26)**

Deuteronomy 28:1-26 gives a detailed description of the blessings and curses among the Israelites. God’s chosen people and the descendants of Abraham.

The Israelites had to make choice between blessings and curses basing on the covenant relationship.

Deuteronomy 28:1 shows that obedience to God’s command would bring more blessings.

The Israelites were required to observe/ maintain monotheism as a basis of their lives so as to receive God’s blessings.

The Israelites were to be blessed with abundant wealth if they would observe the Sinaitic covenant. The wealth was to be inform of animals like cattle and sheep among others.

Israel was also to maintain theocracy (being ruled by God) and receive the blessing of stability hence their stable lives had to depend on their acceptance of God as their ruler.

The Israelites were to trust Yahweh and replaced with good crop yield which hence abundant food supply.

They would be blessed with victories of blessings over their enemies that they should defeat them and maintain their status.

The Israelites would also be blessed with fertility of the body. They were to have many children and spread all over the land they would be given.

**On the other hand the curses would befall the Israelites as a result of their disobedience to the covenant requirements.**

Through the covenant, the Israelites would experience incurable diseases like leprosy.

The Israelites were to suffer from dust and drought resulting into famine until they would perish due to disobedience.

They were to suffer military defeat in any confrontation with their neighbours. Consequently they would suffer the second exile life and be subjected to oppression and exploitation as it was the case with the Egyptian slavery.

The Israel women would suffer barrenness and hence childlessness would be the characteristic of any marriage relationship.

There would be poverty, their yields would decline, the cattle, sheep and oxen would be stolen and so many related problems.

The Israelites would suffer natural calamities and catastrophes in the form of earthquake, flooding etc.

God would desert them and they would die out of their own mistakes hence God shall have with drawn all his assist to the people he had chosen.

The Israelites would lose their fame, respect and status as the chosen people and would therefore be minimized by their neighbours who thought them strong.

Their sons and daughters would be taken by other nations and defiled without them having nothing to do.

**UNDERSTANDING OF CURSES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**

To the Africans curses are believed to befall an individual or community after annoying god especially the activities of the elders and community as a whole.

Curses are also as a result of failure to give respect to the spirit. This may explain why sacrifices are offered, given to these spirits intended to appease them.

The Africans also believed that annoying the living dead would result into curses. These living dead were considered part of the family and superior to the living members.

Curses in African traditional society call for the need of consulting gods in the shrines. This was done with the intention of finding out the possible causes of the curses.

Having sexual relation with a relative (incest) would result into curses. This was because they believed such people were already connected by blood.

To the Africans indecent burial of a member especially if such an individual was influential, it would cause tragedy and suffering to the living ones.

Curses were also closely associated with killing of relatives. This would mean breakage in blood relationship of the people believed to annoy the ancestral spirits.

Disrespect to secret objects and places like shrines would cause curses something bad had to happen because of the spiritual nature of such things.

In African traditional society, to them curses associated to disrespect of elder people especially the parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents because these people are believed to be close to God hence any kind of abuse would annoy the spiritual world.

Breaking of blood pact would result into curses. Blood pact involved making promises in the name of God to show one’s commitment hence breaking it would mean in the social relationship involving even God and the spirit world.

Curses are associated with breaking of norms and customs of the society which to the traditional Africans had a deeper connection with the spiritual world.

To the Africans, they had a belief that failure to take care of the graveyard/ burial grounds especially by cleaning them would cause curses.

**CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN (JOSHUA 1-12)**

After the Israelites had wondered in the wilderness for a great number of years (40years). They finally reached Canaan under the leadership of Joshua following the death of Moses who had led them from/ out of Egypt.

To the Israelites, the conquest of Canaan was seen as another mighty act of God and through Joshua they prepared themselves carefully to cross River Jordan into Canaan.

God through Joshua commanded the Israelites to sanctify/ purify themselves as they prepared to occupy the Promised Land. They had to keep themselves free from any evil.

The priest were instructed to lead the Israelites carrying the Ark act of covenant with a distance existing between themselves and the Israelites they were leading.

Reaching the edge of River Jordan the water is said to have stopped flowing their by allowing the Israelites to cross into Canaan which marked the beginning of new life as the chosen people of God.

However, before settling down, the Israelites had to fight several wars given the fact that they were simply entering into a land being occupied by other people.

Judges who were also military leaders led the Israelites into attacking several city states of Canaan .g. Jericho, gilgal, bethel and hai among others in the early beginning and the conquest was finalized when Jerusalem was captured during the reign of king David.

However, in some places like schechem, the Israelites entered peacefully as they were given a good welcome. This was because they were believed to be related to those people basing on the ground that Abraham their great grandfather had at one time been to this place where he had built an alter and worshiped God. Jacob also had once bought a piece of land in the same place. (Joshua 24-32)

**REASONS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONQUEST OF CANAAN**

The Israelites used a surprise attack approach on their enemies hence meaning that the enemies weren’t aware of such attacks and they were easily defeated.

God’s will and protection played a role in the successful conquest of Canaan. God had earlier on promised protection from their enemies and had even protected them in the wilderness.

The Israelites were well prepared to launch the attack on their enemies. In the wilderness they had already fought successful battles over other groups e.g. the amalekites as such learnt more combat attacks.

The strong desire to occupy the land promised to their great grandfather Abraham contributed to the Israelites successful conquest they knew that the land belonged to them thus they fought with a lot of vigour and moral to obtain it.

The use of collaborators helped the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan. Among others, a Canaanite prostitute in the name of RAHAD rescued the Israelites spies by hiding them on top of her roof when King Jericho had planned for their arrest.

The Israelites were bound by nationalistic feelings. They fought as one people and were ready at any cost to defend themselves.

Related to the above, there was disunity among the Canaanites tribes, each tribe fought her own and as such couldn’tover come the formidable force of Israel under leadership.

The desire to live a settled life motivated and gave determination to the Israelites to fight until the end. This had followed their long life wondering in the wilderness which they had got tired of.

The assumed invisibility of Israel contributed to their successful conquest of Canaan. News of their earlier clash with the Egyptians and other tribes in the wilderness like the amelikites had already widely spread in the Canaanite city states and as such they got prepared for the wars and were therefore easily defeated.

The role played by the Israelites who were already settled in Canaan contributed to their successful conquests. At shechem the Israelites were given a warm welcome because of the knowledge that Abraham and Jericho had earlier settled there before.

**THE ROLES OF JOSHUS**

Joshua mobilized the Israelites into a formidable fighting force. They were therefore able to face their enemies courageously.

Joshua led the Israelites into battle fields and thought his effort places like Jericho, bathel and hai were easily captured.

Joshua disputes arising among the Israelites amicably. This helped to maintain peace and justice among the Israelites.

Joshua equally distributed the conquered land away from the tribes of Israel. This helped to reduce cases of land disputes.

Joshua called for strict monotheism. He showed the importance of worshiping only Yahweh and the dangers associated with the worshiping of polytheism.

Joshua helped to create unity among the tribes of Israel. Through him the Israelites came to realize that they were one people chosen by God.

Joshua organized a covenant renewal at shechem (Joshua 24:1-following) this helped the Israelites to remain firm in their faith and the relationship established at the foot of mountain Sinai.

**THE COVENANT RENEWAL CEREMONY**

The covenant renewal deals with God’s instructions to the Israelites through Joshua as their leader they came at a time when the Israelites had successful conquered and settled in Canaan (Promised Land)

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at shechem and called on the elders, other leaders and judges to come into the presence of God.

Through Joshua God reminded the Israelites of his blessings and promises he had made to their great grandfather Abraham.

Joshua pointed out the monotheistic faith of Israel’s fore fathers i.e. Abraham and Moses. He reminded the Israelites also to do the same.

Joshua reminded the Israelites about the roles of Moses and Aaron at the time they were suffering in Egypt under slavery.

Joshua presented God as being merciful and saving. He reminded them that God out of his love chose them and mercifully saved them from their Egyptian king and his magicians among others.

Joshua reminded the Israelites that their God was omnipresent and was therefore watching their behaviours hence he called upon them to be holy like him.

Joshua also reminded the Israelites about the covenant they entered into with God at mountain Sinai and called upon them to maintain it.

Joshua reminded the Israelites how God protected them from their enemies e.g. the amalekites, Amorites, Moabites and the Canaanites.

Joshua further reminded the Israelites that their God gave them a fertile land Canaan in which they would live forever until.

Joshua called upon the Israelites to serve and honour only one God (Yahweh) they were to get rid of their gods which their ancestors used to worship at Mesopotamia and in Egypt ( Joshua 24:14)

Joshua also pointed out the likely consequences of serving other gods. For this, Yahweh wouldn’t forgive them but would punish and destroy them.

The Israelites thereafter answered Joshua offering their commitment to Yahweh and promised to obey him.

At the climax of the covenant renewal Joshua wrote the command he had read to the people in the book of the law.

Joshua then took a large storm and set it under jak tree in the Lord’s sanctuary. The storn was to act as a witness to help the Israelites remain/ keep away from rebellious activities against God.

The covenant renewal involved the incorporation of foreign tribes into Yahweh’s community.

Joshua thereafter dispersed the people and they all returned to their own part of land. He died shortly and was buried at shechem.

**REASONS FOR THE COVENANT RENEWAL**

The Israelites had started backsliding and quit often they were tempted to abandon Yahweh (Exodus 32)

Most of the mature Israelites present at the time of the sinaitic covenant had started dying. Therefore those who were very young or hadn’t yet been born during the sinaitic covenant had to be introduced to such an important aspect of their lives so that they could enter into a personal and bidding relationship with Yahweh.

The Canaan land was a place full of morality and therefore a covenant renewal was aimed at preventing the Israelites from falling prey to such immorality.

The Israelites had incorporated some Canaanites into their society hence such people had to be taught about the covenant faith which was inspired by God.

The Israelites had started trusting their won powers following their successful conquest of the Canaan land. Hence the covenant renewal was an occasion Joshua used to remind the Israelites of God’s assistance.

Some Israelites had started looking at Joshua as their only leader because of his role in their conquest and settlement in Canaan. Joshua therefore intended to show them that they were God’s people and were bound to his laws only.

By organizing the covenant renewal Joshua intended to serve a warning to the Israelites about the polytheistic nature of the society they had settled in. it was therefore a call for the Israelites to maintain monotheism.

Joshua intended to remind the Israelites about their responsibilities and obligations as per the sinaitic covenant. Hence any future sinning and its subsequent punishment would lead out of the Israelites disobedience.

The covenant renewal was necessary to re-affirm Israel as a theocratic nation. It therefore showed/ signified that the leaders who were there at that time were mere servants of God (Joshua 24:1)

The covenant renewal was intended to allow the new generation to know about their history especially the origin.

Joshua intended to remind the Israelites about the roles Yahweh played in their lives. They had to recall that their God was a God with power, love and care among others.

**PROBLEMS/ CHALLENGES IN THE PROMISED LAND**

There were land disputes among the Israelites basing on tribal differences with some showing greediness. Joshua however solved this problem by dividing the land himself.

Disunity development among the various tribes of the Israel. This was because after settling in the land given to them each tribe started thinking about themselves as individual tribes other than the nation of Israel.

There were constant attacks on the Israelites from the neighbours. The Canaanites made the Israelites life increasingly difficult by attacking them because they believed that their land had been hijacked by these foreigners and were therefore determined to fight back.

Sexual immorality especially prostitution became common. The Israelites especially men got engaged in these activities majorly because of the beautiful Canaanites covenant laws where the Israelites weren’t meant to have any sexual relations with other nations.

There was leadership vacuum particularly after the death of Jacob. This contributed to the late power struggle which eventually created disunity among the Israelites.

The Israelites experienced period of drought. This resulted into famine which subjected the people to suffering.

The societies of the Israelites settled were permissive. People behaved in any way they wanted. This attracted Israelites who felt betrayed by the covenant laws.

Israelites backslide and started practicing religious syncretism in other words they started worshiping Yahweh and baals at the same time.

Because of the pagan influence the Israelites disobeyed Yahweh. They failed to carry out the act of herem as instructed but instead became friendly to the people.

Some Israelites practiced religious apostacy. they completely abandoned Yahweh and started worshiping the Canaanite gods i.e baal.

Idolatry also became common among the Israelites. They started worshiping objects e.g. trees, rocks, snakes and the sun etc.

Corruption was also common after a long period of their settlement at canaane.g the sons of eli misused people’s sacrifices and went a head to sleep with women at the alter.

The Israelites failed to pray to the leadership system that their neighbours who were being led by kings they demanded for a physical king and neglected Yahweh thesaratic rule over them but this was against the covenant faith.

Diseases and natural epidemics became common among the Israelites which left them physically weak and were therefore unable to earn a living.

Kingship in Israel, resulted into foreign alliance. This led to the importation of pagan practices into the Israelites community.

**ROLES OF JUDGES**

Judges were the charismatic leaders appointed by God. Among others they included Deborah, ehud, barak, gedion, Samuel and Samson. God particularly appointed judges during the political crisis and military distress and were therefore to help the Israelites by performing the following duties.

Judges acted as military leaders. They were able to organize and command the Israelites when fighting their enemies.

Judges acted as God’s representative on earth among the Israelites. Israel being a theocratic nation, the people would talk to God through judges.

Judges helped to maintain morality in Israel. Among others, they ensured that the benjamite rapists were punished (Joshua 19:22-30 and 28:11 and 18:28)

Judges had the responsibility of conquering new territories to make it part of the Promised Land.

Judges solved the disputes arising among the Israelites from time to time. It was important in maintaining justice.

Some of the judges composed hymes e.g. Deborah composed songs praising Yahweh’s omnipresence and greatness.

The judges helped the priest in carrying out some of their duties. Among others, they emphasized the observation of Sabbath as a holy day and the role of circumcision.

Judges helped in motivating Israelites in doing some agricultural work like cultivation. This had followed their semi-nomadic way life and their eventual settlement at Canaan where they had to adjust to a new life.

Judges helped the Israelites to renew the covenant laws. They could bring the 12 tribes of Israel together and places like shechem and Shiloh such that they could re-affirm their faith in Yahweh.

Judges prophesized. They were able to foretell events ahead of time. For example, Deborah prophesized defeat of sisera a commander of one of the Israelites enemies and indeed it happened (judges 4:12-24)

**RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM**

This is the fussion of different religious beliefs; ideas and practices. This was the case when the Israelites conquered and settled at Canaan. It particularly became Canaan after the death of Joshua when the Israelites started borrowing the religious practices beliefs and ideas from the Canaanite religion and mixing it with their own but which was contrary to what Yahweh had commanded them to do and therefore it signified their disobedience.

**CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM**

The Israelites had lost faith in Yahweh. They didn’t see the need of believing in him and this came after they had forgotten the contribution of Yahweh in their history like liberating them from the Egyptian slavery. Protecting them against their enemies and giving them food among others. This therefore made them to trust the Canaanite religious way of life.

There was also absence/ lack of exemplary leaders particularly after the death of Joshua. This made them to behave in any way they thought like hence why some of them became a victim of religious syncretism (Joshua 17:6)

Religious syncretism became common because of the absence of vision. The Israelites believed that God was lacking time to answer their prayers. This encouraged them to go ahead and begin practicing the Canaanite religion.

According to the Israelites, the covenant laws were as strict on their ways of life and yet the Canaanite religion appeared to have a lot of axity/ freedom. The Canaanite religion recognized freedom of worship and even prostitution.

The Canaanite gods were visible and yet Yahweh was invisible hence the Israelites were tired of worshiping an invisible God from their time of liberation to the time of settling in the Canaanite land who had visible gods.

Failure to carry the act of herem as God had commanded led to the syncretism. This came as a result of the Israelites mixing freely with their enemies and their different ways of life yet they were meant to destroy them because of this they failed to resist the temptation of worshiping the Canaanite god.

The new generation of Israel that settled at Canaan lacked the real understanding of what Yahweh had done to their ancestors and even who Yahweh was. They couldn’t therefore see the need of believing him and because of this they started believing in ht Canaanite religion,

The Canaanite gods appeared to offer a more practical and quick solution to the people’s problems than Yahweh e.g.Baal who was the chief go responsible for the health of the people and their animals appeared to have made all the Canaanites and their animals appeared attracted to Israelites to be

Religious syncretism came up because of the excitement associate with the worshiping of the Canaanite gods. Among other, baal worship allowed sexual intercourse during the occasions. This therefore influenced the Israelites to copy such a way.

The transitional period from normadic life agrarian life contributed to religious syncretism thus this was because baal was responsible for good agricultural products. This meant that the Israelites had to consult baal such that they could.

The Israelites relaxed after acquiring the promised land hence could no longer see the importance of Yahweh in their lives hence because of this, they resolted to baal worship because it seemed new.

Similarity in the names of God i.e the Canaanites and Israelites God contributed to religious syncretism. Both of them refered to the supreme being as “El” even the patriarch had refered to their God as “El shadia” meaning the God of the mountain and yet the Canaanite chief god was also called “El”.

HOW THE ISRAELITES PRACTICED SYNCRETISM

Question: How did the Israelites betray their own God

Account for the Israelites betrayal of Yahweh

Worshiping baal

Offering human sacrifices

Practicing temple prostitution

They built pegan alters

They intermarried with the Canaanites

They made idols/ images of their God.

They demanded for a human king which was a practiced by other pegan

They built houses in peganfassione.g the pillars being made of the images of gods and goddesses.

Gave pegan names to their children e.g Gideon was named ishabaal.

Made prigrimilages to the temple of baal

They entered into alliances with the Canaanites and foreign nation e.g the Canaanites and other nations like tyre.

DANGERS OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM (Deutronomy)

Losing military confrontation e.g the philistines defeated the Israelites and even took the ark of covenant.

Disunity among themselves i.e. the Israelites blamed and turned against each other e.g king saul wanted to kill David after realizing that he would be a next king to replace him.

Infertility of crops, animals and human beings

Incurable diseases

Class distinction among the Israelites of the rich and poor

They would die

Yahweh would die

Loss of the Israelites culture like circumcision

Nepotism among Israelites e.g king david failed his own friends, tribemates when appointing leaders.

Israelites lost their original faith of the covenant

HOW CHRISTIANS PRACTISE RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM TODAY

Marrying polygamously which is contrally to God’s intention of creating only one man and woman.

Wearing protecting charms like around the neck, arms, wrist and other private parts etc.

Building of shrines to represent places of worship for the traditional gods while at the same time contributing towards the building of the church.

Believing in superstitions like abandoning one’s journey after meeting a dog or woman as the first thing of the day.

Some humans do offer sacrifices to gods for various reasons e.g.prosperity, protection among others.

Giving names to newly born babies, relating to traditional practices e.g. names of twins.

Dedicating one’s house and children among others to both the church and the shrines.

Practicing food prohibition and yet Christ declared all food fit for human consumption.

Consulting mediums/ witchdoctors at a certain given moment and going to the church thereafter.

Consulting and believing in the stars in the newspaper.

Taking part in all practices involved in funnel rites.

**CHARACTERISTICS/ FEATURES OF THE CANAANITE RELIGION**

This was a religion which was in existence when Israelites entered and settled at Canaan. It was characterized by the following.

It was a polytheistic religion i.e. it involved the worshiping of many gods like Baal who was the chief god and Astarte the wife of Baal, mot the god of death.

The gods and goddesses had images i.e. they were responsible in curving clay wood or metals. They also took the form of insects, birds, animals like cows and goats.

It had inerachy. Among all gods, Baal was a chief god following his wife Astarte then mot and others.

It was a nature religion worshiping of the gods depended on the agriculture season e.g.Baal who was responsible for rain was worshiped during drought or in absence of rain such that it could rain.

The gods had their own particular location where they were worshiped and consulted.

The gods renaled among themselves e.g.Baal was always in conflict with mot god of death.

It recognized the practiced temple prostitution. The Canaanites believed that a man , his crops and animals could be fertile after having sexual intercourse with the prostitute stationed at pagan temples.

The gods and goddesses were believed to be evident and powerful but were easily controlled by human beings through performing magical rituals.

Offering sacrifices was an important aspect of the Canaanite religion. Among others human beings, cows, goats and other animals were sacrificed.

The Canaanite religion involved the use of mediators i.e. the priest acted as link between gods and goddesses and man.

The Canaanite religious rituals aimed at ensuring the continuity of land, animals and people.

**COMPARISON BETWEEN CANAANITE AND ISRAELITE RELIGION**

Both of them believe in a supreme being and they both address them using the same name “El”

Offering sacrifices was an important aspect of both religions.

Both religions had mediators whose main function was to link man and the Supreme Being through various activities like sacrifices and prayers.

In both religions, the prosperity of the people depended on their relationship with the Supreme Being. Obedience would mean prosperity and disobedience would mean suffering.

In both religions there existed religious festivals in which rituals were performed among others, the Israelites had the Passover festival and the Canaanites had the new moon festival.

In both religions there existed places of worship referred to as temples.

Both religions had religious centers especially during the time of judges. The Israelites had religious places like shechem and Shiloh and the Canaanite had theirs like Ugarit.

There existed prophets in both religions all of which acted as God’s spokesmen.

**DIFFERENCE**

The Canaanites religion was polytheistic while the Israelites religion was monotheistic.

Where as the Canaanite gods and goddesses were visible the Israelite God was invisible.

The Canaanite gods had wives and were married while the Israelites God was not married. Baal had a wife Astarte and the Canaanite supreme god “El” had a wife called asherah.

Whereas the Canaanite gods were violent, the Israelites god was loving, merciful and forgiving.

The Canaanite gods would be controlled by human beings through magical practices. This was contrary to God of the Israelites who instead had control over his people.

The Canaanite gods had images inform of lizards, bulls, goats etc which was contrary to the Israelites God were such never existed.

Whereas the Canaanites religion tolerate the act of impurity like prostitution. The Israelites God demanded holiness and purity.

The Canaanite gods were believed to have continual conflicts with each other like the Baal god against the mot god while the God of Israel had nothing of the nature of the sort.

The prophets and priests of Israelites were true, pure and moral while the Canaanite prophets and priests were false and immoral.

The Canaanite gods could forget their duties. Among others the worshipers had to play sex with the temple prostitutes so as to remind Baal about his responsibility of fertility (1st kings 18:26-27). The God of Israel was the one instead reminding the people about their conduct.

In Baal worshiping temple prostitution was practiced in order to ensure the fertility of people, animals and crops while in the Israelites religion prostitution was highly condemned and punishable by stoning the victim to death.

Whereas the Israelites religion recognized only animal sacrifices and crop offering, the Canaanite religion involved human sacrifices besides animals and crop offering.

The Israelites religion was dependant on the covenant laws which were written while the Canaanite religion had nothing like laws at/ to which it was bound.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AFRICAN RELIGION**

Believed in the supreme God who was considered one, real, unique and the controller of the universe.

People believed in divinities i.e. small gods who were considered to be the intermediaries between the supreme God and the human kind.

They believed in spirits.

They had mediators

Practiced sacrifices

Shrines were built to represent places of worship

The gods were appeased thus they could be controlled by human beings.

The gods lived in secret placed like mountains, forests, rocks

Some of the gods were violent and could punish accordingly

Images of the supreme God could be made.

The gods could posses an individual

**SAMUEL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONARCHY IN ISRAEL**

In 1st book of Samuel there is a transition from the period of judges to the formation of the Israel monarchy with Samuel as the central figure. He is considered the last and the greatest judge of Israel.

Immediately the Israelites settled at Canaan, they were indirectly being governed by God through priests and judges. Priesthood as stated in the book of Leviticus was hereditary and didn’t only involve divine services but also the political management of the people medical functions and settlement of disputes among others.

Samuel came into being at the time when their was a priest called Eli serving in the temple at Shiloh.

Samuel by God’s decision inherited the priest throne which was quite abdnormal from Eli’s sons

**THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL**

Samuel was a son born to Elkanah married to two wives peinnah and Hannah

Elkanah nad too much love for Hannah but unfortunately she was barren and thus could not have children while peinnah was fertile and had children. This became a great source of conflict in elkanah’s home.

The great love elkanah had for Hannah angered peinnah and the inability of Hannah to have children was a great disappointment to her.

It was a tradition for Elkanah and his family to go for an annual festival at Shiloh, during the occasion peinnah and her children were entitled to offer a half of the sacrificial meal and Hannah was given less because of being alone.

However, peinnah used this chance to criticize Hannah and this even made her more sad about her barrenness.

At one annual festival when Eli and his two sons, hophni and phinehas were performing there priestly duties and after the sacrificial meal, Hannah went to the temple to pray to God. She prayed in her heart with only the lips moving and she whispered deeply asking God to look into her problems and give her a son. She promised to give the son wholly to God.

Eli on observing Hannah praying, first thought she was mud or drunk but she denied and explained that she was telling God her problems. Eli thereafter blessed her and asked God to listen to her prayers.

When the period of sacrifices was over elkanah and his family went back to their place at Ramah where Hannah was able to conceive later and had a son whom she named Samuel “ask from God”

Immediately the boy was weaned Hannah picked a 3year old bull, a jar of flowers and some wines and she took Samuel to God’s house at Shiloh as she dedicated him for the service of the lord as he lived.

**GOD PROMISED TO BRING ELI’S FAMILY TO AN END/ GOD’S REJECTION OF ELI’S FAMILY**

Because priesthood was hereditary in Israel, Eli’s sons were entitled to their fathers throne after his death but unfortunately they didn’t have this opportunity and they lost their fathers throne.

The Angle of the lord came to Eli and announced the destruction of Eli’s sons because of the various crimes they had committed (1st Samuel 27:30)

This was a very sad announcement to Eli because it implied that his roles as a priest was going to be handed over to people of God’s choice and therefore the end and history.

The Israelites also believed that a man whose children died before him was cursed, which to Eli wasn’t an exemption.

**REASONS WHY GOD REJECTED ELI AND HIS FAMILY**

Eli and his family were rejected because of greediness which was clearly exhibited by his sons before the worshipers. They would eat much during sacrifices leaving other people to suffer and this made the people to complain to the Lord.

In relation to above, Eli’s sons violated the rules governing sacrifices. They would eat the best part of the sacrifices before even Yahweh had been given his share. They had also started presenting animals with defects and deformation and deforn (1st Samuel 2:12)

Eli was rejected because his sons defiled the Lord’s sanctuary. They took advantage of their position and started having sexual intercourse with the women working in the temple. This showed that the boys had yielded the Canaanite religion as opposed to the demands of the covenant laws.

Eli’s family was rejected because his sons had no respect for him. Even when he made an attempt to warn them about their misconduct, non of them could listen to him. This was contrary to the covenant requirement where children had to respect their parents (Exodus 20:12)

Eli had weaknesses that eventually led to the rejection of his family. He failed to discipline his sons by punishing them as they continued with their misconduct. This showed a bad example to others as a holy man working on behalf of God.

The rejection of Eli’s family was because his sons had failed to follow the good example their father had set. He worked faithful as a mediator between God and his people but his sons were doing the contrary hence their rejection (1st Samuel 2:23-25)

Eli’s sons became proud and arrogant because of their position. They also discriminated the worshiping basing on what they had. In this case, they praised the rich and despised the poor yet all these were Yahweh’s people and therefore equal.

God rejected Eli’s family because his sons were corrupt and were taking bribes. They misused people’s sacrifices by taking them as their personal belonging. This explains why God could reject some of the sacrifices which even made people very annoyed.

Eli’s sons were using vulgar language in places of worship. Besides they quit often spoke evil things about God, this was blasphemy as it showed no respect to God as demanded in the covenant laws. (Exodus 20:7) for this reason Eli together with his sons were rejected.

Eli’s rejection was because his sons had become rude to the people and quit often they intimidated people who brought their sacrifices at Shiloh (1st Samuel 2:16) they used force to get the best part of the sacrificial meal from the worshipers. This was a sin before the Lord hence their rejection.

Eli’s family was rejected because his sons practiced religious syncretism and yet they were supposed to serve only Yahweh. Among others they had started practicing cult prostitution which was a Canaanite practice (1st Samuel 2:22)

The character of the boy Samuel who remained faithful as he worked with Eli contributed to Eli’s sons being rejected. Although he was an adopted child, his faithfulness made him to appear to be a perfect substitute to Eli’s sons who were unfaithful.

Eli who was already growing old took it for granted to appoint his sons as priest without consulting Yahweh. To this it appeared that he had turned the charismatic leadership into family affairs hence the reason why God

**PURNISHMENT JUDGED ON TO ELI’S FAMILY**

There were no longer to offer sacrifices for forgiveness. Even if they were to do so, it couldn’t be accepted because it was the wrong people giving the sacrifices.

They were not to be respected since they also had no respect to the people and God.

The privilege of hereditary priesthood was given to another family. Samuel who was an adopted son inherited priesthood from Eli instead of Eli’s sons. It highly troubled them.

The life span of Eli’s family members was to be reduced from generation to generation implying that Eli’s generation would eventually come to an end and hence the end of history.

Eli’s family members were to die a violent death. This was to serve as an example for others to behave properly.

The family members were not to continue serving as priest and if they…….they were to become blind and hopeless.

Eli’s two sonshophi and prinehas were to die on the same day.

Eli’s family was to be reduced to extreme poverty. They were to beg food and seek employment in unidentified land.

**LESSONS TO MODERN RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM THE REJECTION OF ELI’S FAMILY**

Religious leaders need to acknowledge that God is all knowing and hence should be mindful of their conduct as they render their services.

There is need for religious leaders to up bring their children in a proper way hence they should discipline them where necessary.

Religious leaders should be honest and avoid corruption. They should serve their people diligently to keep good public image not like the sons of Eli who became corrupt and painted a bad public image on their family.

Religious people should have respect for God and his people unlike Eli’s sons who were punished because of having no respect for their father and other people.

Religious leaders should treat all people equally. To them, both the poor and rich are God’s people and therefore same unlike Eli’s sons who praised the rich and criticized/ despised the poor.

Religious leaders need to serve God with holiness and dedicate themselves in God’s services unlike Eli’s sons who defiled God’s sanctuary by having sexual intercourse with the worshipers and were therefore punished.

Modern religious leaders have to live a simple and humble life. They should avoid being proud and arrogant because of their positions like Eli’s sons who were later on punished for this behavior.

Religious leaders need to seek God’s guidance through prayers during family problems. Eli as a priest could have sought for God’s assistance during his family problems before being rejected.

Religious leaders should learn that God can use other people to punish another. God used Samuel to punish Eli and his family.

Religious leaders should obey and serve God faithfully. Eli and his sons failed to up hold the responsibility of priesthood at Shiloh and were rejected and Samuel who worked faithfully took over the responsibility.

Religious leaders should be contented with who they are and what they have. They should therefore avoid greediness as manifested by Eli’s sons who grabbed the worshiper’s sacrifices and were punished.

Religious leaders should learn to listen to people’s views/ out cries. Eli ought to have listened to the people’sout cry but he did little by only warning his sons and was eventually rejected.

They need to show love to God and his people in there services unlike Elis’s sins who cared only for themselves.

Religious leaders learn that every sin is judged and punishable thus they should welcome and appreciate punishment for the sin committed just like Eli who accepted his rejection.

Religious leaders should always accept their mistakes. They should therefore avoid giving excuses just like Eli accepted to suffer the guilt of his sons.

**THE CALL OF SAMUEL (1st Samuel 3:1- following)**

Despite the corruption at Shiloh Samuel remained faithful and served the Lord under the guidance of Eli. He grew up seeing all the evil acts in Eli’s family.

At that time the word of the Lord had become rare. People even never saw visions because they became unfaithful and the priest house had been defiled.

The call of Samuel became dramatic while he and Eli were sleeping in the temple, the Lord called him and he answered “here I am” and went to Eli thinking it was Eli calling him but which Eli denied and sent him back to sleep.

The Lord again called for Samuel went back to Eli and still Eli denied having called him.

When Samuel heard the 3rd call again he went to Eli. The old spirit this time realized that it must be God calling the young boy. So Eli instructed Samuel to respond and say “Lord your servant is listening” after hearing another call.

When Samuel went back to sleep the Lord called him the 4th time and he responded as Eli had instructed him. God thereafter pronounced to Samuel his intention to destroy Eli’s family.

Eli with the knowledge that God had spoken to Samuel commanded him to reveal the message that he did so.

In his reply Eli simply said “he is the Lord, no will do whatever seems right to him” this implied that Eli allowed and accepted the punishment of dying because of the sins of his sons.

**COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CALL OF MOSES AND SAMUEL**

Both Moses and Samuel pronounced God’s judgment and punishment. Moses pronounced punishment to the Egyptian slave masters and Samuel to Eli’s family.

They were both called un aware and at awkward time. Moses was in the bush looking after the sheep and Samuel was a sleep during the night.

Both Moses and Samuel were called and sent to specific people. Moses was sent to liberate the Israelites and Samuel to Eli’s family.

Both of them were called while away from their homes. Moses was in exile in the median land and Samuel was at Eli’s home in Shiloh away from his parents in Ramah.

Both Moses and Samuel were in the hands of priests at the time of their call. Moses was living with jethro the median priest and Samuel with Eli a priest at Shiloh.

Both were called at the time when God’s words and visions were rare. Moses only had his mind to suffering of his people under the Egyptian slavery and at the time of Samuel the Israelites had started practicing religious syncretism.

God’s revelation to both Moses and Samuel were dramatic. God appeared to Moses through a burning bush which was unconsumed and to Samuel through strange voice at night.

Both Samuel and Moses were given a difficult task which they decided to avoid. Moses tried to object God’s instructions by giving some excuses like inability to speak well knowing God’s name. Samuel also feared to reveal God’s message to Eli.

Both Moses and Samuel were born at the time of crisis. Moses was born during the political crisis in Egypt and Samuel during the mental crisis in elikanahs family.

Both Moses and Samuel communicated to God directly without any intermediary.

God initiated both the call of Moses and Samuel with the intention of bringing salvation to mankind.

Both Moses and Samuel were alone at the time of their call. Moses was in the bush looking after sheep of his father in law jethro and to Samuel he was sleeping far away from Eli.

**DIFFERENCES**

Moses was called and given a helper. Aaron but Samuel had nobody as a helper.

Samuel was called when he was still young while Moses was called at an old age.

The call of Moses involved movements contrary to Samuel’s call. Moses had to leave the median land and go back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites while Samuel’s call happened when he was together with the people he had to deliver God’s image.

Samuel was called when he had already entered the service of God but Moses, this was the beginning point of service.

God revealed his name in the call of Moses as being “I AM WHO I AM” but God didn’t identify himself to Samuel.

Samuel’s call had an eye witness. It was witnessed by Eli but Moses was alone in the bush looking after the sheep of his father in-law.

Moses was called when he was already married but Samuel was still single at the time of his call.

Samuel willingly accepted God’s call but Moses first objected his call by giving excuses like inability to speak fluently and demanding for the name of God.

Moses was called before the formation of Israel as a nation while Samuel was called after the formation of Israel as a nation.

Moses was given divine power to perform miracles while Samuel wasn’t given any powers of such nature.

God appeared to Moses and Samuel in different forms. Moses was in the form of fire and to Samuel inform of a strange voice.

Moses had taken a refuge in the median land at the time of his call following his criminal act of killing an Egyptian slave master. Samuel on the other hand was at Eli’s house with the blessing of the mother.

**LESSONS FOR SAMUEL’S CALL**

God’s call has a purpose. God called Samuel to deliver a message to Eli’s family.

Christians need to obey God’s call just as Samuel responded with obedience.

To Christians God is the initiator of everything. It was God who approached Samuel.

Christians need to avoid evil acts which can bring upon them punishments. God called Samuel to pronounce punishment on Eli’s family because of their evil acts.

Christians learn of God’s presence. God appeared to Samuel even in his bed.

God can call at any time. Samuel was called during the night. There is need for Christians to always stand for and speak the truth. Samuel openly pronounced God’s punishment without fear.

Christians need to acknowledge God as a supreme being just as Samuel who said “Lord your servant is listening”

God can call any body regardless of the age and social status. Christians should therefore be ready for God’s call.

Christians learn that God can appear to man in any form just as he appeared to Samuel inform of a voice.

**HOW THE CALL OF SAMUEL INFLUENCED THE LIFE AND HISTORY OF ISRAEL**

His call led to the death of Eli’s sons who were disobedient to God and the Israelites.

It led to the rise of Samuel himself who later only knew the Israelites heritage.

It endured monotheism in Israel once again.

His coming into the scene forced the philistines to return with the ark of covenant.

Samuel purified Shiloh the worshiping place previously defiled by sexual immorality.

Samuel called back the Israelites through organizing national repentance.

Israel started enjoying prosperity as opposed to the time of Eli.

Corruption that was practiced by Eli’s sons was eradicated.

Samuel restored the Israelites hope in the roles of priests. People became satisfied with their sacrifices.

Israel was able to defeat her enemies.

Israel changed her stats to kingship from a theocratic nation.

The Lord’s vision and words became common among the people again.

The Israelites started living a life based on sinaitic covenant.

Idolatry persisted.

Israelites demanded for a physical king.

Religious syncretism persisted.

Corruption resurfaced by the son’s of Samuel.

Nature of God for Moses’s call.

Made a mistake and appointed his sons as priests without consulting the elders.

**THE DEATH OF ELI AND HIS SONS (1st Samuel 4:1- following)**

The death of Eli and his sons was a fulfillment of Samuel’s prophesy. Whatever God said through Samuel came true.

The philistines attacked Israel and over-powered it despite the fact that Israelites had carried the covenant backs with the hope of God’s protection.

Eli’s sons; hophni and phienehas had come with the covenant box. At battle field they were killed and the covenant box was carried away by philistines. They died on the same time as the Angle of Lord had earlier long prophesized.

When Eli at the age of 98 was informed of the death of two sons and the taking away of the covenant box he got shocked and died instantly. This was another confirmation of Samuel’s prophesy.

Eli died after being a leader for 40years. Later on his wife perinna died shortly after giving birth to a son whom she named ichabod thus meaning “God’s glory has left Israel” (1st Samuel 4:19-22)

**ROLE PLAYED BY SAMUEL AS A KING, PROPHET AND JUDGE AS WELL AS A KING MAKER**

The death of Eli and his sons left the priestly throne in the hands of Samuel fortunately to him the Ark of covenant was returned by the philistines because of the fear of God of Israel, but inspite of this the philistines continued to dominate Israel.

Samuel ‘s explanation of his domination was based on the misconduct of people and the evasion of God particularly at the time they were settling down at Canaan. Samuel therefore became the leader of the people as a priest, judge, the prophet as well as the king maker as observed below;

As a priest, Samuel taught Israelites God’s message. He came at a time when God’s word was rare and he took an effort a status quo.

As a priest Samuel organized a day of national repentance at Mizpah and Gilgal where he asked the people to dedicate themselves to God and to destroy all the foreign gods and images they worshiped. (1st Samuel 7:3-4). The Israelites obeyed and left their idols of Baal and Astarte and God rewarded them with victory over the philistines.

As a priest, Samuel sacrificed and offered on behalf of the Israelites. Among others, he offered and burnt sacrifices for sin offerings and fellowship offerings. He followed all the laws regarding sacrifices as put in the book of Leviticus.

Samuel purified Shiloh a worshiping place which had been defiled by weakening of sons of Eli.

Samuel as a prophet delivered God’s message to the people among others God sent him to Eli, Saul and David.

As a prophet, everything Samuel spoke became true and a reality. He prophesized the death of Eli and his family and it was eventually fulfilled when Eli’sson’s were killed at the battle field and Eli there after he also died.

Samuel’s reign as a prophet witnessed God’s vision and message. This came after along period of absence following misconduct of the Israelites.

Samuel was a military leader. He was courageous enough and helped the Israelites to defeat their enemies like the amalekites who had attacked them at mizpah.

Samuel as a seer e.g. he assisted Saul to trace the lost donkies of his father.

He acted as a chief judge over people’s disputes. He moved all over Canaan settling people’s cases in places like bathel, mizpah, and even at his birth place Ramah.

As a judge Samuel called upon the Israelites to live as one people. He showed them the need of behaving as brothers and sisters of one loving father. This helped them.

Samuel asking, he anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel following the people’s demanding for a kingdom.

Samuel further went ahead and guided the king on his roles. He gave Saul some laws which he was to follow as a king of Lord’s people.

Samuel acted as a councellor to the king. On several occasions he advised king Saul especially during difficulties.

Samuel mediated between the Israelites and Yahweh. Among others Israelites demanded for a king through Samuel and in his response he prayed to God and he answered him by giving him a go ahead to meet people’s desires.

As a priest Samuel revived the Israelites respect to God’s leaders. The Israelites listened to him as opposed to time of Eli when the people had lost respect on their leaders.

Samuel defended the covenant faith he quit often called upon the Israelites to maintain good and harmonious relationships with Yahweh through following the Ten Commandments.

**However Samuel as a leader had his own weaknesses and because of this he became too inefficient especially in carrying his duties as a priest where he failed to offer sacrifices.**

A case in point is during the war against the amalekites where Saul was forced to offer sacrifices on his behalf and yet as a king this was not his role and therefore as a result, this contributed to Yahweh’s rejection of sacrifices and the subsequent defeat of the Israelites.

Samuel also blundered and chose his own sons to succeed him insipte their misbehavior.

Samuel failed to discipline his children. He appeared to be too reluctant in performing his duty as a father and this eventually led to the misbehavior of his children.

Because of the role Samuel played Samuel became a man of Yahweh, he was respected and he himself listened to God’s views unfortunately Samuel thought that priesthood could be heritary and so didn’t accept the people of God who had been rulers by God’s demand for physical king but they did so.

**THE ISRAELITES DEMAND FOR A KING**

As Samuel aged he appointed his sons Joel and abijah to rule Israelites as judges. Unlike their father they accepted bribes and perverted justice because of the continuous corruption practices by Samuel’s sons the Israelites elders came to Samuel and demanded him to appoint them a king.

The Israelites wanted Samuel with God’s guidance to appoint a leader who didn’t/ wouldn’t have a natural power over them but would also be recognized by other nations.

**Reasons why Israelites demanded for a king**

Samuel was growing old and so the Israelites wanted a young and energetic man to lead them.

Israel wanted to be like other neighbouring nations who were also being ruled by kings.

Samuel’s sons were corrupt and dishonest thus the people of God lost confidence in them as their leaders to be. They saw no need on relaying on them and consequently they demanded for a king.

The Israelites thought that the kings would provide answers to their problems. This was because they believed that God was failing to answer them immediately whenever they prayed.

The Israelites wanted a physical king whom they could contact directly this was based on the ground that God their theocratic leader could be contacted by the people directly other than passing through intermediaries e.g. the priests and prophets.

The Israelites wanted a king who would help them fight their enemies e.g. the philistines. Samuel who was already aged couldn’t physically go to the battle field which made the Israelites worried of the philistines who were seriously fighting them.

The Israelites wanted a king who could unite them as people of one God. This was because of the existing disunity based on the tribal differences.

The Israelites believed that their demand for a king wasn’t to deny God as their over role king and they argued that the would be king would be through God’s guidance.

The Israelites had attributed to the economic prosperity of their neighbours like Syria, Philistia and Moab to their respective kings because of this they saw the need of also having one king.

The Israelites lacked appreciation towards what Yahweh had done in their lives right from the time of their Egyptian slavery until they settled at Canaan. This is justified by the fact that they appeared to have got tied of the theocratic rule and thus demand for a leader they could see.

The Israelites wanted a king who would ensure justice. This was because Samuel’s sons had perverted justice and Samuel himself appeared reluctant to discipline them and instead he appointed them as judges.

**SAMUEL’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ESTABLISHMENT OF MONARCHY**

Samuel’s reaction towards the Israelites demand for a king was a negative one. He was very unhappy and refused their demand basing on the following.

To Samuel, the demand wasn’t that the people had rejected the divine theocratic leadership of God. Samuel thus saw it as a challenge to the kingship of God over Israel.

Samuel believed that the demand for a king was against the covenant law God had promised to be Israelites father if only they would remain his people by being royal and obedient thus meaning that the Israelites had gone against the covenant which they had made with God on mountain Sinai.

To Samuel, the Israelite were rejecting him as their leader thus he took it as a personal rejection.

Samuel saw the demand for the king coming out of evil desires basing on their misconduct.

To Samuel, initiating other nations was useless and God choosing Israel as a holy nation was to make them serve as an example to other nations thus it would have been other nations to initiate Israel.

Samuel wanted priesthood and kingship to be hereditary as it was by then and because of this he wanted his sons to take over from him.

To Samuel, it was only God to initiate and choose leaders of his people. Therefore he never expected the Israelites as being God’s people to come out with such a decision.

The Israelites appeared to have lost trust and patience with Yahweh. Samuel therefore looked at the demand for a king as being premature because to him God knew when and what to provide.

Samuel took it that the Israelites hadn’t appreciated his role as their leader appointed by God.

Samuel rejected the demand for the king on the ground that the demand for the kingship went introducing a new political and social setup in Israel which the people weren’t used to.

Samuel expected the Israelites to have consulted him before carrying out with their demand.

Samuel prayed to God about the matter because of the people’s insistence. God in response told Samuel to do what the people wanted but advised him to warn them about duties and position of their kings.

**SAMUEL’S FEARS FOR A KING**

Following the Israelites demand for a king, God used Samuel to inform them about the dangers of having an earthly king. According to Samuel, the following would be the consequences

The kings would become unjust to them. They would exploit and oppress them as well as taking them back to the days of Egyptian slavery.

Samuel feared that there would be forced recruitment into the army i.e. military conscription would be the order of the day because of the king’s selfish ambitions of fighting unnecessarily.

Samuel pointed out that the king would reign over them, take their sons and appoint them as chariot the workers.

Samuel also noted that forced labour would come after the sons would be forced to work in the fields for the kings economic benefits and the daughters made cooks/ bakers.

To Samuel the Israelite kings would make political alliances with the pagan nations with the intention of being militarily safe from external attacks. This would imply disobedience to Yahweh because the Israelites as a chosen nation weren’t to mix freely with others.

Samuel feared that the kings would lead them to worship other gods. A typical characteristic of the neighbouring nations being led by the physical kings.

The kings would grab the people’s land and property as well as wives like kingDavid. This was true of the kings that neighbouring Israel.

Samuel noted that the kings would rule Israel with selfish interests and make the Israelites suffer,

The kings would live a luxurious life at the expense of people. They would live in fine houses with in the palace built using people’s taxes and forced labour.

God wouldn’t listen to the Israelites cry against the king of their choice. This implied that even when the king would oppress and exploit them God wouldn’t listen.

The weakness of the king would make the Israelites enemies to defeat them and God’s assistance would be no more in any confrontation.

The Israelites wouldn’t lose respect but also wouldn’t be recognized as the chosen people of God. They would be despised by all their neighbouring nations.

The kings would be greatly corrupt, extravagant and selfish and would therefore be mind full of only themselves.

**KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL**

Despite the warnings Samuel gave, the Israelites continued with their demand for a king. In a fixed Samuel who had no choice turned and prayed to God about this matter. In his response, God gave Samuel a responsibility of appointing a king. However Samuel didn’t agree with the people’s idea of having a king similar to those to the neighbouring nations.

Therefore Samuel took the initiative and tried to give a possession of the Israelites kings and their general duties which could prove them to be ideal kings of the chosen people.

**THE IDEAL KING OF ISRAEL**

An ideal king of God’s people had to be one who was chosen/ appointed by God himself but not elected by the people.

In Israel king had to work as God’s servant. Therefore he was to be representative of Yahweh among his people. This implies that a king was set aside by God’s services and had to govern Israel in behalf of God.

An Israel king was to have good administrative skills with good health.

The king was to be a channel of divine blessing to God’s people in all places and at all times.

The king of Israel had to uphold the covenant faith and rule according to its demands. In other words, the laws there in had to control the behaviours and activities of the king.

An ideal king of Israel had to be the people’s saviour in ruling and fighting the enemies.

The king of Israel had to maintain righteousness among his people. He had to be extemporary in words and character for others to follow.

Any Israelite king wasn’t to marry from foreign nations but rather to his own people. Marrying from other nations could cause idolatry in Israelite community.

An ideal king of Israel had to be an Israelite by birth and besides he had to be circumcised.

An Israelite king had to cooperate and respect other God’s servants e.g. the priests and prophets thus above all the king had to recognize and not to assume the duties of such people.

The king of Israel wasn’t to make/ enter into alliances particularly militarily with the neighbouring nations. Instead such a king had to trust and believe in Yahweh’s protection.

The kings of Israel were to act as judges and thus had the responsibility of settling internal and external disputes.

The kings of Israel had to maintain monotheism thus they were at all times to defend the Israel religion against polytheistic influences by teaching the people how to keep and observe the law.

The kings of Israel had to be democratic and accepted by the people. Besides, they had to listen to people’s problems and provide solution for them.

**KING SAUL**

Saul was a son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was chosen to become the king of Israel by God following the people’s demand for one.

He came in at the time when the Israelites were constantly attacked by the philistines implying that he had a big challenge ahead of him to overcome as a new leader of God’s people.

God had made an order to Samuel to wait for a young man whom he had chosen through his people. As Saul was looking for his fathers donkey’s he eventually came across Samuel who then realized that this was the chosen king but didn’t reveal the information.

The next day Samuel presented Saul at a high table and gave him a special treatment. After these/ this Saul was taken back to the city where he spent a night with Samuel.

In the morning Samuel revealed God’s plan to Saul of making him a king. Thereafter Samuel anointed Saul and gave him a sing to show that this was God’s plan.

The sign was thatSaul was about to meet God’s people singing and rejoicing. Indeed as Saul went in his way back home, he met a group of people including some prophets dancing and playing musical instruments. These people gave him a warm welcome.

Later on Samuel called all the tribes of Israel at mizah and presented Saul as their king appointed by God. The people then shouted with joy saying “Long live the king”.

**SAUL’S SACRIFICES (1st Samuel 13:1- following)**

Even when Saul was made king, the philistines continued to threaten Israel (1st Samuel 13) shows the philistines attempt to attack Israel when they were sure that these people were week and defenseless. They based their knowledge on the ground that the Israelites didn’t have weapons.

As the philistines came to attack they gathered near Saul who had already made appointment with Samuel to meet at gilgal in order to offer sacrifices to God before people could force their enemies.

Unfortunately Samuel delayed to come at the appointed time and the people started deserting Saul because of fearing the philistines who were near them.

This forced Saul who already waited for Samuel for seven days to offer the sacrifices himself with the fear that unless God gave his soldiers victory, the philistines could destroy them all.

Samuel arrived just as Saul had finished offering to God and was very annoyed with what he saw because of Saul’s lack of faith. However Saul tried to put the blame to Samuel himself for having delayed to come.

Samuel immediately pronounced God’s judgment for Saul. He prophesized the end of Saul’s rule and the as a king Saul would never have a great dynasty “like Eli his name would be forgotten”.

**SAUL’S REJECTION (1st Samuel 15:1- following)**

The final break in Saul’s reign was when he was directed to go and revenge on the amalekites who had attacked God’s people on their way from Egypt.

God through Samuel gave a strict command to Saul to go and destroy all the amalekites, Saul did as he was told and destroyed all the amalekites together with their property.

On attacking the amalekites, Saul did as he was told but didn’t follow the order strictly. He destroyed all that he considered valueless and kept the good things like sheep and calves.

Worst of all he captured king AGAG of Amalek but he didn’t kill him as he was instructed and instead went with him to Israel. This was disobedience on the side of Saul which eventually landed him into trouble.

The Lord then came to Samuel and regretted why he had anointed Saul as a king of his people. Samuel was also very angry and pleaded with God al the night. God then declared having withdrawn all the powers from Saul and giving it to someone else.

Samuel met Saul the next morning and blamed him for what he had done.

However, Saul again defended himself that he had intended to keep the fat cows and all the valuable things as sacrifices to God.

Samuel rebuked Saul for defending himself saying that God wasn’t interested in sacrifices but was more concerned with the obedience of the covenant laws. He also made it clear that rebellion is as sinful as idolatry. He then assured Saul that the Lord had rejected him as a king (1st Samuel 15:23).

Saul admitted his guilt and asked Samuel to forgive him, he also asked Samuel to go back with him so that he could worship the Lord once again but which Samuel refused (1stSamuel 15:24).

As Samuel tried to leave Saul got hold of his cloak and tore it apart Samuel then said “ the Lord had torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today and given it to someone who is better than you” (1st Samuel 15:28)

Samuel who ordered Saul to present king AGAG to him later killed him by cutting him in front of the alter at gilgal (1st Samuel 15:32-33)

Samuel went to Ramah and Saul went to gibeah. After this break Saul continued to rule from gibeah some few miles in the north of Jerusalem and Samuel who continued living at Ramah died later as an old man but still respected (1st Samuel 25:1).

Its important to note the situation in Israel as Saul lost contact with Samuel. The philistines continued with their attacks and there was massive and severe destructions.

They had almost gained complete control over the central part of Israel by the end of Saul’s reign.

Saul developed a state of mental and spiritual torment (1st Samuel 16:14-23). The end came for Saul and three of his sons were killed in the battle at mountain gilboathat witnessed the Israelites being badly defeated and Saul himself took his own life after being severely wounded.

However before Samuel died there was still one most important task to do i.e. Samuel had to appoint Saul’s successor.

**ACHIEVEMENTS/ SUCCESS OF KING SAUL**

King Saul recorded military decrees. Among others he completely defeated the pagan tribe of the amalekites by not only capturing their king but also destroying almost everything he came across.

King Saul was a nationalist. He had love for his own people so much that he died at the battle field defending the Israel nation.

He laid a strong foundation of monarchy in Israel. He was the first king and this implies that he came in at a transitional period from parasmatic leadership to kingship which was full of challenges but which he managed to overcome some of them.

King sail expanded the army by recruiting and training more soldiers. Besides he instilled discipline among the soldiers who were not strong but determined

Saul was a God fearing king. At the time he was being anointed, he responded to God’s message through Samuel with faith and trust. He also made it a point to participate in Samuel’s religious functions and greatly rejoiced before the Lord besides calling upon people to give respect to him (1st Samuel 11:15).

King Saul was an obedient man. Among others he obeyed God’s command through Samuel to go and revenge on the amalekites who had attacked God’s people while in the wilderness.

Saul was a repentant king. After his disobedience of failing to destroy some of the amalekites and their property and his eventual lying. He admitted his guilt and asked Samuel to forgive him (1st Samuel 15:24-25).

King Saul created unity among the Israelites. He acted as a judge and moved all over Israel calling for togetherness among the 12 tribes.

Saul had the heart of forgiveness (1st Samuel 12:27) shows that some people despised and didn’t welcome Saul as their king but inspite of all these he worked with them peacefully thereafter and didn’t revenge (1stSamuel 11:14)

King Saul expanded the kingdom of Israel. Among others, he recaptured the town of jabesh which was a territory of Gilead previously captured by amalekites.

Saul co-operated with other God’s servants. Among others he tried to work closely with Samuel by waiting for him to offer sacrifices before going for a war against the philistines.

King Saul had good administrative skills and was able to rally all the Israelites especially during war times like those against the amalekites and the amaorites.

**FAILURES OF KING SAUL**

King Saul assumed the priestly duty by offering sacrifices on behalf of Samuel. Much as Samuel had belayed to come he had to be patient because offering sacrifices was a role preserved for priest only.

King Saul was un repentant for example he blamed Samuel for the sacrifices he had offered on the ground that Samuel had delayed to come instead of acknowledging his mistakes.

King Saul was a liar. He lied to Samuel that he had kept the fatty sheep and cows of the amalekites as sacrifices to God yet he had kept it for himself.

King Saul lacked control over his people particularly the soldiers. This is clearly seen where the soldiers decided to desert him for fear of being attacked by the philistines.

King Saul was an arrogant man. This is evident when he rebuked and blamed Samuel after offering sacrifices which he wasn’t meant to do so.

King Saul was a blood thirsty character. He ordered the killing of some priest whom he accused of conspiracy with David against him. Besides he was responsible for the killing of the wives, children and animals (1st Samuel 22: following)

King Saul was a jealousy man. He became jealousy of David after realizing that he would be the next king replacing him because of this, Saul un successfully tried to kill David (1st Samuel 18:6-12)

King Saul was denied a dynasty and God rejected him as the leader of his people and this implied that his role as king was going to be bonded over to other people of God’s choice.

King Saul was materialistic in nature. He spared the fatty sheep, cow and all the valuable things of the amalekites yet he was under strict order to destroy them.

King Saul consulted a medium who was a Canaan in order to know what was going to happen following the threat from philistines. This was lack of faith and trust in God (1st Samuel 27:3- following).

King Saul became mad on his rejection. The spirit of God left him and he was eventually possessed by an evil spirit. This showed that Saul had a weak personality (1st Samuel 16:`4-23).

King Saul engaged in Baal practices. He gave names to some of his children relating to Baal worship e.g. ishabaal.

King Saul ignored the act of harem. He spared king Agag after defeating the amalekites and yet agag was a king to a pagan nation which had to be destroyed.

King Saul failed to create unity among the Israelites towards his last reign. He there encouraged the people to rebel against David who had become popular at his expense (1st Samuel 22:6-7)

**THE RELEVANCE OFKING SAUL TO LEADERS TODAY**

Leaders have to acknowledge that authority is God given.

Leaders have to do their work thoroughly.

Leaders have to accept their mistakes and therefore repent unlike Saul who never accepted his mistakes.

Leaders have to be contended with what they have unlike Saul who never got contended by sparing some things.  
leaders have to be patient in life.

Leaders have to avoid interference with other peoples duties.

Reconciliation and forgiveness i.e. avoiding revenge.

Leaders should always have trust in God and be optimistic.

Leaders should always stand the truth in life.

Leaders have to be obedient.

Leaders should stick to monotheism.

Leaders should act as unifiers.

Leaders should have effective control over the work for their people.

**KING DAVID**

David was the young son of Jesse who took over from Saul (Israelites 1st king) who God had rejected through Samuel to his failure as a king. He is therefore the 2nd king of Israel and his rise to power brought the downfall of KingSaul whom God had promised to end his life.

David became a king of Israel at the time of even greater crisis that either Samuel andSaul had faced at the beginning of their work although things were bad enough to each of them. There was severe destruction and the philistines had almost taken over control of the big part of Israel which by then had been reduced to a mere conquered state.

David described as an ideal king of Israel because he was able to understand his mistakes and repented. He was the one shepherd who was chosen by God himself. He was appointed and anointed as a king privately when king Saul was still alive but wasn’t authorized to over through or to lead a revenge/ rebuke against him since God knew the time he would be taken over.

By the time Samuel anointed him David had already entered the services of KingSaul as a soldier and musician. Saul’s son Jonathan became David’s great friend and his daughter Michal later became his wife.

David’s achievement as a soldier earned him respect and as a result he became famous. However this resulted into KingSaul turning against him with jealousy with the problem being worse when the Israelites women begun singing songs of praises for Davidthat “Saul has killed 000’s but David has killed 10 of 1000”

Out of this jealousy David was in problems as the king wanted to kill him and was forced to fleed from the south until the time of Saul’s death in the battle of gilbea. David was forced to live a life of fugitive.

After the death of king Saul together with his son Jonathan, the country wasn’t only still under the philistines control but also split into two with the men of the south showing their royalty to David and the men of the north supporting the surviving son of king Saul by the name of ishibotheth.

The result of this rivalry was the murder of the surviving son of King Saul by David’s two supporters but David didn’t approve but condemned the murderers.

David was thereafter acclaimed as the king of Hebron by the men of south and later on the delegation of old tribes came to ask him to be the king over them.

David became a king at the age of 30years after being anointed by Samuel using olive oil in a colourful religious ceremony in the presence of his brothers.

**QUALITIES OF DAVID/ FACTORS WHICH FAVOURED HIS RISE TO POWER AS A KING**

King David’s success as a ruler of Israel were based on his character although other factors facilitated his rise to the thorniness or power.

David is described as a humble king even to his enemies like KingSaul. He humbled himself to Prophet Nathan and to Samuel even when their prophesies were bad enough for him and was neither boastful or arrogant.

His earlier experience as a shepherd adequately prepared him for a better future. This kind of work introduced him to the entire land of Israel and easy leadership just like a fore leader like Moses, Saul and who were also militarily shepherd but became human leaders.

David had a patient character and above all tolerant. He was able to wait for the death of King Saul before he could take over the kingdom despite Saul’s effort to have him killed.

David further had a character of forgiving. In many cases, King Saul wanted to kill him but even when David had the chance of revenging he didn’t commit himself into it.

David was friendly in his relationship with others like he made friendship with Saul’s son Jonathan and it was his friendship that enabled him relate freely with Saul.

David was a repentant king whenever he made mistakes, he was able to repent when he made a double sin of adultery and murder (Uriah).

King David was a brave and charismatic soldier who courageously faced a giant worrier (6m) and was able to defeat all the enemies of Israel despite his under age thus it made him to appear to be the next leader.

The blunder and mistakes King Saul committed that eventually led to his rejection by God facilitated David’s rise to power.

David also had the ability to keep secrets i.e. he was able to keep the secret of his anointment which was done privately despite his close relationship with Saul’s family.

Most importantly it was God’s choice which led to David’s rise to power. His rise to power was based on the concept of choice and elimination. God had eliminated King Saul and chosen David as the leader of his people.

David’s talent as a musician helped him to rise to power. It was his talent that eventually attracted King Saul who then brought him to his palace where he was able to learn the kingly duties.

David was a God fearing person. He owed his survival from the jaws of wild animals in the desert to God and even when he became king he was able to repent after sinning.

David is described as obedient person. Despite being the youngest son of Jesse he was able to look after the father’s sheep even when the elder brothers weren’t all that concerned.

**ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING DAVID**

The reign of King David has been described by some scholars as being the most successful in the history of Israel’s monarchy. He is in some cases labeled as an ideal king and below are his achievements;

King David defeated the Israelites enemies like the philistines. He became a king at a time of greater crisis when the philistines had taken control of the big part of Israel but through determination and military genius he courageously faced the philistines and most of all the most giant worrier who was most feared and was able to break their power after the very many years of wars which enabled David create security and peaceful atmosphere in the entire Israel.

David captured Jerusalem from the jebusites through his various military victories and was able to establish it as the capital city of Israel. This came at the time when Israel’s other rulers including King Saul had failed to dislodge the jebusites from Jerusalem.

King David had good foreign policies and promised diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries like tyre and Egypt which he successfully beat Saul through promoting foreign trade. This became important since in the early times Israelites involved in wars with her neighbours and therefore the promotion of this friendship was a change in the approach to various issues as opposed to the war situation. Consequently this brought in stability in Israel.

King David promoted unity in Israel especially when all the tribes in the north and south came to recognize him as their only king. It was his idea of nationalism which David introduced that became a connection in the progress of Israel as a theocratic nation.

King David is credited after promoting religion in Israel. He centralized worship at Jerusalem as opposed to the existence of various tribes in places like Shiloh, gilboa and bethel etc. this was in his effort to rule Israel with God’s assistance in the end promoted unity as he brought the northern and southern people could gather at Jerusalem for religious festivals.

King David expanded the boundaries of Israel through his military activities/ victories where he was able to annex the conquered territories on Israel.

David is also credited for having maintained a strong standing army which he used to maintain stability in Israel. He himself was a soldier and therefore able to recruit strong able men.

King David went ahead to stamp out internal oppositions or resistances from the kingdom of Israel although he put harsh policies of killing but the elimination of these characters ensured stability of the kingdom.

King David brought back the Act of covenant to Jerusalem from the philistines after a long period of its absence. The philistines had captured the various laws at a time Saul was a king.

King David was a great musician. He used to entertain King Saul in his palace and went ahead to compose the psalms.

King David had great respect for God’s messengers like Samuel and Prophet Nathan and this opposed to the behaviours of his predecessor like King Saul who would even afford to rebuke Samuel at a time he offered sacrifices on behalf of the priest. He is also seen to respect prophet Nathan even when he had brought bad prophesies to him of God bringing his rule to an end.

David was a repentant king like he repented and fasted when he committed the double sin of adultery and murder. This opposed the character of his predecessor king Saul who least of all failed to recognize his mistakes.

David promoted justice among Israelites. He ensured the cases were judged fairly following the covenant and laws.

David is credited for having brought the plan of building a temple for God in Jerusalem where the Ark of covenant should be kept after securing it from the philistines. It was also to be a place of worship. However, God didn’t approve his plan and through Prophet Nathan he stopped David from carrying out his program. David however deserved a credit because he laid a foundation of the temple building which his sons was able to use.

David centralized his administration in a single place in the city of David at the beginning of his reign. This enabled him to take control of the entire kingdom. It also promoted unity among the Israelites (1st Samuel 14:4-17).

David reconstructed and built Jerusalem to be the most attractive beautiful city at that time. He obtained the building materials and skilled builders from the neighbouring countries and in the process he constructed impressive buildings in the city of Jerusalem. This became important considering that Jerusalem had been destroyed during various wars with the philistines.

King David was promised a dynasty and that one of his sons was to succeed him and most of all messiah was to come from his lineage after sinning and it was out of this fear that he advised his son Solomon to be also God fearing and law abiding.

David developed Israel economically through promoting trade with prosperous countries like Egypt and tyre (2nd Samuel 5:11-12)

David promoted and encouraged monotheism. He is seen to have burnt all the idols which the defeated philistines had left behind (2nd Samuel 5:21)

In summary David’s achievements both in domestic and foreign policies made him to be regarded as the most ideal king of Israel. This is why God through Prophet Nathan promised to fulfill his promises of making him a great king.

**FAILURES/ WEAKNESSES OF KING DAVID**

**“King David was the most ideal king of Israel” discuss.**

Despite the above achievements David’s reign like any other leader developed black spots hence his rule wasn’t therefore without problems especially as he sinned here and there.

Like any other human beings David had his own human weaknesses and as a result his reign came to a tragic turn point as he committed a number of sins and his weaknesses include the following;

David committed a double sin of adultery and murder. In the double sin, David had sexual relations with bathsheba who was legally married to Uriah and was one of his faithful soldiers and as a result of his sexual relations the woman conceived. And David under the disguise of hiding the pregnancy he called Uriah to come back from the battle field but he refused thus which annoyed David and he instructed his commanders to put Uriah where the fighting was so serious hence the plan worked out and Uriah innocent as he was, he was killed.

King David carried out illegal national census and he acted against the advice of the elders and with out consulting God. The census had a bad motive because it was known that knowing the number of people who could be exploited inform of forced labour and forceful recruitment of army men.

King David became tribalistic as he decided to recognize administration of the kingdom. He delegated powers to his own tribesmen and friends which created instability in the whole kingdom.

King David introduced forced labour as he embarked on his development programs. The Israelites were dragged into free labour with a lot of injustices and this was a kind of rule which made David a dictator.

David became a blood thirsty character and failed to uphold the moral verge of forgiveness and reconciliation, he murder the wife of Saul yet this was against the covenant laws.

David married polygamously and above all a number of them were from foreign nations who came in with there different cultures and religion which resulted into idol worship and even marrying polygamously was against God’s ideal type of marriage hence monogamy.

King David was a weak family head. He failed to control his family members which resulted into total divisions within the family e.g. annon raped his ½ half sistertamah and then David failed to punish him for that (2nd Samuel 19)

King David perverted justice towards the end of his reign. His officers at the court were only responsible to him as opposed to the traditional systems where the role of priest, judges and tribal leaders were highly important in the administration of justice in Israel.

David levied heavy taxes on his people at the time he started his building program and worst of all the taxes were also meant to his many wives as well as please them which left the majority of the population in poverty.

King David became autocratic. He centralized power and made Israel become a person autocracy (conservative) other than a theocratic nation which was there before.

The great commercial prosperity which Israel attained during the reign of David backfired as it led to corruption and exploitation of the majority. This polluted Israel’s faith.

David had a hand in the division of the kingdom of Israel which came shortly after his downfall. This was majorly due to enmity which David had created between people of the north and south.

King David carried out forceful recruitment as he embarked on fighting useless wars which resulted into the death of many people with a number of women left widows and children left orphans.

King David cursed his own wife Michal and as a result of the curse, the woman became barren.

David made alliances with pagans/ pagan nations like tyre. This contributed to the rise of pagan practices like idol worshiping in Israel nation.

King David violated the law of sanctification of Israel’s army. The soldiers weren’t meant to have intercourses during fighting but David went ahead by having sex with bathsheba who above all wasn’t his wife.

**THE BRINGING OF THE COVENANT BOOKS FROM BAALAH- JUDAH TO JERUSALEM**

2nd Samuel 6:1-15 and 1st chronicles 13:1-16 describes how David brought back the Ark of covenant from Baalah in Judah to Jerusalem following its capture by the philistines during the reign of King Saul.

The covenant box was kept in the house of Abinadab at baalah in Judah which was located on the hill.

David mobilized a total of 30,000 best soldier men and led them to baalah in Judah and this marked the beginning of the Ark of covenant to Jerusalem after a long period of its absence.

The great procession was intended to bring back to Jerusalem the covenant box baring the Lord’s name.

On reaching the house of abinadab david and his men put the Ark on a new Carl/ cart being pulled by an oxen and started their way back to Jerusalem.

The and ahio guided the cart with ahio walking in front.

David and all the Israelites danced and sung with all their might in giving honour with musical instruments like drums, rattles, harps, cymbals, lyres being played.

However, as David and his men reached a place called nacon the oxen stumbled Uzzah reached out and got hold of the ox but that annoyed God who instantly killed him because he was unclean.

The incident made David afraid and decided not to take the covenant box with him but instead left it in the house of obededom. Obededom, a native in the city of Gath.

The covenant stayed in the house of obed and the Lord later blessed him and his family.

David after hearing of the blessings of obededom and his family made another move to bring the covenant books to Jerusalem.

David put up a tent and consulted the priest to go and perform their duty of carrying out the books. This came after David had made a mistake of not moving with the priest in his first attempt.

After removing the covenant books from the house of abinadab and when the men carrying the books had moved 6 steps (six steps) David stopped them and offered to the Lord a sacrifice of a bull and a fattened calf.

David and all the Israelites accompanied the covenant books with shouts of joy and the sounds of comfort.

As the box was being brought into the city Michal and Saul’s daughter David’s wife saw David dance and jump around thus she became disgusted.

Eventually the covenant books were taken to tentDavid had set earlier on for it.

David then offered sacrifices and fellowship offerings.

David later blessed the people in the name of the Lord and giving each of them a loaf of bread and some roasted meat and then sent them to their homes.

At home Michal made fun of David saying “the king of Israel made a big name of himself today! He exposed himself like a fool in the sight of the servant of his officials”.

Because of this fun, David cursed Michal and never again did she have any children again.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF BRINGING THE ARK OF COVENANT TO THE ISRAELITES**

It proved that David was a man of God as he was to rule Israel through God’s assistance.

It opened up Jerusalem as a religious centre for Israel. Before this, Shiloh was the recognized religious centre of Israel.

It assured the Israelites of God’s holiness taking an example of uzzah who was killed because of his unholyness.

It created unity among Israelites as they all came together to celebrate the return of their God.

It proved that God is the source of blessings as he was able to bless Obededom and his family.

It signified God as a powerful God as he was able to cause the death of uzzah instantly which meant that the Israelites had to turn to him.

Signified that for every sin, there is punishment as God was able to punish uzzah who was unholy hence it was a call for Israelites to avoid sinning.

It signified God’s presence among the Israelites. The covenant box was a symbol of the God of Israel, they meet at the foot of mountain Sinai.

It restored the Israelites military confidence as they became assured of their God being with them once again their/ any confrontation.

It proved that leaders had to rule by good examples like King David who led Israelites to bring back the covenant box.

It showed that the sacred duties should be performed by the concerned people i.e. it re-assured Israelites of the secret duties of the priest.

It proved to the Israelites that God could be worshiped in various ways like dancing, singing, jumping just as David did.

It signified respect among the Israelites as God through David was able to curse Michal of having made fun of her husband.

It signified that Israelites had to worship and praise God regardless of their status just as David who was a king had to jump and dance when they brought the Ark of covenant.

**LESSONS/ SIGNIFICANCY OF THIS EVENT TO MODERN CHRISTIANS**

There is need for Christians to be holly in their service to God. Uzzah was killed because of his un holiness when he touched the covenant box which was holy.

There is need for Christians to remain faithful in order to receive God’s blessings just like he blessed Edon who kept the covenant box for three months.

Christians should always turn to God through prayers so as to get strength and courage. God is the only hope to them particularly during difficulty and they should therefore turn to him unlike in the case of David who had a point to abandon temporary the plan for transforming the covenant box.

Christians should be God fearing and obey when serving him just like David who feared what the Lord did to uzzah.

There is need for Christians to offer sacrifices to the Lord just as David did after his men carrying the box and moved six steps which ensured the success of the mission.

Christians should always stand firm when serving God. David showed human weaknesses as he was caught up with fear following the death of uzaah and consequently had to leave the covenant box behind.

Christians should learn to respect each other in their relationships when serving the Lord unlike Michal who was cursed because of making fun of David who was serving the Lord through dancing and jumping.

Christians should show good examples to others just like David who moved together with his men to baala- Judah where they had to bring back to Jerusalem the Ark of the covenant.

There is need for Christians to observe monotheism. David made it a point to bring back the Art of covenant because it was the symbol of Israel’s only God (Yahweh) and its absence meant that the Israelites were without their God.

Christians have to acknowledge God’s power among them. The story presented God as omnipotent because he was able to cause the death of uzaah and cursing of micahl.

Christians should always repent off their sins as they serve God. Uzaah was killed because he had touched the covenant box without purifying himself.

There is need for Christians to praise and worship God irrespective of their status just as David who was a king openly danced and jumped as a covenant box was being brought back to Jerusalem.

There is need for Christians to respect duties which should only be performed by the people concerned. David made a mistake and did not consult and involve the priests in his missions because it was the duty of the priest to carry the covenant box and this is what contributed towards the failure of bringing back the covenant in David’s 1st mission.

Christians should be able to construct churches just as David put up a tent in which the covenant box was kept after being brought back from baala.

Christians should be united as they serve God just as the event of bringing the covenant books united the Israelites as they all kept together to celebrate.

There is need for sharing among the Christians just like David gave food to the Israelites before sending them to their homes.

There is need for Christians to prepare and be ready for God’s judgment. Uzaah was judged and found to be impure.

**PROPHET NATHAN AND KING DAVID**

As David settled in his palace as king of Israel, the influence of prophet had not been experienced since the death of Samuel. It was at such a time that God decided to send Prophet Nathan to deliver his message to David.

Prophet Nathan appeared to King David when he was about to make wonders and also he had already committed some crimes. His prophesies to David formalized into two;

Prophesy on building of temple.

Prophesy when David committed a double sin.

**NATHAN’S PROPHECY ON BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE**

As one of his many plans as king of Israel, David came up with the idea of building the temple that so that he could stop keeping the covenant box in the tent (2ndjarn 1:17)

David first consulted Nathan about his idea and Nathan gave him ahead pointing out that David had a lot with him and as such he could do whatever he had in mind (2nd Samuel 7:1)

However at night the Lord appeared to Nathan instructing him to stop David from carrying out his plan.

According to the Lord, he had never lived in the temple since the time he rescued the people of Israel from Egypt but always in a tent.

The Lord further pointed out that he had never asked any of the leaders he had been appointing why they had not built for him a temple.

God through Prophet Nathan reminded David of how he took him from where he was looking after the sheep of his fore father and made him the ruler of his people.

God further nominated David of how he had been with him whenever they could go and how he helped him to defeat his enemies.

God through Nathan also made various promises to King David which were to be fulfilled even when David had died.

David was to be as famous as the greatest leaders in the world. It was later fulfilled through David’s achievements and how the messiah came through his line.

One of David’s sons was able to be made a king after him and his kingdom was to be strong. This was fulfilled when Solomon was made a king of Israel immediately after his death.

God was to protect King David from his enemies. This was fulfilled when David defeated his enemies like philistines.

One of David’s sons was to build a temple for God and this was fulfilled when Solomon built and eventually dedicated the temple for God.

David was to have many descendants that any other man could count. This was fulfilled as Israelites continued to grow in large numbers.

God promised to be the father of David’s sons when they could be made a king and that he would persist the sin when in the wrong just as the father punished his sons. God later is seen punishing Solomon for his mistakes.

God promised David dynasty through his son whose reign would continue forever. This was fulfilled especially when the messiah was born through David’s lineage.

God promised never to withdraw the support from one of his sons and David himself. This was fulfilled through the various achievements to David and his son Solomon registered.

Later he accepted all these promises and offered thanks giving prayer to the Lord.

**REASONS WHY GOD OBJECTED DAVID’S PLAN OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE**

King David appeared to be too ambitious and as such there was possibility of the work breaking down on the way and calling the need of stopping him.

God appeared to have realized that David was about to commit a number of sins therefore making him unfit to be behind the building of a holy place. This eventually came true when David committed a double sin of adultery and murder.

There was possibility of the temple confining Yahweh only to Jerusalem yet he is a universal God that can’t be limited to an area or a mere building.

Yahweh foresaw David burning with a desire of making a name for himself and entering in the history if Israel as having been one to have built the first temple.

The temple was most likely to equate Yahweh to the Canaanite gods whose idols were always decorated and put in precious buildings.

God through Prophet Nathan foresaw David committing a crime of pride and boastfulness as having done something great for the God of Israel.

According to God he had never lived in a temple ever since he rescued the people of Israel from Egypt but always in the tent and therefore he didn’t see the importance of a temple being built.

Yahweh through prophet Nathan also pointed out that he had never asked any of the leader he had appointed why they had not built for him the temple and since he had never complained to them thus there was no need for building the temple.

According to Yahweh David thought building the temple after first building his house which meant that David took the temple of low significance and yet it would have been first in David’s agenda considering that he was serving the most high.

Probably Yahweh foresaw the Israelites yielding to evil practices in the temple like prostitution as was the case with Eli’s sons and the Canaanite religion therefore this stopping of davit was aimed at preventing the Israelites from backsliding.

God had a clear vision of whom would build for him a temple and this is why he is seen promising David through prophet Nathan that one of his sons would be the one to build the temple and indeed his son Solomon later built and dedicated the temple.

King David appeared to have been influenced by the pagan Canaanites who had the same type of buildings for their gods yet the Israelites were the ones to act as examples to others.

David’s plan for building the temple appeared to be due to his lack of knowledge about the nature and identity of Yahweh David ought to have realized that the covenant was simply a symbolical representation of Israel’s God who is spirit and as such couldn’t be confined in a physical building.

**THE SECOND PROPHESY OF NATHAN AFTER DAVID’S DOUBLE SIN (2nd Samuel 11 and 12)**

King David committed a double sin when he committed adultery with Uriah’s wife bathsheba and went ahead to plot for his death.

This came at the time when the Israelites army was at the front line fighting the ammonites whom they defeated in the city of rabbah on the fateful day David after having a nap in the afternoon went to the palace roof and saw bathsheba bathing.

Beautiful as she was David got attracted and wished to have sexual intercourse with her.

David then sent one of his servants to call bathsheba and committed adultery with her and yet she had just finished her monthly ritual of purification.

After sometime bethsheba realized that she was pregnant and communicated to David accordingly but that didn’t please him.

To disguise the pregnancy and escape the responsibility David called Uriah back home for a leave.

Uriah being aware of the Israelites law regarding the holy war that didn’t permit sexual intercourse refused to go to his house and as such didn’t have sex with his wife.

King David later tried to trick Uriah so much that he invited him for a dinner and made him drunk that he sent him to his home again to that Uriah again didn’t but slept in the palace guardroom.

The next morning David wrote a letter to joab one of his commanders and gave it Uriah himself instructing joab to put Uriah on the front line where fighting was heaviest.

The plan eventually worked and Uriah was killed when the enemies troops came out in the city and fought joab’s forces.

**NATHAN’ MESSAGE TO DAVID (2nd Samuel 1:12- following)**

God being annoyed with David’s action sent a messenger to him through Nathan inform of a story.

Nathan told David that there was once a rich man who had many cattle, sheep and a poor man who only had a lamb/ animal.

On receiving a visitor the rich man instead of killing one of his many animals grabbed the poor man’s one animal and slaughtered it for the visitor.

David on hearing this story became very angry with the rich man and condemned him to death and even ordered the man to pay four times (x4) as much as he took.

Nathan later told David that he was the very rich man according to the story and Uriah was the poor man.

Prophet Nathan therefore prophesized that David was to be punished and was to die for his sins. David however accepted his mistakes and repented and God in turn forgave him.

Nathan went ahead with his prophesies emphasizing that David’s descendants would/ will have to die in every generation.

Further still one of David’s family members was to bring trouble to him.

God was to take David’s wives, give them to another man who would rape them in a broad day light/ publically.

One of david’s sons was to die a violent death.

**The above prophesies were fulfilled in the following ways;**

David’s son born out of adultery died after along period of illness (2nd Samuel 16:following).

David’s son annon raped his step sister ramah and this caused chaos in the family.

David’s sons absolom organized a coup against him and claimed the throne of kingship (2nd Samuel 15:following)

Solomon one of David’s sons murdered his own brother adonijah (1st kings 2:24-25)

**THE MEANING/ IMPLICATION OF NATHAN’S PROPHESY**

In the story, David was the rich man referred to ad having been exploited the poor unfortunate man. He had killed Uriah and taken his wife.

Uriah was the poor man who had only a lamb, bathsheba was his only wife.

The many cattle and sheep the rich man had meant the many wives of King David.

The visitor of whom the rich man slaughtered for the animal meant the sexual desire/ lust that over came David and let him into sexual intercourse/ relations.

David’s anger implied that he knew what was wrong and was as such touched by the unfortunate incident.

David’s condemnation of the rich man to death implied that David was aware of the law at that time but was unconscious of himself as being a law breaker.

The condemnation also implied that David had passed judgment upon himself especially as Nathan told him that “u are the rich man”.

Grabbing of the only lamb of the poor man implied that David instead of choosing one of his many wives to satisfy his sexual desires seceded to do it with someone’s wife.

David condemnation further implied that he was keen and observing the law.

The adultery that David committed meant that he violated God’s law of being the holy people.

David’s acceptance of his guilt implied that he realized his own weaknesses as a human being and his unworthiness before the law.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP TO MODERN CHRISTIANS TODAY**

Christians should avoid sinning for its punishable like the way David was punished.

Christians should have respect for marriage for it carries desire meaning unlike David who went against this by committing adultery.

Christians should accept mistakes just as David who realized his mistakes when Prophet Nathan approached him telling him of the sin he had committed.

There is need for Christians to avoid idleness for an idle mind is a devils workshop judging from the way David was tempted at a time he was idle.

There is need for Christians to always keep God’s command unlike David who violated God’s law by committing adultery and murder.

Christians should always try to control themselves and avoid human weaknesses unlike David who failed to overcome his sexual feelings and ended up committing adultery.

Christians should lead by examples to receive God’s blessings unlike David who showed bad examples to his subordinates.

Christians should seek God’s wisdom and guidance in all their activities. David failed to seek wisdom and guidance and thus ended up sinning.

Christians should acknowledge that children are blessing in marriage from God and they should be got in proper ways. David’s son got out of adultery died.

Christians should acknowledge that God is omnipresent. David failed to recognize this fact at the time he was committing adultery but only received the news from Prophet Nathan.

Christians should always repent their sin just like David repented and fasted after committing a double sin thus was forgiven by God.

Christians should always accept advice. David accepted the prophesies of Nathan.

Christians should use authority in a proper way giving respect to their subjects unlike kingDavid who used his authority to plot the death of an innocent man.

Christians should learn to be patient in life. King David wanted another wife, he would have waited for God to provide him.

Christians should acknowledge the fact that sin is shameful so much that it separates human beings among themselves and from God.

**RELEVANCE OF KING DAVID TO MODERN CHRISTIANS**

Christians should learn to be courageous just like David faced courageously the giant Goliath and was able to eliminate him from Israel.

Christians should always forgive one another. David forgave KingSaul who had wanted to kill him.

Christians should praise and worship God. David openly danced and jumped when the covenant box was being transformed from Judah to Jerusalem in giving honour to the Lord.

Christians should respect one another. David respected King Saul who was his superior.

Christians should promote religion by observing religious festivals just as David sacrifices to the Lord at the time of transferring the covenant box.

Christians should accept their mistakes for that matter repent. David accepted his mistakes after committing a double sin as presented.

Christians should always strive towards economic development. David promoted trade with neighbouring countries like tyre and Egypt thus that boasted the economy of Israel.

Christians should always discipline their children unlike king David who was faced by chaos in family.

Christians should provide security to their people. David killed Goliath in persuing a peaceful living.

Christians should be God fearing just like David fearing the Lord after the death of uzzah.

Christians should obey the laws governing the society. David had to be punished because he broke God’s command which was against adultery and murder.

Christians should always be united. David worked tirelessly towards the unity of Israel.

Christians should always pray to God for hope. David failed to turn to God to prayers when uzzah was killed.

Christians should always lead by examples. David led his fellow Israelites at the time of bringing the covenant box back to Jerusalem.

**KING SOLOMON**

He was the third (3rd) king of Israel who was chosen by his own father king David as his successor.

He was a so of David and Bathsheba a former wife of Uriah whom David had taken after committing adultery and plotting for his death.

King Solomon and his reign is willed by God although his rise to power was as a result of confusion.

David had become too old and so he couldn’t rule effectively. He had even lost popularity and his people had begun staging rebellions against him.

Still at such an old age David had lost control over his children although he was able to promise Bathsheba that his son Solomon would be the next king.

After the death of absolom adonijah also the son of David looked at himself as the next king of Israel. He provided himself with chariot horses and an escort of 50men and proclaimed himself as the king of Israel.

David however didn’t like adonijah’s move. Although adonijah was supported by his mother haggith, the army commander joab and abiathar, the priest.

Adonijah invited all theson’s of David to witness his proclamation except Solomon. He also invited all religious leaders and military leaders except Prophet Nathan and David’s bodyguard.

Prophet Nathan and Solomon’s mother Bathsheba on hearing the plan went and inquired about the legitimacy of adonijah’s proclamation as the king of Israel.

David later organized a ceremony where Solomon was to be appointed, anointed, proclaimed, crowned and enthroned.

The day of this anointing was a day of confusion in Israel. Some people cheering Solomon while others adonijah.

When adonijah realized that he had been rejected, he ran and got hold of the corners of the alter that Solomon shouldn’t put him to death with Solomon replying that nothing will happen to him if he would be royal.

David introduced the system of inheritance in the kingdom of Israel. Its noted that king Saul and David were appointed by God himself but now Solomon was becoming a king as heir to his father.

As David was nearing his death, he gave his last instructions to his son Solomon telling him to be confident and determined in his administration.

He also reminded Solomon on that the promises made to him will be fulfilled if he would obey God’s command.

David further advised Solomon that Joab one of his military commander had to be killed for having shed innocent blood and his lack of support.

Solomon promised to follow his fathers’ advice and in his prayer he asked for nothing else but wisdom to rule Israel.

**Therefore Solomon’s rise to power is attributed to the following;**

God willed Solomon’s rise to power. This followed prophet Nathan’s prophesy to David that one of his sons would replace him as a king which became more clearer after Solomon’s birth when God showed his love for him as he sent prophet Nathan to name him jedidiah (2nd Samuel 12:24-25)

King David had promised Bathsheba that her son would be his successor. David was therefore under the obligation to fulfill his promise therefore Solomon had to become the next king as David grew older.

Solomon enjoyed great support from Prophet Nathan and priest zadook. Its therefore against this background that prophet Nathan advised Bathsheba to contact David who was already growing old and demanding him to fulfill his earlier promise to making Solomon the king (1st kings 11:1-14).

Solomon also enjoyed support from some of the army commanders like beriaiah and David’s royal bodyguard. Therefore he had to become the next king because of this close interaction when David grew older.

The confusion within David’s family was instead in favour of Solomon’s rise to power. If adonijah coup against his father David had succeeded Solomon wouldn’t have been made a king of Israel.

Solomon had a humble character. He was well behaved, feared the Lord and had great respect for his father as compared to his other brothers adonijah, ammon and absolom. His good character therefore paved way for his rise to power.

The love king David had for Solomon’s mother Bathsheba facilitated his rise. David had to anoint Solomon to please his wife.

**KING SOLOMON’S PRAYER FOR WISDOM (1st kings 3:1- following)**

As king Solomon settled in the throne of Israel, he had to follow his father’s action, he has the fear for and loved the Lord and thus because of this he slaughtered animals and offered them as sacrifices on God’s alter.

On one occasion he went to Gibeona place with the most famous alter of sacrifices. He then offered hundreds of burnt offerings.

On that night the Lord appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he should do for him.

King Solomon who then answered the Lord politely first gave a narration of how God showed great love for his father David and how he made him to succeed.

King Solomon in the end asked God to give him wisdom which he needed to rule God’s people with knowledge and justice.

Solomon’s request pleased God for he expected Solomon to ask for long life, riches and the death of his enemies.

God then promised to give Solomon more wisdom and wisdom than any one has ever had before and would never have.

God promised King Solomon respect and honour more than that of any king.

God also promised Solomon long life if he obeyed him and keep his laws and commands.

King Solomon woke up and realized that God had spoken to him in the dream.

He later went to Jerusalem and stood infront of the Lord’s covenant box and offered burnt offering and fellowship offerings.

King Solomon then gave a feast for all his officials.

**Question**

**“King Solomon asked wisdom from God”. To what extent did he use it to the benefit of his nation?(Achievements and failures)**

**THE BUILDING OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE (1st kings 6:1 – following)**

King Solomon embarked on his building program as he established himself as king of Israel.

God through Prophet Nathan had stopped Solomon’s father from carrying out his plan of building the temple for him but promised him that one of his sons would do so.

King Solomon was therefore under the obligation of fulfilling his promise made to his father David.

King Solomon continued with the relationship his father had established with Hiram of tyre.

He signed a trade treaty with tyre to supply him with building materials like cedar and pine in exchange for wheat and olive oil.

To accomplish this building Solomon recruited 50,000 men as forced labour from all over Israel. He also had 80,000 men quarrying stones with 70,000 to carry it, putting there 33000 foremen in charge of them.

As the building progresses Solomon ended up over taxing his people so as to meet the construction costs.

King Solomon took 7 years constructing the temple and later he concided with the construction of his palace and other cities such as Megiddo, hazar and gezor.

Its however noted that the construction of the Lord’s temple led king Solomon into sinning far different from his attempt to please him.

**THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE (1st kings 8:62-following) (1st kings 8:1-13 and 62 following)**

This was the day the priest took the covenant box into the temple and placed it in the most holy part.

King Solomon gathered all the tribes and clan leaders of Israel leading them towards the temple of Zion.

The priests performed their duty of carrying the Ark of covenant from the tent and besides they took with them other sacred (holy0.

King Solomon with all the Israelites assembled before the covenant box to offer sacrifices of many sheep and cattle.

The priest then brought the Ark of covenant to its place in inner sanctuary of the temple.

As the priest withdrew from he holy temple, the Lord appeared in a shinning cloud and dazzling light stopping the priest from performing their duties.

King Solomon then addressed the people giving reference of the temple he had built to the Lord’s holy place as promised by his father.

King Solomon thereafter blessed the people as they were standing thanking the Lord for the great things he had done for his people right from Egypt.

King Solomon reminded the Israelites about the covenant relationship God has established with their ancestors.

King Solomon then prayed to God asking him for protection of the temple which is still referred to as the Lords dwelling place.

He prayed for good relationship among the Israelites asking God to condemn the guilty and declare innocent not guilty incase of one.

King Solomon also prayed to God to forgive his people during tragedy like drought and famine even when people had sinned against him.

King Solomon also prayed for the gentiles asking God to listen to them whenever they would pray in his name (1st kings 8:41-43)

He further prayed for protection against Israel’s enemies in the event of wars.

After finishing their prayers they stood up and again blessed the whole assembly of Israel. Later on there was a great feast.

Later on there was a great feast which lasted for 7days on he 8th day Solomon sent the people to their homes each being joyful and praising the Lord.

**THE ROLE OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE**

The temple which king Solomon built in Jerusalem on mountain moriah, mountain played some great roles in the kingdom of Israel. Its however noted that the temple also had some negative impacts in Israel. Its why some scholars have argued that the building of the temple was both an asset and liability to the kingdom.

**The temple as an asset**

The temple became a centre for worshiping Yahweh. Hitherto (before that) many shrines i.e. Shiloh, bathel, existed as places of worship.

The temple created unity among the Israelites. As they came together to worship in the temple, the spirit of togetherness was fastened and came to realize that they had a common anscentry.

The temple acted as a centre of national religious festivals for Israel like the Passover and the atonement day.

The temple promoted monotheism in Israel and this is because all religious activities came to be centered in one place as opposed to the existence of many places where it was difficult to monitor the religious life of the worshipers.

The temple attracted foreigners as it was magnificently built and furnished among others, the queen of Sheba from Ethiopia visited Israel partly because of the great temple Solomon had built.

The temple boasted trade in Israel and with the neighbouring states like tyre. It was because the building materials were battered with goods from Israel.

The temple constantly reminded the Israelites about God’s presence among them for they believed that their God Yahweh was contained in the covenant box which was placed in the temple.

It became a centre for ordaining and conscreding religious leaders like the priest who were important in the development of religious life in Israel.

The temple acted as the administration centre for justice i.e. cases and disputes were settled from the temple.

The temple became a centre for offering sacrifices with among other reasons aimed at reconciliation with God and among the Israelites themselves.

The Israelites dedicated their first born sons at Jerusalem and this was done to remember and appreciate Yahweh for having spared their first born during the Passover in Egypt.

The temple strengthened Israel’s relationship with her neighbours. This enhanced peace and stability in the kingdom since Israel had for sometimes been at logger heads with her neighbourss

The temple became a permanent house for God. Permanently in it was the Ark of covenant which represented Israel’s God.

It was a center of fellowshipping with God. The Israelites would come together as they perform various sacrifices and prayers to show their royalty to God.

The temple became a center of education. These in the end promoted morality in the kingdom.

It was a symbol of God’s protection over his people. The Israelites soldiers were under the obligation to first assemble in the temple before embarking of any military confrontation. This was done to receive God’s blessings.

**The temple as a liability**

The temple which was built with good intention later on caused problems among the Israelites including the following;

The temple made King Solomon to use forced labour. He subjected the Israelites to slavery conditions and resulted into severe suffering.

King Solomon over taxed his people in an effort to meet the construction costs. This resulted into poverty in Israel.

The temple led King Solomon into living an extravagant life at the expense of his people. It was particularly during the dedication of the temple were the animals were sacrificed yet they were taken from the oppressed people.

The temple made the Israelites take God for granted. After putting the covenant box into the temple, the Israelites thought they had domesticated their God and were as such not bothered to observe the covenant box.

The temple made Israelites to accumulate a huge debt particularly during its construction. It was on this ground that King Solomon was forced to sale 20 cities in the region of Galilee to king Hiram and yet the land belonged to God according to the covenant laws and which weren’t meant to be sold permanently.

The Israelites later worshiped the temple instead of Yahweh thus the temple became an idol for the Israelites but which was against the covenant laws.

The temple building forced King Solomon to collaborate with the pagan nations e.g. Solomon signed a trade agreement with the king of tyre because he wanted building materials but this resulted into pagan practices in Israel which were against the covenant faith.

The temple promoted tribalism in Israel. Solomon in the process of meeting the costs of construction of the temple only taxed people from the northern part leaving the southern part tax free yet they were all God’s people.

The temple encouraged and promoted pagan practices in Israel. First, it was built in a pagan style and above all the builders were foreigners who came in freely with their religious practices.

The temple later led to the division and collapse of the kingdom of Israel. King Solomon during the construction sawed seeds of hatred between the north and south as he only subjected the northern people to forced labour and forced taxes which his son Rehoboam also inherited and led to the final blow of the kingdom because of the mistakes already made during the building of the temple.

The temple made the Israelites to commit the sin of pride and arrogance against other nations. They looked at themselves as the chosen people having their God with them in the temple and despised the gentiles.

The temple brought about hypocrisy in worshiping. The worshipers only went to the temple for formality and to show off. This meant that their religious festivals, sacrifices and fasting etc. were meaningless.

The temple blocked the Israelites from repenting. They became stubborn to think that God wouldn’t punish them even when they had sinned without preventing because of the presence of the temple.

The temple gave false security and protection to the people of Israel. They thought that God was only with them and were therefore secured from external threats.

The temple led to the breakdown of other sector of the economy in Israel. Agriculture for instance was ignored as all the able bodied men were drafted into forced labour during the building.

The temple led to false prophesies in Israel. This was because of the economic difficulties which was caused by the building it self and it was on this ground like hannaiah came up to serve their interest by telling people about the economic recoverment.

**KING SOLOMON’S POLYGAMOUS/ FOREIGN MARRIAGE (1st kings 11:1-following)**

King Solomon after establishing himself firmly on the throne of Israel he loved and ended up marrying vey many wives who were above all foreigners.

He married the daughter of the Egyptian king, hittile women and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom and sidom.

King Solomon married 700 princesses’ 830 concubines making up a total of 1000 wives.

King Solomon’s marriages were however illegal for the Lord had commanded the Israelites not to inter marry with other people (1st kings 11:2)

Through these marriages king Solomon sinned against God for the king wasn’t meant to have many wives because he could easily turn away from God (Deuteronomy 17:17)

Further still most of Solomon’s wives were from pagan nations and came with their pagan gods.

King Solomon later constructed temples for the gods of his wives and more so on the land of Yahweh.

Solomon also made mistakes and worshiped these gods instead of Yahweh. He also built a place on the mountain on the east of Jerusalem, mountain to worship (hemosh the disgustive god of Moab and a palace to worship molecht he disgusting god of Ammon.

King Solomon also built places of worship where all his foreign wives could burn incense and offer sacrifices to their own gods.

God however didn’t leave King Solomon to go on with his free life style. He appeared to him twice commanding him not to worship these foreign gods but which he disobeyed.

God being angry with king Solomon promised to tire his kingdom apart but only after he handed it over to one of his sons. It was for the seek of the promises he had made to king David, Solomon’s father.

**HOW KING SOLOMON’S MARRIAGE LED HIM TO SINNING**

King Solomon married polygamous yet it was condemned in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 17:17).

Solomon married foreign wives yet the Israelites weren’t allowed to inter marry.

Solomon’s wives made him to live a luxurious and extravagant life at the expense of the great majority who lived under poverty.

King Solomon married pagan wives from the pagan nations of Moab, Ammon, Edom and sidan yet God had given prior warning against this to the people of Israel (Deuteronomy

King Solomon allowed his pagan wives to come with their pagan beliefs and practices into the land of Yahweh.

Solomon constructed pagan temples for the pagan gods of his wives more over on Yahweh’s land. He therefore equated Yahweh with these gods for he had also built the Jerusalem temple to Yahweh.

King Solomon built places of worship where his pagan wives could burn incense and offer sacrifices to their gods.

Solomon himself turned to worship the pagan god of his wives besides Yahweh yet this was syncretism and therefore against the covenant faith.

King Solomon practiced apostasy. He totally abandoned Yahweh and turned to the pagan goods of his wives.

King Solomon disobeyed God through his marriage. God appeared to him twice warning him against the worship of these gods but he didn’t listen.

King Solomon showed a bad example to God’s people, he led them astray by making them to turn to the worship of his wives together with their pagan gods instead of Yahweh.

King Solomon himself sacrifices to the pagan gods of his wives instead of doing it to Yahweh.

King Solomon became a servant of his wives instead of serving Yahweh. He was only interested in doing what his wives desired and denounced Yahweh who had brought him to power.

King Solomon marriage eventually led to the division and collapse of the kingdom of Israel. It was a punishment due to anger against Solomon’s sin of apostasy.

King Solomon disobeyed his father’s last instructions before his death David Solomon’s father advised him to be confident, determined and to obey the Lord’s commands written in the laws of Moses (1st kings 2: following)

**SIGNIFICANCY/ LESSONS OF SOLOMON’S MARRIAGE TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

Christians should uphold monogamy as the ideal type of marriage unlike King Solomon whose polygamous marriage led him into sinning.

Christians should observe monotheism as opposed to polytheism which led to sinning against God judging from Solomon’s worshiping of the pagan gods of his wives thus eventually brought him punishment.

Christians should always repent their sins and live a holy life. King Solomon failed to repent his sins despite God’s warning to him and was consequently punished.

There is need for Christians to obey God’s laws as to live a righteous life. King Solomon disobeyed God’s laws despite having a perfect knowledge of them and consequently sinned against him.

Christians should always accept their mistakes unlike King Solomon who failed to do so and continued sinning against God.

There is need for Christians to resist temptation so as to avoid sinning. King Solomon failed to resist temptation of worshiping and sacrificing to the pagan gods of his wives and yet this was a sin against Yahweh.

Christians should acknowledge that there is a punishment for every sin committed against God. For his sins God punished King Solomon by tiring the kingdom of Israel during the reign of his son Rehoboam.

Christians should acknowledge the fact that God keeps his promises. God had promised David, Solomon’s father that he would not withdraw his support from David’s son and that he would punish his son when on wrong. In fulfilling this God kept Solomon’s reign intact and punished him accordingly.

Christians should only sacrifice only to God instead of other gods. King Solomon sacrificed to the pagan gods of his wives which annoyed God and later on punished him.

Christian marriage should be within the religious setting unlike king Solomon who went against Israel’s customs by inter marrying.

Christians should only worship only one true God unlike King Solomon who worshiped the pagan gods of his wives.

Christians should keep away from pagan beliefs and differences plus influences. King Solomon associated himself with his pagan wives and ended up behaving in the same way.

Christians should always listen to warnings against doing evil practices. King Solomon failed to listen to God’s warnings against his bad behavior which annoyed God.

There is need for Christians to completely be devoted to God unlike King Solomon who was double minded.

**ACHIEVEMENTS OF KING SOLOMON**

Solomon is regarded to be one of the most successful kings in the history of Israel. This wisdom later helped Solomon to promote social justice and prosperity in Israel (1st kings 3:16-18)

King Solomon built a temple at Jerusalem. He completed the building within 7years. The temple later became the center of worship in the kingdom of Israel.

King Solomon went ahead to construct and facelift on Jerusalem city. He built his palace which took him 13 years. He also built other palaces for his many wives.

King Solomon is further seen as an author and composer. He composed 3000 proverbs and more than 1000 songs besides being the writer of the wisdom book including songs of songs and ecclesiacitis.

Solomon promoted trade and commerce in Israel and with the neighboring countries like tyre and Egypt. This led to the economic prosperity of the kingdom of Israel e.g. he exchanged wheat and oil with building materials supplied by Hiram of tyre.

King Solomon peacefully settled disputes among his people using the wisdom he asked from God e.g. settled a dispute between two prostitutes over a child (1st king 3:16-following)

King Solomon decentralized power in his administration. He divided the kingdom into 2 districts basing on tribes and also appointed a member from each of the tribes in his palace. This promoted efficient and effective administration from the kingdom.

King Solomon enabled peace and security in the kingdom. He was able to eliminate his rivals like his own brother Adonijah (1st kings 2:25). This gave a chance to Israelites to hold celebrations as they were able to eat and drink with joy (1st kings 8:62).

King Solomon replaced the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. He transferred it from the tent where his father David had placed it after bringing it from baalah in Judah into the temple (1st kings 8:1-following)

King Solomon extended the boundaries of the kingdom of Israel. He was able to annex some territories to the kingdom including hamath, zadok in the diplomatic ties of the neighbouring nations like Egypt, tyre and Ethiopia. This was through signing treaties and even marrying wives from some of the nations. This further enhanced peace and stability in the kingdom.

King Solomon built a strong army. It was a force of 14,000 chariots and 12,000 Calvary horses. These forces were instrumental in maintaining the territorial integrity and the security of the kingdom (1st kings 10:26)

King Solomon promoted and encouraged civilization and cultural development in the kingdom of Israel. Himself being an author Solomon encouraged the culture of reading among his people.

King Solomon was a God fearing man. He owned a number of occasions prayed to God for the blessing of the kingdom (1st kings 8:22-following). This was in an effort to follow the advise his father king David had given him before his death.

King Solomon’s personality attracted visitors to the kingdom of Israel. His wisdom and achievements made him famous so much that even the queen Sheba of Ethiopia had to travel to Jerusalem out of these visitations Israel prospered as some of the visitors moved with a lot of wealth.

King Solomon developed infrastructure in Israel. He built the court of ezion and ceber.

**HOW KING SOLOMON REAPED FROM WHAT HIS FATHER HAD SAWN**

According to some scholars King Solomon is seen not to have achieved a lot to Israel since most of his achievements are seen to lie on his father’s foundation. This is why its argued that Solomon reaped from what his father David had sawn. This argument is based on the following;

The building of the temple which took King Solomon 7years was initiated by his father king David who didn’t so after God through prophet Nathan stopped him. Solomon therefore simply accomplished the program as God had promised.

The building of the palace was also begun by his father David and Solomon only came in to build a bigger and better one but the ideas remain that of his father.

King Solomon’s achievements as being an author is inherited from his father king David who was the author of psalms. King Solomon therefore promoted his father’s work by writing the proverbs and other wisdom books like songs of songs.

King Solomon can’t be credited as being the initiator of trade in Israel. He simply went into the father’s footsteps who had already opened up trade links with the neighbouring states of tyre and Egypt. He therefore reaped from what his father had sawn.

Solomon’s achievements in promoting external relations had been began by his father king David whose collaborations with Hiram of tyre can’t be under estimated.

By King Solomon installing the Ark of covenant into the temple he was simply making final touches on David’s program of bringing back the Ark of covenant to Jerusalem.

Solomon further reaped from his father’s effort by putting in place a strong army he inherited from his father.

The extension of the kingdom of Israel beyond its initial boundary was a work well started by Solomon’s father king David. He simply picked from where the father had stopped and accomplished the task.

King Solomon reaped from his father’s effort when he decentralized his power when administering the kingdom. His father David had done this before and Solomon was simply copying his father’s administrative skills.

By King Solomon promoting peace and stability in the kingdom of Israel he was simply maintaining status quo as his father king David had established.

King Solomon’s fear of the Lord was an example of an instruction from his father David before his death had instructed Solomon to obey God’s command and David himself was a God fearing man judging from the way he repented after committing the double sin of adultery and murder.

King Solomon borrowed a leave from his father and promoted justice and righteousness among the Israelites. David during his reign made sure that all cases were judged fairly following the covenant laws. Therefore when Solomon peacefully settled a dispute between the prostitutes over a child, he was simply promoting what his father had earlier on done.

King Solomon’s tapping of the mineral resources like copper at Edom was only a completion of the task his father David had already started. David had already conquered this area and established order in it.

King Solomon went into his father’s footsteps when he reduced internal resistance within the kingdom therefore by Solomon eliminating his enemies like his own brother Adonijah he was simply following his father who also eliminated his enemies like King Saul’s family members during his reign.

**WEAKNESSES/ FAILURES OF KING SOLOMON**

King Solomon committed a number of blunders and God through prophet ahijah promised to take away the kingdom from him (1st king 11:30-32) therefore his weaknesses include the following;

King Solomon subjected the Israelites to forced labour. This came at a time he embarked on the building programs of the temple and palaces where he drafted 80,000men quarrying stones, 70,000 men to carry the stones and 3300 foremen (1st kings 5:13-17).

King Solomon heavily taxed his people. This was in an effort to accomplish his many building programs of the temple and palaces, maintaining his big army and his many wives plus concubines. This increased the level of poverty among the Israelites.

King Solomon became too extravagant. He had to be supplied with 10 well fed cattle, 100 sheep, 5000 litters of fine flour and 1000 litters of meal among others each day. This was done at the expense of Israelites who lived under poverty (1st king 4:22-23)

King Solomon sold some part of Israel’s land to a foreign nation. He sold 20 towns in the region of Galilee to king Hiram of tyre in his effort to pay the huge debt he had accumulated during his building program (1st kings 9:11) and yet this was Yahweh’s land (Leviticus 25:23-following)

King Solomon’s mistakes culminated/ resulted into the disintegration of Israel which happened during the reign of his son Rehoboam. His policy of taxing the northern people brought in conflict and divided the kingdom which resulted to its collapse.

King Solomon is blamed for the failures of other sectors in Israel. He was only pre-occupied with his building projects leaving out other sectors of the economy which declined as a number of people were taken as forced labourers.

King Solomon murdered many people in Israel including his own brother Adonijah and a constentant to the kingdom. Adonijah’s only crime was to demand to marry the care taker of their father abishag (1st kings 2:22-25) he also ordered for the murder of Joab one of his military commanders (1st kings 22:30) but all these were against the covenant faith.

King Solomon married foreign women yet the covenant laws prohibited the Israelites from inter marriage (1st kings 11:1-3) and (Deuteronomy 7:3). He married women from Edom, Egypt, Ammon, sidom etc.

King Solomon also married polygamous. He had 700 wives and 8300 concubines contrary as being ideal to Yahweh’s people.

King Solomon introduced idol worship in the kingdom of Israel. He allowed his foreign wives to come in with the pagan gods and himself worshiped Astart, the godless of Sidon among others (1st kings 11:5) yet this was contrary to the covenant faith which control/ called for monotheism.

King Solomon was unfair in his trading activities with the neighboring nations. He didn’t respect his trade agreement with king Hiram of tyre. Solomon was given a large amount of gold but in payment he gave back a peace of land described as a wasteland which indeed didn’t please his trade partner (1st king 1:9-13)

King Solomon was an un repentant person, he ignored his mistakes especially as he began sinning against God. But his mistakes caused great suffering in Israel.

King Solomon neglected Israel as his own country and concentrated on trade and extending external relations.

King Solomon failed to respect his father’s advice. His father David had advised him to follow God’s laws and live by the covenant faith.

King Solomon’s reign was full of resistance and oppositions so much that at the time of his death, he had created enough enemies. There was a rebellion from hadad who turned against him in revenge for what his father David had done when he killed the people of Edom. Jeroboam also turned against Solomon because of his unfair rule (1st king 11:14-40).

THE FALL AND DIVISION OF ISRAEL (1st king 11:1-following)