

KABARAK



UNIVERSITY

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BIBL 110

LECTURE NOTES

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Kabarak University Moral Code

As members of Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times and in all place to set apart in one's heart, Jesus as Lord. (1 Peter 3:15)



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INTRODUCTION

The O.T consists of 39 books, written and collected over a period exceeding 1,000 years. The bible is the sacred or holy book to both Jews and Christians. Jesus and his apostles embraced and used the bible because it is the word of God. Christians have always read the bible for comfort, strength, encouragement, guidance, instruction, vision for future, warning e.t.c. The Old Testament books are of unequal length for instance the book of Obadiah is barely a page long, while Psalms has 150 chapters. The Old Testament is mostly written in Hebrew although small portion of Ezra, Jeremiah and Daniel are written in Aramaic. The Old Testament books exhibit great diversity of literary style including narrative, poetry, sermons, dialogue, prayers, hymns/songs, letters and prophecies.

The Old Testament Arrangements

The Old Testament books are arranged in the order of the law, history, poetry and prophecy. The law books of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and the historical books (Joshua-Esther) are presented in narration or historical format. The poetic books (Job-Songs of Solomon) were grouped together because they are presented in poetic form. These books deal with personal issues from human devotion to God to human love. The prophetic books (Isaiah-Malachi) contain the complex messages of the Israelites prophets. These messages of the Israelites prophets, urgent, direct, contemporary, morally informed and filled with warning, promise and judgment. There is also a universal element in the messages. They reach out to nations surrounding Israel as well.

The uniqueness of the Bible:

The entire biblical scripture both the Old Testament and the New Testament are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16 -17) hence useful for teaching, correcting and equipping God's people for God's service. It is this aspect of inspiration that makes the bible unique book as compared to any other religious book. Although it was written and collected over a period exceeding 1,000 years as mentioned earlier, by different authors the bible is still coherent, reliable and highly organized. The Bible is a transforming, living book because it has changed many lives and it continues to do so.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THIS LECTURE

1. What are the major themes that characterize each of the books of the Pentateuch?
2. Examine the creation story and relate with your community's theory of creation.
3. Outline the consequences of the fall of man in the garden of Eden.
4. Explain the call of Abraham and how this was the foundation of God's redemption grand plan for the human race.

THE PENTATEUCH

The term Pentateuch is derived from the Greek words *penta*-five and *teuchos*-scroll meaning five scrolls or volumes. The Hebrew term for these five books of the old testament is Torah which means the “law” of “teaching”, the Old Testament refers to the Pentateuch when it uses phrases like the “Book of Law of Moses” (2 Kings 15:5) or “The book of the Law” (Joshua 1:8)

The history of the Pentateuch spans from the beginning of the time down to when the Israelites were about to enter into the Promised Land. The Pentateuch is believed to have been one scroll before it was thematically sub-divided into five books by Bible compilers. The first book of Genesis describes the beginning of the universe and the origin of God’s people the Israelites. The second book, Exodus traces the salvation of God’s people who were helpless to save themselves. Leviticus calls for holiness as the only natural lifestyle for the Israelites and as the only possible response to God’s grace. Numbers on the other hand is a book depicting the wanderings in which God’s people suffers the consequences of their unbelief, but the story ends on a positive note, when Deuteronomy presents a program of renewal.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH

The authorship of the Pentateuch has traditionally been accredited to Moses who is believed to have written it in around 1450-1400 B.C. however it is worth noting that not every bible scholar shares in this belief. In 19th and 20th centuries arose biblical critics who doubted the mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; the following points qualify mosaic authorship:

1. The oldest Jewish traditions the Talmud affirm of the mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
2. The early church embraced and accepted the claim of authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses.
3. The wording of the Pentateuch qualify mosaic authorship
4. Internal evidences depict mosaic authorship – Exodus 17:14, 24:4, 34:27
5. The flowing themes of the Pentateuch advocate for mosaic authorship
6. Jesus Christ and the apostles often times quoted Moses in relation to the covenant law hence credited him as the author of the law books. Mathew 19:8, John 5:46-47, Acts 3:22, Romans 10:5
7. The Pentateuch was one manuscript which was only sub-divided by the compilers of the bible to display themes contained in the Pentateuch.
8. The critics of mosaic authorship are recent bible scholars who cannot provide tangible evidence to rule out mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
9. Many other Biblical references attribute the writing of the Pentateuch to Moses.
10. Moses had the pre-requisite qualifications to be the author because he was well educated and also grew in a culture where the art of writing was cherished.

GENESIS: (BOOK OF BEGINNING) – ELECTION OF THE HEBREW NATION

“In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth” **Genesis 1:2**

BACKGROUND

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is a foundational book to the understanding of the rest of the scriptures because it is a book of all beginnings.

THEME

God's creation and the beginning of man's sin and initial steps taken for his redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

1. The book of Genesis highlights on the foundational relationships between God and nature, God and man and man and man. It is the very book in the Old Testament, which lays the foundation of all beginnings as prescribed below.

Creation Story

Genesis describes vividly the manner in which God created the universe and all that is contained in including mankind.

- a) God created everything ex-nihilo (out of nothing), just by the word of command “let there be...” and all that he commanded to come to existence came to be.
- b) When it came to the creation of mankind God took his time to create him using his hands and some material (dust of the ground Genesis 2:7). After he had made the form of mankind, he breath the breath of life into his nostrils and the man became a living being. Humanity, unlike any other creatures has; intellect, emotions and will.
- c) God instituted the first marriage covenant in the Garden of Eden. God saw that it was not good for a man to be alone and therefore created a helper for him (Genesis 2:18, 19-24). God created Eve as Adam's equal companion only that their God given roles were distinct. She was created from one of the ribs believed to have been the one from the left side of the chest closer to the heart for her to be loved and not to trample on.
- d) Mankind was given the responsibility to be in charge of other creatures and manage the environment. Adam named all the animals and birds of the air (Gen. 2:19-20)
- e) God entered into a covenant relationship with man which has come to be known as the **Edenic covenant**. They would always abide by the covenant so long as they did not touch the fruits of the forbidden tree. This was the first covenant that God ever entered into with mankind. Other covenants recorded in Genesis were the **Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic/Sinatic, Davidic and Messianic/New covenant. The Messianic covenant was the fulfillment of all the other covenants.**

(Research on existing creation theories today).

THE FALL OF MANKIND

Genesis shows how man was created as a special and perfect creature of God, but who later gave into the deception of the devil (serpent). Genesis chapter 3 displays how Adam and Eve broke the **Edenic covenant** by yielding to the Devil's persuasive lies. This was the beginning of sin, physical death, and external penalty of sin. There were immediate consequences of sin prescribed for the serpent, the woman and the man (Genesis 3:14-19).

- a) The serpent penalty included crawling on its belly all the days of its life, there will be permanent enmity between its seed and the woman's seed. **This was a pointer to Christ's redemptive work at Calvary where Satan and the sting of sin would be crushed once and for all by the seed of the woman Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:13-15).**
- b) The woman penalty included pain in childbearing insatiable desire for her husband (probably the beginning of the concept of polygamy). It was after the fall of man when the practice of polygamy became rampant. However, when Jesus who is considered the New Adam (Romans 5:14) came he reverted the marriage institution back to the original plan in Genesis 1 and 2 as exemplified in his teaching in Mark 10:2-12.
- c) To the man Adam his penalty included sweat and painful toil in order to eat all the days of his life until he is laid to rest in the grave.

The Perpetuation of sin after the Edenic fall

The book of Genesis further displays how the fall of man ushered in untold suffering to the human race as a result of series of sinful activities which included; murder, lies, theft, rebellion against authority, jealousy, hatred, selfishness, attempts to take God's glory among many others. The killing of Abel by Cain inaugurated the era of murder that is witnessed up to today. The tower of Babel was a project whose prime agenda was to question God's power, authority and glory. The Noahic flood catastrophe was precipitated by the people's wickedness and rebellion against God. However, after the flood which had universalistic consequence, God entered into a covenant with Noah which has come to be known as **Noahic Covenant** depicting God's resolution to punish mankind with water again and the constant seal that marks this resolution is the rainbow. (Genesis 9:11-17)

God's Redemption Plan Through Abrahamic Lineage

The book of Genesis introduces God's immediate redemption plan after the fall of the first man and woman. In Genesis 3:15 the serpent is informed of unending enmity between his offspring and the offspring of the woman. The woman's seed will crush his head and he will strike his heel (this was pictorial of Jesus work on the cross).

- The election of Abraham as a channel through which God was going to carry out his redemption plan for the human race. God made a covenant with Abraham and promised him a land flowing with milk and honey and that sacrifice, and the circumcision rite marked or rather sealed the **Abrahamic covenant**. The election of Abraham as depicted in Genesis chapter 12 was the beginning of God's grand redemption plan rollout. The Hebrew nation which became the vehicle of God's redemption story was born through Abraham's household. Jacob who was Isaac's son and Abraham's grandson was privileged with twelve sons who then became twelve tribes of Israel. The three Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became the patriarchs or founders of the Hebrew community and carriers of the redemption story. The climax of the redemption story was in the person of Jesus Christ still born through the Abrahamic lineage.

EXODUS: (DELIVERANCE) – REDEMPTION OF THE HEBREW NATION

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. Read Exodus and Explore the Hebrew slavery in Egypt
2. Explain the significance of Passover in relation to the redemption story to the Hebrews and the entire human race.
3. Account for the reasons that led to a number of Hebrews denied entry into the promised land.

BACKGROUND

The book of Exodus is the second book of the Pentateuch. The meaning of Exodus is “a going out” or “going away” or “way out”, referring to the Israelites departure from Egypt to the Promised Land. God raised Moses to deliver his people from Egyptians slavery and lead them to the Promised Land. The Hebrews found themselves in Egypt when Jacob's son Joseph was sold to Egyptian caravan traders because of jealousy they had about him. God's favour was upon Joseph amidst the trials and afflictions he went through (Gen. 37-41:40)

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

Exodus lays a foundational Theology in which God reveals his name, his attributes, his redemption, his law and how he is to be worshipped.

It also reports the appointment and work of the first covenant mediator (Moses). The book also describes the beginning of the priesthood, defines the role of the prophet and relates how the ancient covenant relationship between God and his people came under a new administration (the Sinai covenant).

Exodus lays the foundation for the actualization of God's redemption story (the Passover festival) was a pointer of the new Passover through Christ's atoning blood.

a) Theme:

God's deliverance of his people and the Israelites development into great nation.

b) The Call of Moses

God raised and prepared Moses early enough to deliver and lead the Hebrew people from the Egyptians slavery to freedom in the promised land of Canaan. Moses whose name means pulled out of the water was a miracle child whose life was spared from destruction of Hebrew infants by the two Egyptians midwives Shiprah and Puah. Moses was found in the River Nile and reared by Pharaoh's daughter at the palace. He was given the best education in the land in preparation to succeed Pharaoh, but God had in mind a different mission – to deliver and lead the Hebrew people from the Egyptian slavery.

Moses ran away to the median desert after he killed an Egyptian and realized that his act would anger Pharaoh. He was taken care of Jethro who later on became his father in-law. As Moses was taking care of his father in-law flock in the desert, God called him to his ministry through a burning bush. He was given the assignment to deliver the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery in spite of his reluctance. God gave him Aaron to speak on his behalf and assured him that his staff would work out miracles. On his way to Egypt Moses was almost killed by God because of his failure to circumcise his firstborn son. Circumcision was a covenantal physical badge to distinguish God's people from the heathen. Moses' life was however by his wife Zipporah when he circumcised the boy using a flint knife (Ex.4;22-26).

Moses went back to Pharaoh and the Hebrews and communicated God's message. God hardened the heart of Pharaoh in order to prove to him that he was a powerful God above any other god.

c) Five dominant themes

- i) **Deliverance:** this is the predominant theme in the book because it shows how God raised his servant Moses to go to Pharaoh to demand the release of the Hebrews to go to the Promised Land. This deliverance task however was not easy because Pharaoh could not easily release the Israelites as demanded by Moses. God through Moses sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians to soften the heart of the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. These plagues range from; frogs, gnats, flies, death of livestock, boil, hail, locust, darkness and death of first born. The last plague caused Pharaoh to allow the Israelites go, and God through Moses led the Israelites across over the red sea miraculously and drowned the Egyptian chariots that were pursuing them. The last plague was the initiation of **the Passover festival which was pictorial of what Christ would do on the cross as the sacrificial lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John1; 29) The Passover lamb was one without blemish or defects to show that atonement sacrifice needed the blood of a perfect animal in order to wash away the spiritual dirt of sin. The Hebrew passing over from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the land of promise signified the Christian Passover from eternal death to eternal life in the kingdom of God through believing in Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life for the redemption of the Human race.**

ii) **Covenant:** this was the abiding agreement between God and his people. God made the Israelites know that they were his own elected people and he was their God. They therefore needed to worship him and glorify him alone and in so doing God would protect them, provide for them and give them victory over their enemies and prosperity in all their undertakings. The covenant was crowned by the issuing of the dialogue or the ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). The stipulations of the ten commandments were as follows:

1. "You shall not have other gods before me."
2. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."
3. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."
4. "Honour your father and mother."
5. You shall not murder."
6. "You shall not commit adultery."
7. "You shall not steal."
8. "You shall not give false testimony."
9. "You shall not covet your neighbour's house"
10. "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, maidservant or his donkey."

Most of these commandments especially from the fourth to the tenth commandment have been the basic of law making in the human societies throughout generations until in the recent times when secularism has attempted by all means to push aside biblical ethics and morality in the law making. The covenant between God and his people provided the spiritual, political, social and economic roadmap to the Hebrews. Obedience to the stipulation of the covenant meant victory over their enemies, God's provision and protection. Straying from the covenant spelt doom for the Hebrew community.

iii) **The Promised Land:** this was the very land that God has promised to the patriarchs that is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, almost 800 years as recorded in Gen. 12:1 – the Israelites had to drive away the Canaanites and take possession of the land.

iv) **The presence of God:** the emphasis on the presence of God runs through the entire book of Exodus. God assured Moses of his presence which is basically interwoven with his own name "I am" (Exodus 3:14). The presence of God meant victory to the Israelites, and that is why in Exodus 33:12-17 Moses demanded to know from God if his presence was going to go with them because his presence meant assurance of victory, provision and protection. Moses literally appealed to God to manifest his presence among his people as he led them to the Promised Land (Exodus 33:14-17). The Ark of the Covenant was the hallmark of God's presence among God's people and it was jealously safeguarded.

v) **Priesthood:** The Priesthood was established by Aaron and his sons in the time of Moses, when the Hebrew religion was formally instituted in the covenant of Mount Sinai. Aaron was the first High Priest and his principal responsibility was

to conduct worship for the Hebrew community at the tabernacle and also officiate in all the sacrifices and festivals that pertained to the continuing religious life of the people. The office of the High Priest and Priesthood in general were transmitted throughout the Old Testament.

(Discussion question: How does God manifest his presence among his people today?)

LEVITICUS: (HOLINESS) – SANCTIFICATION OF THE HEBREW NATION

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. Explain why the book of Leviticus is understood to be a book of Holiness and cleanliness.
2. Identify the feasts in Leviticus and understand what each signified.
3. Authenticate the claim that the book of Leviticus lays the Biblical sacrificial system in the entirety of the Bible.

BACKGROUND

The name of the book is derived from the tribe of Levi- named after the 3rd son of Jacob and Leah. The Levites were set apart and given the responsibility of conducting worship in the tabernacle and the general maintenance of holiness among the people. Leviticus contains many of the laws given by God to direct them in their work as priests for the worship of God.

THEME:

The central theme of the book is holiness and sacrifice, which perfected this holiness. The word holy occurs over 80 times in the book. The key verse in this book is Leviticus 11:45 “Be holy because I am holy.” Spiritual holiness would always be guaranteed if they did abide by the covenant.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

1. The emphasis of the book

The entire book of Leviticus emphasizes the need to cherish holiness, cleanliness and morality in the day-to-day living. They needed to always maintain holiness and maintain access to God by substitutionary atonement. They were required to worship God according to God’s ordination and abstain from mingling the holy and the profane.

2) The sacrifices offered:

Leviticus describes how the Israelites perfected holiness through the sacrificial system. The following were some of the most common sacrifices offered to attain this aspiration.

a) Burnt offering (Lev. 1; 6:8-13, 8:18-21-16:24).

This offering compressed of burning of a bull, ram without defects or male bird (dove or young pigeon for the poor). It was wholly consumed. This was done voluntary as an act of worship. It was sort of atonement for unintentional sin in general, expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God.

b) Grain offering (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23).

This required grain fine flour oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers) salt without yeast or honey. Grain offering often times accompanied burnt offering and fellowship offering. This was a voluntary act of worship in recognition of God's goodness and provisions as well as devotion to God.

c) Fellowship offering/Peace offering (Leviticus 3; 7:11-34)

Any animal without defect from herd of cattle or flock was sacrificed. This was also a voluntary act of worship and thanksgiving to God. It was meant to maintain communion with God and with fellowmen.

d) Sin offering/atonement (Leviticus 4:1-5, 5:13, 6:24-30, 8:14-17, 16:3-22)

The following were required for this kind of sacrifice;

- i) Young bull – for the high priest and the congregation
- ii) Male goat for the leader
- iii) Female goat or lamb for a common person
- iv) A dove or pigeon for the poor
- v) Tenth of an ephah of fine flour for the very poor. Mandatory atonement for specific, unintentional sin, confession of sin, forgiveness of sin, cleansing from defilement. This sacrifice was offered to atone or cover individual or communal sin.

e) Guilt offering/cleansing (Leviticus 5:14, 6:7, 7:1-6)

This required a ram or a lamb. It was a mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution, cleansing from defilement, make restitution which included payment of a prescribed fine.

(What kind of offering is God requiring from believers today?)

3. The Genesis of the Biblical Sacrificial System

The book of Leviticus lays the foundation of the biblical sacrificial system which culminates in the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as portrayed in the New Testament. John the Baptist introducing Christ as God's sacrificial lamb said when he saw Jesus coming to be baptized "Look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The following charitable depicts the cruciality of Leviticus in laying the new foundation of the biblical history of sacrificial and priesthood systems.

THE O.T. SACRIFICIAL AND PRIESTHOOD SYSTEMS	THE N.T. SACRIFICIAL AND PRIESTHOOD SYSTEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O.T. priesthood was temporary (Heb.8:13) • Aaron was the first high priest (Heb.8:4) • Priest come from the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:5) • Used blood of animals (Lev. 16:15) • Required many sacrifices (Heb.10:1-3) • Needed perfect animals (Lev. 22:19) • Required careful approach to tabernacle (Lev. 16:2) • Looked forward to new system (Heb. 10:1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.T. priesthood is permanent • Jesus is the only high priest (Heb.4:14) • Jesus ministers in heaven (Heb. 8:1,2) • Jesus came from the tribe of Judah (Heb.7:14) • Use of the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:4-12) • Requires only one sacrifice (Heb. 9:28) • Needs perfect life (Heb. 5:9) • Encourages confident approach to the throne (Heb. 4:16) • Sets aside old system (Heb. 10:19)

Discussion question:

Does God still require animal sacrifice in this New Testament dispensation to cleanse one from sin?

1. The Highlights of the Jewish Festivals:

The book of Leviticus highlights the various Jewish festivals as described below.

- i) **Passover** – (Lev. 23:5) this festival only lasts for a day. It is a celebration of remembrance of how God spared the lives of the Israelites first borns in Egypt during the last plague and freed the Hebrews from slavery. The festival reminds the human race at large of God's deliverance.
- ii) **Unleavened bread (Lev. 23:6-8)** – this festival lasted for seven days. The Jews remembered and celebrated how God delivered them from Egyptian slavery in spite of the many challenges and hardships they went through. It was also meant to remind the Hebrews that they have to leave the old life behind and enter into a new way of living.
- iii) **First harvest (23:9-14)**. This festival lasted for only one day. The first crops of barley harvest in particular were presented to the priest. The festival was a reminder of how God had provided to the people hence a thanksgiving celebration.
- iv) **Pentecost (Harvest) – (23:15-22)** – this festival lasted for a day. This was a celebration of the end of the barley harvest and bringing of the wheat harvest, it was meant to show joy and thanksgiving over the beautiful harvest.
- v) **Trumpets (23:23-25)** the festival lasted for a day. It was conducted at the beginning of the seventh month to express joy and thanksgiving to God.
- vi) **Day of Atonement (23:26-32)** lasted for a day. This was the celebration to mark the removal of sin from the people and the nation and restores fellowship with God.
- vii) **Shelters/Tabernacles (23:33-32)** this celebration lasted for seven days. It was a celebration of God's protection and guidance in the wilderness, renewed, Israelites commitment to God and trust in his guidance and protection.

- viii) **The sabbatical year (25:2-7)** it was celebrated once after seven years to designate a 'rest' to the land for a year. The land was to be left untilled. This sabbatical year was also a year of remission of debts.
- ix) **The year of jubilee (25:8-16).** This was celebrated once in fifty years. Slaves were liberated, debtors were freed, and general restitution took place.

Note: All of the above festivals were all geared towards drawing the Hebrews closer to God in worship and service to him.

NUMBERS: (WANDERINGS) – DIRECTION OF THE HEBREW NATION

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. Highlight some of the ways the Hebrews displayed rebellion against God during the years of wandering in the desert.
2. Relate the bronze snake lifted by Moses in desert with Jesus crucifixion on the cross.

BACKGROUND

The book's name in the Hebrew Bible means wandering in the wilderness or desert. The Latin Vulgate on the other hand uses the word numbers as a title suggested by the census that are reported in the book during the second year after they left Egypt (Chapt. 1) and in the fortieth year (Chap. 26). Most of the book however tells of the experiences of the Israelites during the 40 years they were in the desert before they entered the Promised Land. In many of Israel's sufferings were direct outcome of faithlessness and disobedience. One could say that Numbers is a record of human failure set against divine faithfulness.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

1. Numbers relates the story of the Israelite's journey from Mt. Sinai to the plains of Moab on the border of Canaan. This was the 39th year of their meandering in the desert due to their disobedience to the law of the covenant of The Lord.
2. The book tells of the murmuring, complaints, and ingratitude of God's people despite the many miraculous activities God had manifested during the deliverance process from Egyptian slavery, hence this led to their subsequent judgment.
3. The very people whom God had redeemed from slavery in Egypt and with whom he had made a covenant with them engaged themselves in repeated acts of rebellion, which came to extreme expression in their refusal to undertake the conquest of Canaan. Chapters 13 – 14 are key chapters because they display the Hebrews' turning point against God, and his servant Moses. They threatened to stone Moses, Joshua and Caleb who believed that God would deliver the land of Canaan to them regardless of the military might of the inhabitants of Canaan (Numbers 14:5-10).
4. God's chosen people forfeited their part in the Promised Land. They were condemned to live out their lives in the desert, only their children would enjoy the fulfillment of the promise that had originally been theirs.

5. The book shows how God is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, nations and all creations.
6. The book also shows how God makes his presence available to his people in their varied circumstances. **God instructs, chastises and punishes his people in the immediate context of their lives. They were subjected to snake bites, hunger and thirst and denial of entry into the Promised Land because of their disobedience. However, because of God's gracious love he instructed Moses to make an artificial bronze snake and the believing Hebrews to look up to it when bitten by snakes and they would live again. This was a pointer to Jesus Christ hanging on the rugged cross during his crucifixion and whoever looks up to him and believes will live forever (John 3;14-16).**
7. The book graphically portrays Israel's identity as the lord's redeemed covenant people set apart to establish God's kingdom on earth, despite their rebellion.
8. The Hebrew disobedience and disbelief costed them dearly. **All those that knew what God had done to them all the way from Egypt and in the desert missed the chance of entering the Promised Land including Moses and Aaron.**

DEUTERONOMY (RENEWAL/REVIVAL)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. Definition of the title Deuteronomy
2. Why is the covenant a central theme in Deuteronomy?
3. Explore the aftermaths of either faithfulness or rebellion against the covenant.

The book of Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Pentateuch. Deuteronomy is derived from the two Greek words *deuteros* which means second and *nomos* which means law. Deuteronomy then means second or revived law. The book of Deuteronomy is the climax of the Pentateuch in that Moses was about to die and therefore he was giving final words to the Israelites. After the Israelites wandered in the desert of Sinai for forty years due to their persistent rebellion and disobedience against God, the book of Deuteronomy calls for revival and rededication to the covenant of the Lord in order to benefit from his blessed promise to enter into the Promised Land. The book therefore outlines the practical deliberate efforts to restore their relationship with God and abide by the covenant.

THEME:

Deuteronomy is concerned with the aspect of sanctification that is how the people are to live before God in a covenant relationship and always demonstrate loyalty towards God and his covenant. The word "covenant" occurs over 27 times in the book.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The book of Deuteronomy outlines God's directives and instructions to the Israelites pertaining to their relationship to him and his covenant stipulations. There are four major covenant references that make up the centrality of the message of Deuteronomy.

1) The God of the Covenant – God takes centre stage in the book of Deuteronomy.

There are several references made to describe the characteristics or the attributes of God as follows;

- i. He is one and only he
- ii. He is a unique God
- iii. He is just but a righteous God
- iv. He is a sovereign ruler
- v. He is a jealous God who cannot tolerate rivals
- vi. He is a gracious loving God
- vii. He is a generous God
- viii. He is father to Israel

These references were specifically meant to instill into the Israelite the reality that God was the author of the covenant and that Moses was a mere mediator.

2) The obligation of the covenant

Moses reminded that Israelites that they had to carry out the demands of the covenant to demonstrate their loyalty to its stipulations. The following are some of these obligations.

- i) They must be in a relationship with God
- ii) They must acknowledge his sovereignty
- iii) They must observe holiness and shun away evil.
- iv) They must have complete trust in God and never turn to idols.
- v) They must remember and cherish what God has done in the past and what he is capable of doing in future.
- vi) They must educate their children on the statutes of the Lord, so that they do not turn away from God.

All those demands as you can see were all mandatory because God never requests but commands because he is sovereign, and he had given the Israelites what it takes to carry out the commands.

3) Benefits of keeping the covenant

After describing who God is and his obligations of the Israelites to the covenant, Moses lays bare before the Israelites what awaited them if they decided to abide by the covenant demands or reject them. The following are the benefits that resulted from keeping the covenant:

- i) They would enjoy prosperity in the promised land
- ii) They would defeat their enemies and subdue them. They will be head and not the tail (Deut. 28:7, 13)
- iii) Their land would prosper. They will have plentiful harvests, their livestock will be healthy and productive, they will also have lots of healthy children
- iv) Each individual Israelite will prosper and enjoy good health and long life.

4) Results of breaking the covenant:

- i) There will be disaster for the nation. They will be defeated by their enemies
- ii) There will be disaster for the land – terrible droughts will occur, killing animals and crops as well.
- iii) There will be disaster for the people – dreadful epidemics will occur; families would break up e.t.c.
 - Obedience to the stipulations to the covenant meant sure entry into the promised land. For Christians to day obedience and believe in the word of God is assurance of entry into God's eternal Kingdom.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS:

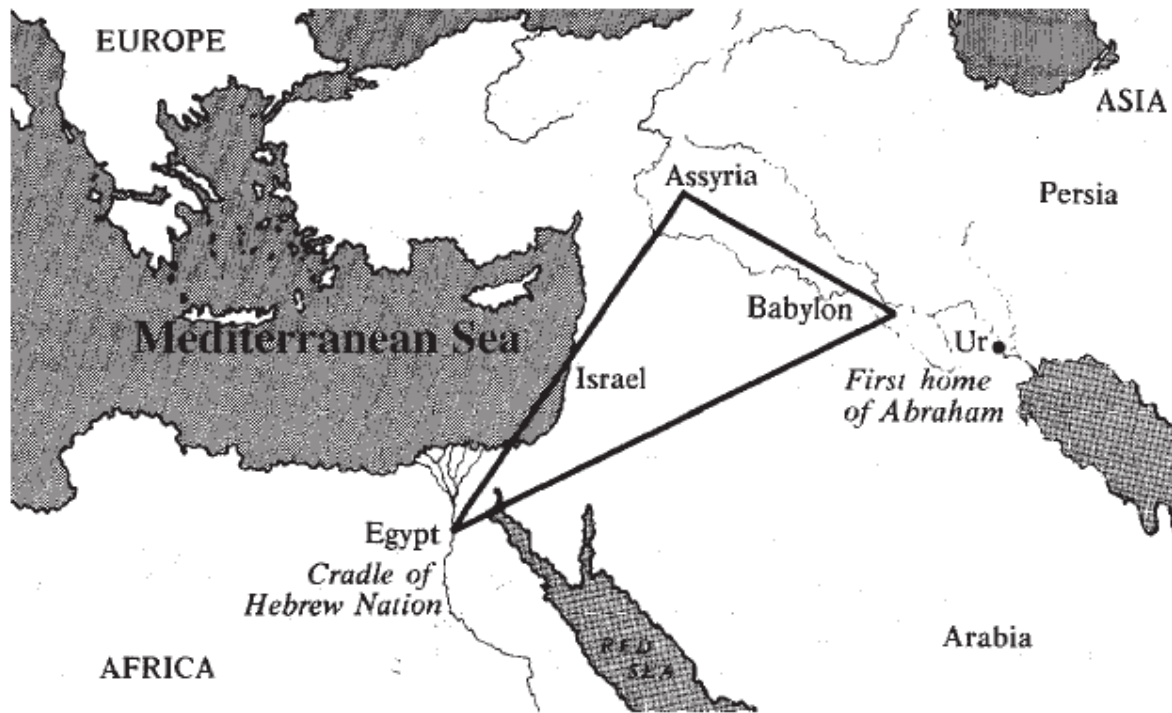
1. Describe the theme of each of the books of Pentateuch.
2. Identify the contents of each of the books of the Pentateuch in the terms of the themes, events and the practical lessons which can be deduced from these
3. Justify reasons for mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

HISTORICAL BOOKS (12 BOOKS)

The historical books cover the historicity of the Hebrew people when they conquered and entered into the land of promise to the time they were taken as captives by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (Northern Kingdom) and 586 B.C (Southern Kingdom). It was during this historical era when the Hebrew loyalty to the covenant of the law was put to the acid test due to the influences of the surrounding communities. This period witnessed the rejection of the theocratic rule and the introduction of the monarchical rule. The various kings that rose to rule the United Kingdom of Israel and later on the divided kingdom of Israel displayed both their strengths and various weaknesses that prompted God to raise his spokesmen (The prophets) to address on the socio-political, economic and religious decadence within the Hebrew community. Majority of the historical books depict the Hebrew life while in the promised land and a few others record the history of the Hebrews in captivity and after captivity.

The Map of OT World

The Map of the Old Testament World will show you the relative location of the land of Israel to the other ancient world powers who played a role in the development of the history. Israel's central location to world powers explains why the armies of the ancient world traveled through Israel. This area has been called "the land bridge of the continents "because it is near the connecting point where three great continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe) come together.



MAP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD

JOSHUA: (THE CONQUEST AND POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. Explain the role of Joshua in leading the Hebrews into the Promised Land.
2. Describe the Hebrew conquest of the land of Canaan.

BACKGROUND

Joshua is the first book of historical books. Joshua is believed to have been written by Joshua himself between 1405-1200 B.C. the name Joshua means **Yahweh saves**. Joshua was the son of Nun who worked in the service of the Lord very closely with Moses. When Moses died Yahweh picked on Joshua to lead Israelites into the Promised Land. The book of Joshua is one of the Biblical books which set a role model for mentoring and preparation of leaders who take over leadership. It is a book that stands out as one of the Old Testament books that displays the faithfulness of God in keeping his promises regardless of the period of time to be accomplished.

THEME:

The central theme of Joshua resolves around the death of Moses and the succession of Moses by Joshua as well as the detailed historical account of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to the patriarchs to give Israel the land of Canaan.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

- 1) Joshua describes the way power was transmitted from Moses to Joshua through divine arrangement Chapters 1 – 4. Before Moses died, he had already commissioned Joshua as his successor. As the name Joshua Yahweh saves, His name was prophetic of what God would accomplish through him and that was leading the Hebrews across the river Jordan to the promised land of Canaan. This signified the mission of the Messiah whose name Jesus is means he will save his people from their sin will also lead his people - The Christians from slavery of sin to eternal life in Heaven which is the eternal dwelling of God and his chosen people who believe in Jesus Christ his begotten son.
- 2) The book of Joshua outlines the possession, conquest and division of the land of Canaan among the 11 tribes of Israel leaving aside the tribe of Levi which was consecrated for the priestly ministry.
- 3) Joshua elaborates on the faithfulness of God in keeping his promises **Genesis 15:18, Joshua 1:2 – 6, 21:43 – 45**. He shows that the conquest of Canaan did not happen because of Israel's military prowess but because of the faithfulness of God.
- 4) In his leadership Joshua proved himself as a successful leader, and it is believed that his success was pegged on the following;
 - i) he was mentored and prepared by Moses
 - ii) he was anointed by God to lead the people
 - iii) he knew the people very well
 - iv) he made use of the Israelites leadership structures
 - v) he had blessings from God to carry out his assignment
 - vi) he was courageous and always depended on God
 - vii) He knew the land of Canaan after spying on it earlier on.

JUDGES: (THE APOSTATE STATE OF ISRAEL) AND HER OPPRESSION BY FOREIGNERS

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE

1. Identify the Canaanite practices that contaminated the Hebrew religious lives.
2. Explain the role of the Hebrew Judges during the era of judges.

BACKGROUND

The author of the book of judges is anonymous, although the Jewish tradition the Talmud maintains that Samuel wrote it. It was written between 1040 and 1020 B.C. the book of judges gives a practical application of the Old Testament covenantal theology pointing out on the demands of the covenant relationship with God as well as the immediate consequences of failure to abide by the covenant. God's character is vividly featured as a gracious loving God, and also retributive wrathful God.

THEME:

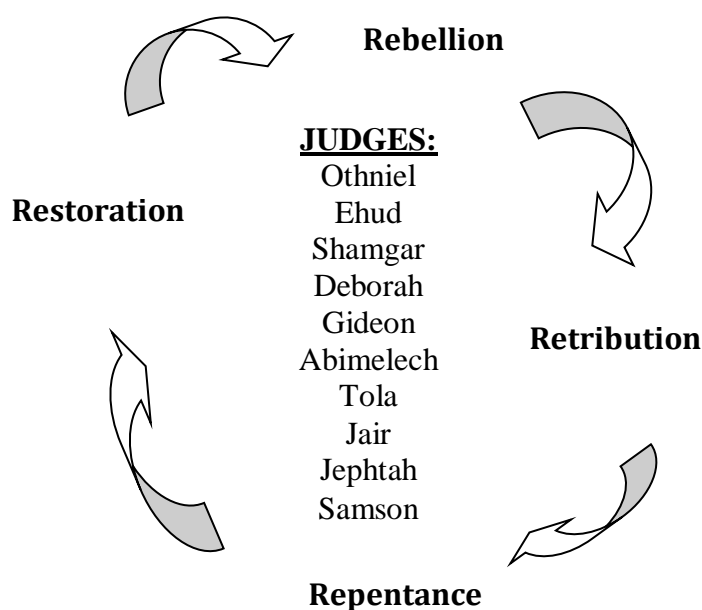
The book of judges characterizes the life of Israel in the promised land of Canaan from the death of Joshua to the rise of the monarchy. The theme revolves around rebellion, retribution, repentance and restoration.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

1. Judges depicts the life of the Israelites after the death of Joshua, from the display of the Israelite life it is evident that Joshua did not have a suitable heir to his throne and if there was any, then it seems the people rebellion overshadowed him. The book of judges gives an account of frequent apostasy provoking divine judgment. The statement "in those days Israel had no king everyone did as he saw fit" (Jud. 17:6) best describes the state of Israel during the era of judges. The common sins that characterized Israel life during this time were as follows;
2. The prevalent wickedness during the days of Judges;
 - i) Lawlessness – paid no attention to the guidance of the law.
 - ii) Human sacrifice – A Canaanite religious practice which the Israelites borrowed a leaf from. This was the highest sacrifice the Canaanite gods required.
 - iii) Immorality – Ranging from fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, and bestiality.
 - iv) Temple prostitution– A Canaanite religious ritual to please the goddess of fertility. A number of prostitutes were kept in the temple of the goddess of fertility for religious purposes.
 - v) Idolatry – Worship of many gods and goddesses.
 - vi) Intermarriages with foreign women – This enhanced idolatry because these wives brought with them their gods and goddesses and altars were erected for them.
 - vii) Rebellion against the covenant – This meant God's wrath was upon them
 - viii) Rebellion against leadership – They paid no attention to the Hebrew leadership structures.
 - ix) Rejection of theocratic rule – They agitated to be ruled by human Kings like other surrounding nations.
 - x) Syncretistic practices – They combined both the worship of Yahweh and idols.

These evils denied the Hebrews God's blessing and ushered in his divine judgment.

THE LIFE CIRCLE OF THE HEBREWS DURING THE TIME OF JUDGES



3. Judges describes how the Hebrew encounter with foreign nations influenced their Socio-political, economic and religion lives.

In spite of this frequent apostasy, the Hebrew people many a times cried to God and God responded and raised up judges for them Judges 2:16 “Then the Lord raised up Judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them”. The judges stood in the gap between God and his people. Examples of these judges were; Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. God raised these judges in intervals and every time he did so, Israel was able to conquer her oppressors and restore peace and spiritual sanity in the land. The time of Judges was characterized by extreme moral decay that did not even spare the Judges themselves as depicted in the life of Samson.

Discussion question:

What are the common sins in our contemporary society that replicate the ones of the time of Judges?

RUTH: (THE INCLUSION OF A FOREIGNER INTO THE WAGON OF REDEMPTION STORY)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE LECTURE

1. Why was Ruth's profound statement in (Ruth 1;16-17) gave her special placement in the Hebrew redemption story?
2. How was Ruth's marriage to Boaz signified God's redemption plan for the entire human race?

Background

The author of the book is unknown. However, the Jewish tradition points to Samuel but it is unlikely that he is the author because of the mention of King David (Ruth 4:17-22), this implies a later date. On this same line the literary Hebrew style used in Ruth suggests that it was written during the period of the monarchy. The book of Ruth strikingly exemplifies the truth that participation in the coming kingdom of God is decided not by the blood and birth, but by the conformity of one life to the will of God through the obedience that comes through faith. Ruth's place in the ancestry of David signifies that all nations will be represented in the kingdom of David's greater son Jesus Christ.

THEME:

The central theme of the book resolves around God's concern for his people at all times in any place.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

1. The book of Ruth highlights the story of a family, which experienced series of tragedies in spite of their strong belief in the true living God. This was the family of Elimelech from Bethlehem, married to Naomi and father to two sons: Mahlon and Kilion. They migrated to Moab leaving behind three helpless widows: Orpah, Ruth and their mother-in-law Naomi.
2. The book displays how God through his concern and gracious providence meet the needs of his people.
3. God entrenched Ruth into the wagon of redemption story because of her profound declaration **"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried"** (Ruth 1:16-17) hence proclaiming the universalistic scope of Christ's redemption story. Through Ruth came about Obed who became the grandfather of King David through whom the Messiah was born. The names of Ruth and Rahab who saved the lives of the Hebrew 12 spies from the people of Jericho (Joshua 2;1-24) are listed among the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1;5-6) to depict the inclusivity of Christ's redemption story.
4. God ordained intercultural marriage relationship through marriage between Boaz (kinsman's – redeemer) and Ruth the Moabitees.

5. From the story of Ruth God demonstrates that he is a raceless and classless God, by picking a foreign woman from a lowly background and engrafted into the messianic royal circle.

Discussion question

Why do you think God permitted intercultural marriage between Ruth and Boaz and yet he had earlier forbidden such a union in the law?

I & II SAMUEL: (THE REJECTION OF THEOCRATIC RULE AND THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE LECTURE.

1. What were the reasons that prompted the Hebrews to demand for a human king?
2. Account for the strengths and the weaknesses of the four major characters in 1st and 2nd Samuel.

Background

The book of Samuel was written by Samuel himself, but also includes the writing of Prophet Nathan and Gad. It was written probably around 930 BC. Originally, I & II Samuel was one book. The first volume narrates the lives and activities of mainly Samuel, Saul and David, while the second volume pays attention to the story of mainly king David. The book of Samuel lays the foundation for Israel monarchical system which finds fulfillment in the kinship of Jesus Christ who is “the king of kings and Lord of Lord’s” the book also shows Israel’s rejection of the theocratic rule and introduction of monarchical system of government. The book of Samuel outlines the transition from theocratic rule (Judges) to kingship.

THEME:

The central theme of the book centers on the choice of Samuel as Israel’s last judge and first prophet, the reigns of king Saul and king David.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The book of Samuel is a book of great beginnings but also a book of tragic endings as exemplified in the lives of the following people.

1. **Eli**- he was a high priest during the time of judges, but he allowed his sons **Hophni** and **Phinehas** to sin against the Lord and this led to tragedy in his family. They corrupted the sacrificial system and took what was meant for God.
2. **Samuel** – his mother dedicated him to the Lord, and he became the last Judge and the first Israel greatest prophet. Unfortunately, his sons **Joel** and **Abijah** turned away from God taking bribes and perverting justice. They became corrupt taking bribes and pursuing after all sorts of dishonest gains, the people therefore rejected the leadership of priests and judges and clamored for a king like other nations (1 Sam. 8:4 – 5). In spite of Samuel’s warnings to them of what the King they were asking for would do to them and their

children they prevailed upon Samuel to anoint a King for them. God instructed Samuel to grant them their demand.” Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being King over them (1 Samuel 8:7).

3. **Saul** – he started well as a handsome and humble man who was God’s choice as Israel’s first king. However, he rebelled against God’s ways. God had assigned him to attack the Amalekites and destroy them completely, taking no survivors and no plunder. However, Saul kept the Amalekite king Agag alive as a trophy and his soldiers and also Amalekite livestock as plunder (1 Samuel 15;7-9). He once became impatient and offered sacrifices to God at Gilgal instead of waiting for the prophet Samuel to do it. He assumed priestly duties by offering sacrifices. He became a jealous king leading to his downfall. This jealousy was evidenced when the young David killed Goliath the Philistine giant and the women of Israel came out from all over the towns singing songs of praises of Saul but mainly David (1 Samuel 18;6-9). Saul tried twice to kill David, but David dodged him. He also disobeyed the covenant but consulting a medium against the will of God. He wanted to communicate with the spirit of Samuel who had died thus breaking the Mosaic Law that forbids divination (1 Samuel 28; 11-20). God was displeased with Saul hence rejected him and anointed David to take over from him.
4. **David** – he started off well as a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), but later on gave in to sin. He murdered his army officer Uriah and took his wife Bathsheba for himself (2 Samuel 11;2-27). David, on the other hand failed as a father to discipline his sons. Amnon one of his sons committed the sin of rape and incest and he was murdered by one of his brothers Absalom (2 Samuel 13). However, David’s strength unlike many is that he readily repented of his sins. David’s repentance earned him honour from God. **God entered into a covenant relationship with him which has come to be known as the Davidic covenant. Moreover, God established a royal dynasty within his lineage which was to climax in the Messiah Jesus Christ. David had intentions to build a temple for God, but God instructed him that his succeeding son (Solomon) would do it.**

Discussion question:

What lessons can modern day Spiritual and Political leaders learn from the lives of the above characters?

I & II KINGS: (ISRAEL UNDER MONARCHIAL RULE AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR LECTURE.

1. Explore the leadership principles that characterized king Solomon's reign.
2. Why was the Fourth king of Israel the genesis of the Hebrew socio- political religious and economic problems from his reign onwards?
3. Explain reasons that necessitated God to raise prophets during the reign of the kings of Israel and Judah.

BACKGROUND

The ancient Jewish traditions identify Jeremiah as the author of the two books. Initially the two were one manuscript and was written around 550 BC. These books were so named because they record and interpret the reigns of all the kings of Israel and Judah except Saul. The book of kings demonstrates how the human kings displayed their strengths and weaknesses in their relationship. God had to raise prophets to prophecy of God's will and intentions upon his people. The book also highlights on the division of the kingdom of Israel leading to the consequences which followed later.

THEME

Narration of the lives of those who live for God and those who refuse to do so through the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, also to demonstrate the fate that awaits all who refuse to make God their true leader.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The content of the Kings revolves around the rule of kings, righteous or wicked and God's appointment of prophets to address on the socio-political, economic and religious evils.

I: THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

Solomon was the son of David with Bathsheba who succeeded his father. David blessed Solomon to take over leadership from him. **Solomon prayed to God for wisdom as he took over leadership from his father and God granted it to him alongside wealth and splendor (1 Kings 3:1-14). The wisdom that God endowed Solomon was exemplified in his ruling over two prostitutes who contested over the ownership of a child (1 Kings 3:16-28).**

Solomon's Kingdom was characterized by majesty wealth and splendor to the extent that it attracted neighboring nations as sort of a tourism destination as evidenced in the visit by the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13). The Kingdom of Israel was very much blessed under Solomon's reign. He was able to build the Temple of God in the City of Jerusalem. However, power and wealth puffed up Solomon hence oppressed and overtaxed his people beyond their capabilities. By the end of his reign the Hebrews longed for relief from Solomon's oppressive regime. Solomon in spite of his unmatched

wisdom drifted from the Lord because of his pagan wives who wrongly influenced him and turned his heart away from the worship of God in the temple.

II: THE REIGN OF REHOBAM

From the reign of Saul to Solomon Israel was a united kingdom. After the third king of Israel – Solomon died his son Rehoboam took over the leadership of the United Kingdom of Israel. He failed to listen to the elder's advice and embraced the advice of his peers. The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom in response to this appointed Jeroboam their king and delivered themselves from the house of David. The kingdom was therefore divided into two kingdoms. This act by Rehoboam brought about many social, political and religious problems to the two kingdoms, e.g. idolatry, over taxation, marriage to foreign women, alliances with foreign nations, disunity among the Hebrews people, civil wars among the Jews, rebellion against leadership, breaking of the covenant, among others.

- the book assumes that the disasters of 722BC (Israel) and 586 BC (Judah) respectively were due to the nation's failure to maintain the covenant that God established at Mt. Sinai.
- The reign of Rehoboam crippled God's divine purpose through the Davidic dynasty for some time.

SUMMARY OF THE KINGS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL AND JUDAH TIMELINE

KINGS OF UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL			
DATE (B.C)	KING	YEARS	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
1050-1010	Saul	40	No heart for God
1010-970	David	40	Full heart for God
970-930	Solomon	40	Half heart for God

KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM			
KINGS OF JUDAH-SOUTHERN KINGDOM			
DATE (B.C)	KING	YEARS/MONTHS REIGNED	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
930-913	Rehoboam	17	Mostly evil
913-910	Abijah	3	Mostly evil
910-869	Asa	41	Godly
872-848	Jehoshaphat	25	Godly
841	Ahaziah	1	Evil
841-835	Athaliah (Queen)	7	Devilish
835-796	Joash	40	Mostly Godly
796-767	Amaziah	29	Mostly Godly
792-740	Azariah (Uzziah) (overlap with Amaziah)	52	Godly

750-732	Jotham	16	Godly
735-715	Ahaz (overlap with Jotham)	16	Wicked
715-686	Hezekiah	29	Very Godly
696-642	Manasseh	55	Wicked
642-640	Amon	2	Wicked
640-609	Josiah	31	Godly
609	Jehoahaz	3 months	Evil
609-598	Jehoiakim	11	Wicked
598-597	Jehoiachin	3 months	Evil
597	Jerusalem fell to Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar during Jehoiachin's rule. Jehoiachin himself was one of those captured and taken to Babylon alongside other Hebrews.	3 months	Evil
597-586	Zedekiah	3 months	Evil
586	Jerusalem city and its temple were both destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were taken as exiles.	3 months	Evil
THE KINGS OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (ISRAEL)			
DATE (B.C)	KING	YEARS/MONTHS REIGNED	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
930-909	Jeroboam	22	Evil
909-908	Nadab	2	Evil
908-886	Baasha	24	Evil
886-885	Elah	24	Evil
885	Zimri	7 days	Evil
885-874	Omri	12	Wicked
874-853	Ahab	22	Terribly wicked
853-852	Ahazariah	2	Evil
852-841	Joram	12	Mostly evil
841-814	Jehu	28	Mostly evil
814-798	Jehoahaz	17	Evil
798-782	Jehoash	16	Evil
793-753	Jeroboam II	41	Evil
753	Zachariah	6 months	Evil
752	Shallum	1 month	Evil
752-742	Menaham	10	Evil
752-732	Pekah	20	Evil
742-740	Pekahiah	2	Evil
732-723	Hoshea	9	Evil

722	Samaria under the leadership of Hoshea fell into the hands of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V. The Ten Tribes of Israel or the Northern Kingdom were taken to Assyria as exiles.		
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THE RAISING OF PROPHETS:

The book of kings highlights on the prophetic ministry. The prophets prophesied of God's impending judgments and this came to pass and so did other prophetic pronouncements. Most of the writing and oral prophets were raised during the pre-exilic era that is before The Hebrews of both The Northern Kingdom (Israel) and The Southern Kingdom (Judah) were taken to Assyrian exile in 722BC ,and those of the Southern kingdom were taken to Babylonian exile in 586BC. Other prophets were later raised during the exilic and post-exilic periods. The prophets generally addressed the socio-political, economic and religious evils.

I & II CHRONICLES (CRUCIALITY OF HISTORICAL FOUNDATION)

STUDY GUIDE QUESTION IN PREPARATION FOR LECTURE.

Explain how the book of 1st and 2nd Chronicles was useful to the Hebrew remnants from Babylonian captivity.

The author of chronicles is not very much known. The Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship of the book to Ezra while recent scholarship terms it as anonymous. It was written around 500 BC. It was done as one long manuscript before compilation. The book of chronicles shows how historical references could be used to revive lost hope and inspire people to move on by reviving their relationship with God and claim his promise. The book of Chronicles begins with the outline of the Hebrew history from Adam through the death of King Saul. The rest of the book is about the reign of King David. This book was written with the sole purpose to remind the Hebrew remnants that they came from Davidic lineage and that they were God's chosen people.

THEME

The predominant theme of chronicles is the historical importance of King David and Solomon as God's chosen covenant kings whose story revives hope and encouragement to the Jewish remnants.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

There are five important teachings contained in the book of chronicles whose focus is to impress upon the Jewish remnants the importance of David and Solomon the kings of Israel as well as the importance of the covenant and the God of the covenant. These teachings are as follows:

- 1) **The importance of monotheism;** This was a trademark of God's chosen people. They were required to worship God and him alone.
- 2) **The centrality of election of The Hebrew nation;** Abraham was selected by God and through his descendants God channeled his salvation story which was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.
- 3) **The cruciality of the mosaic covenant;** This is the very covenant that bound the Hebrews in a covenant relationship with God and provided guidance to the Hebrew community regarding God's expectation of them as his covenant people.
- 4) **The retributive nature of God;** God punishes wrongdoing but still loves the sinner or wrong doer and calls them to repentance. The Chronicler wanted the Hebrew remnants to understand that God punished their parents and grandparents not because he hated them, but because they rebelled against the covenant stipulations.
- 5) **The messianic promise:** The messianic promise was made right from the time of Abraham's election and perpetuated through the Abrahamic lineage until it is climaxed in the person of Jesus Christ. This was an assurance to the Hebrew exiles that God still was going to fulfill his promise that through the household of Judah, the Messiah was going to come who will bring salvation to the entire human race.

EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR LECTURES

1. Describe the role of Ezra the priest in the observance of the law and in the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
2. Identify Governor Nehemiah's leadership qualities that gave him success in the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls.
3. What distinguished Queen Esther as a humble and brave woman who saved her people from destruction?

EZRA: (THE CRUCIALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE CENTRALITY OF THE TEMPLE)

BACKGROUND:

The name Ezra means 'Yahweh helps,' it was written by Ezra the Priest after the Babylonian captivity in 440 BC. The book Ezra demonstrates the seriousness of God's word in a believer's life and ministry.

MESSAGE SUMMARY/THEME:

1. The book of Ezra was written to show how the Israelite remnants returned from Babylonian captivity under the leadership of Ezra, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel the governor.
2. The aim of Ezra in his writing was to rekindle the people's interest in the word of God bringing them to a place of repentance confession of sin, and restitution so that the worship of God could be restored. Ezra 7:10 depicts Ezra's seriousness in the study of God's word "for Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel."
3. Ezra just like Nehemiah stressed on the restoration of Jerusalem temple and enhances Israel's relationship with God.
4. Ezra showed the importance of the temple and its worship to the life of the nation as God's chosen people hence he motivated the people to rebuild the temple.

NEHEMIAH: (RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WALLS OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM)

BACKGROUND

The book was written by Nehemiah in around 430 BC. Nehemiah means Yahweh has comforted. Nehemiah led the third group of the Jewish remnants into the land of Judah. The book of Nehemiah impresses upon the believer the importance of prayer and dedication to God's service in spite of hardships. He describes how God is always faithful to his promises.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

1. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to king Artaxerxes and a man of great faith and prayerful. He gave up his position as a cup bearer to become a governor in Jerusalem leading the people in the reconstruction of the walls of the city of Jerusalem. God caused the pagan king to support Nehemiah in his Jerusalem mission.
2. He led the Jewish remnants in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem despite frequent opposition from the enemies of the Jews namely, Tobiah, Sanballat and Geshem.
3. The book also highlights on the cruciality of patriotism. Nehemiah instilled in the Jewish people the importance of patriotism to their God and their promised land.
4. Nehemiah practically demonstrated dedication to God's service and led the remnants in serving the Lord with commitment and dedication, amidst the challenges they faced during the reconstruction of the broken walls.
5. Nehemiah emphasized on the importance of perseverance in God's ministry even when faced with hostility and frustration.

ESTHER: (GOD'S PROTECTION OF HIS PEOPLE)

BACKGROUND

The book's author is anonymous. It was written in around 331 BC. It is believed to have been written at least by a Jew or a person who knew the Jewish people very well. Esther means star. She was reared by her uncle Mordecai who was an official in the king's palace. King Xerxes chose Esther to be the new queen of Persia after he had divorced his wife.

MESSAGE SUMMARY/THEME

1. The book of Esther reveals a woman of very commendable character; among her traits are genuine piety, faith, courage, patriotism, compassion and maturity.
2. The book also describes God's providence to his people and his protection even at the verge of death. God used Esther to save her people from extinction, which was hatched by one of the senior palace officials – Herman. Through the challenge of her uncle Mordecai Esther 4:14 "For if you remain silent at this time relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have attained royalty for such a time as this?" Esther rose to the occasion and saved her people from the jaws of death.
3. The book demonstrates the ownership that God has for his chosen people. He accords them special placement in his divine plan and programme.

STUDY GUIDELINE:

1. Study carefully each of the Historical books and be able to capture the background information and their message contents as well as their predominant themes.
2. Be sure to be able to make applications of the messages conveyed in the historical books to the contemporary socio-political economic and religious challenges.

POETIC BOOKS

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR LECTURES ON THE POETIC BOOKS OF JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES AND SONGS OF SONGS.

1. Explain why the suffering of Job was allowed by God despite his righteousness.
2. Highlight the five clusters of psalms and how they enhance one's relationship with God.
3. Examine the principle lessons in Proverbs and see if these principles relate with what people do in a day even in our contemporary society.
4. Explore the contents of Ecclesiastes and find out what was the driving factor in Solomon's writing of this book.
5. From the Solomon's love poem with his pride, what is your understanding of God's idea of the marriage institution

JOB: (BLESSINGS THROUGH SUFFERING)

BACKGROUND

The author of Job is anonymous, and the date of writing is uncertain. The name Job in Hebrew means the hated one or one who repents. Both descriptions best describe the personality and the life of Job. The book of Job gives a deeper meaning to the concept of theodicy (study of suffering) and retribution.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

1. The book of Job has been written to show that afflictions cannot even skip a righteous and upright character. However, a righteous man or woman would always hold steadfastly to the fear of God and personal integrity. God may even permit suffering as a means of purifying and strengthening the soul in godliness. God's thoughts and ways are moved by considerations too vast for a mortal mind to comprehend.
2. Job's suffering is God's deliberate attempt to display his sovereignty amidst the apparent mysterious of life. The concept of theodicy is so evident in the book of Job. Job's suffering often times leave the reader with the following questions.
 - i) How can a good loving God allow the suffering of his innocent people?
 - ii) How can a good loving God allow the devil to cause affliction and yet he is able to stop him.

3. The aspect of retribution is put to question by Job's three friends namely, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and even his own wife. However, Job did not go through affliction because he sinned against God, but because God wanted to demonstrate his faithfulness to his suffering servant.

PSALMS: (PRAISE THROUGH PRAYER)

BACKGROUND

The book of psalms was composed by a number of inspired writers over along period of time. The book is often associated with David the sweet singer/psalmist of Israel because he wrote most of the psalms. The following is the distribution of the authors of the various psalms;

- i) David – 73 psalms – Songs of worship, petition, praise
- ii) Asaph – 12 Psalms – Hymns of petition
- iii) Sons of Korah – 10 psalms
- iv) Solomon – 2 psalms
- v) Ethan – 1 psalm
- vi) Heman – 1 Psalm
- vii) Moses – 1 psalm
- viii) Anonymous – 50 psalms – praise and worship

The book of prayer and praise. It speaks to God in prayer and speaks of God in praise also in professions of faith and trust. Psalms also portrays God sovereign Lord and king over the entire one to whom all things are subject.

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

The book of Psalms can be broken down to four sets with different subjects:

1. Psalms of praise and thanksgiving

- i) Praise God for who he is
- ii) Praise God for what he has done
- iii) Praise God for what he is capable of doing

2. Psalms in times of trouble

- i) When enemies are plotting evil against God's people
- ii) Times of trouble due to sin hence cry to God for forgiveness
- iii) Times of trouble, which are occasioned by God himself to show God's enemies that he has power to fight and rescue his people.

3. Psalms about good living

- i) Live according to the statutes of the Lord
- ii) Live a life of integrity and in the fear of the Lord.
- iii) Avoid what is evil to avert the wrath of God and usher in his blessings.

4. Psalms depicting trust in God for:

- iv) His love and protection
- v) Provision
- vi) Salvation e.t.c.

PROVERBS: (WISDOM IN PRACTICAL LIFE)

BACKGROUND

Internal evidence links Solomon with the author's hip of proverbs (1:1, 10:1, 25:1). Biblical tradition also credits Solomon with writing of the book. It is believed to have been written in 950 BC. The book of proverbs is a practical book that is geared toward character formation and transformation. It emphasizes the acquisition of wisdom ad knowledge in order to avoid the pitfalls of folly and succeed in life. It bases wisdom solidly on the fear of the Lord (1:7). The word "Wisdom" occurs more than 110 times

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

The book of proverbs is a collection of teachings whose purpose is to teach people how to attain wisdom, discipline and prudent life and how to do what is right, just and fair. In summary the book inculcates into the believers the importance of applying divine wisdom to daily life and to provide moral instruction. This is clearly demonstrated in the verse 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." The following are some of principle teachings from the book of proverbs; that should be exemplified in day to day life to demonstrate the degree or level of wisdom in an individual.

- 1) **Wisdom and folly (1:7-20, 3:-13-15, 8:1-3)** – proverbs is specifically written to stress on the importance of wisdom as opposed to foolishness on ones day to day undertaking in all spheres of human endeavour e.g. wealth, justice, family, social life, leadership among others. The book bases wisdom solidly on the word of God. Wisdom shapes one's character values which grant them favours with God and fellowmen. Wisdom ushers in God's blessings and prosperity.
- 2) **Work and sluggishness (6:6-11)** – proverbs strongly encourage diligence and hard work and condemns the sluggard for laziness (6:6). He is viewed to be a disgrace (10:5). The sluggard is not a friend to God, himself and the community at large. Laziness is a recipe to evil.
- 3) **Use of the tongue (8:6-11, 10:19, 12: 18)** –the wise use of the tongue is emphasized. Gossip is viewed as a source of great trouble (11:13, 18:8, 26:22). Proper use of the tongue is a desired understanding because it gives praise and glory to God and therapeutic to human relations – brings peace and reconciliation.
- 4) **Friendship (17:17, 18:24, 27:6, 10)** – Proverbs cherishes genuine friendship and detests bad company, because a bad company corrupts good morals.

- 5) **Godly leadership (Prov. 14:34)** “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.”

Discussion question:

How are these principle lessons relevant in one’s character formation?

ECCLESIASTES: (A SEARCH FOR PURPOSE IN LIFE)

BACKGROUND

The Jewish tradition ascribes its authorship to Solomon who wrote it in 935 BC. Ecclesiastes come from the Greek word “*qo leth*” meaning one who gathers an “*ekklesia*”, church or assembly. The author of Ecclesiastes investigates life and tells what kind of life is worth living. It is a quest of soul who sees only vanity all around him until his eyes are opened to the hope offered by God. The book has been described as a confession of failure and pessimism when God is excluded. The book of Ecclesiastes vividly describes the vanity of life without involving God. Eccl. 1:2 “Vanity of vanities” says the Preacher. “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” Life in God has meaning and worth because God is the author and the source of joy and contentment.

MESSAGE SUMMARY / THEME

The basic theme is the futility of life apart from God. In the development of this theme, four key purposes emerge:

1. **In seeking to demonstrate that life without God has no meaning, Solomon is seeking to demolish confidence in man-based achievements and wisdom.** He shows that all of man’s goals or the “way that seems right to man must of necessity lead to dissatisfaction and emptiness.” Solomon recorded the futility and emptiness of his own experiences to make his readers desperate for God. He sought to show that their quest for happiness and pleasure cannot be fulfilled by man himself in the pursuit of his life. He himself was endowed with wisdom, power and wealth but any of these without God is like a chase after the wind.
2. **Solomon affirms the fact that much in life cannot be fully understood, which means we must live by faith, not by sight.** Life is full of unexplained enigmas, unresolved anomalies and uncorrected injustices. There is much in life that man cannot comprehend nor control, but by faith, we can rest in the sovereign wisdom and work of God. Much like the book of Job Ecclesiastes not only affirms that man is finite, but that he must learn to live with mystery. Life down here on earth “Life under the sun,” cannot provide the key to life itself for our world is fallen, bankrupt in view of this, man must have more than horizontal outlook. He must have the vertical look to God, fearing and trusting him. Enigmas and injustices must be left in his hands to resolve.

3. **Ecclesiastes presents a realistic view of life that counterbalances the optimism of Proverbs.** It shows there are expectations to the laws and promises of proverbs, at least from the standpoint of this life. Proverbs 10:6 affirms that justice is meted to the righteous and the wicked but Ecclesiastes 8:14 observes that this life is not always the case, at least not in this life. Are these contradictions? No, because Proverbs is noting the general laws of God without noting the exceptions that occur because we live in a fallen sin-ridden world. Ecclesiastes points out that while a righteous order exists, as affirmed in Proverbs, it is not always evident to man as he views life “under the sun” from his finite perspective.
4. **Solomon showed that man left to his own strategies will always find life empty,** frustrating and mysterious. Meaningful life is when a man acknowledges God and gladly accepts what he gives. The book, however, does not mean that life has no answers, that life is totally useless or meaningless. Meaning and significance can be found, the preacher explained in fearing God. In this case therefore frustrations can be replaced with contentment through fellowship with God. It is only God’s work that endures and only he can impart abiding value to the life and activities of man.

THE SONG OF SONGS/SOLOMON: (THE LOVE AND SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP)

BACKGROUND

The writing of the songs has been accredited to Solomon who might have written in it 950 BC or 930 BC. The book of Song of Songs has often times been questioned within the Christian circles because of its eroticist nature (tendency to stimulate sexual desire) and the absence of a religious sentence or the name of God in it. The book of Song of Songs is one of the rarest books that practically demonstrate the love, passion that should be evident in marriage relationship reflecting the “marriage” relationship between God and his people.

MESSAGE SUMMARY/THEME

1. The primary purpose of the Song of Songs is to extol the love between a bridegroom and a bride to affirm the sanctity of marriage life. The song displays God’s intention for the institution of marriage. He desires to see an exciting and romantic marriage relationship as opposed to a boring one.
2. It is also written to picture God’s love for his people. The intimate love God that God has for his people. The use of marriage life preparedness and life as depicted in the parable of the five wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25; 1-13 and the commands given to the wives to submit to her husbands and to the husbands to love their wives in Ephesians 5; 22-33, shows the importance that God attaches to the marriage institution.

STUDY GUIDELINES

1. Study each of the poetic books and identify the principle lessons propagated in each one of them.
2. See how these principles lessons could be applied to address issues facing the contemporary society in the version spheres of life, politically, economically, socially and religiously.

THE PROPHETIC ERA

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR LECTURES ON PROPHETIC BOOKS.

- 1.What were the messages of pre-exilic prophets?
- 2.What were the messages of exilic prophets?
- 3.What were the messages of post-exilic prophets?

Introduction:

The biblical description of a prophet is someone called by God to receive God's message and to deliver it in accordance with God's instruction. The Hebrew title for prophet is "Nabi", other titles given to a prophet in the bible includes, "man of God", "A Seer", "A servant of Jehovah", all suggesting a prophet's intimate relationship with God and his total loyalty to him. There are two types of prophets in the Bible namely:

1. Oral prophets

These are prophets who made prophecies but did not write any books. These include prophets like; Ahijah, Iddo, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Obed, Shamaiah, Azariah, Hanani, Jahaziel, Huldah, Micaiah, Nathan and Eliezer.

2. The writing prophets

These were prophets who prophesied as well as writing prophetic books. These include the major and minor prophets. They wrote a total of 17 books. These prophets prophesied during specific periods of Israel's history. The prophetic books are classified into: **Major** and **Minor** prophets. The major prophets are understood to be major because of the length of their books and the themes they convey which often times are more than the minor prophets'. However, there is no minor or major God's message.

3. The recipients of the prophetic messages:

Both the major and minor prophets directed their prophetic messages to:

- i) The Israelites (The Northern Kingdom)
- ii) The people of Judah (Southern Kingdom)

- iii) Both the Northern (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah)
- iv) A few prophesied against foreign nations.

4. The eras or periods of the prophetic ministry/message

A. THE PRE-EXILIC PERIOD

This was the period before the Israelites and the people of Judah went to Assyrian and Babylonian captivity respectively. God because of gracious love raised two prophets to prophesy during this period. These ones include Isaiah, Jeremiah (Major Prophets), Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah (Minor Prophets).

THE PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS (11 PROPHETS)				
DATE (B.C)	PROPHET	MESSAGE	RECIPIENTS	REIGN OF:
740-680	Isaiah (major prophet)	The salvation of Yahweh for his people through the redemption of the messiah. The Hebrews are required to abide by the covenant and be optimistic of Gods comfort and deliverance.	Jews in Judea (Southern Kingdom)	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
627-585	Jeremiah (major prophet)	Warning of God's impending judgment because of the rampant sins among the Hebrew people without repentance God will subject them to captivity in Babylon. God however will restore them back to himself under a new covenant.	Jews in Judea and Babylonian captivity (Southern Kingdom)	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.
586 or 585	Jeremiah (Lamentations)	Laments and mourning over what befell Judah in 586 BC. The Babylonians destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem and the temple of God. Many of the Jews were then taken to Babylon as exiles.		
755-715	Hosea	The steadfast unfailing love of God for Israel inspite of her continued rebellion against him. They have adulterated their faith and defiled themselves with	Israel (Northern Kingdom)	Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, Hezekiah.

		idolatry		
835-796	Joel	Warning against Judah for the coming judgment in the day of the Lord. he calls on Judah to repent for God to restore his relationship with them and bless them.	Judah (Southern Kingdom)	Not certain
765-750	Amos	God's impending judgment against Judah for her socio-political economic and religious evils. He also has a message of hope to the faithful remnants.	Israel (Northern Kingdom)	Uzziah, Jeroboam II
840	Obadiah	Pronounced the judgment of Edom because of her pride and rejoicing over the misfortunes that befell Jerusalem.	Judah (Southern Kingdom)	Rehoboam, Jehoram, Jehoash, Amaziah
850-780	Jonah	God's impending judgment over Nineveh and God's willingness to forgive them if they repent of their wickedness.	Ninevites (Assyrians)	Jeroboam II of Israel ministered after the time of Elisha before Amos and Hosea.
740-690	Micah	Shows how the people failed to abide by the stipulation of the covenant. Obedience meant blessing and disobedience would lead to curses which will lead them being cast from the promised land.	Mainly to Judah and partly to the Northern Kingdom	Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah
630-612	Nahum	The prediction of the fall of Nineveh as God's retribution against the wicked Assyrians of Nineveh. They were proud, cruel and planning evil against God's people.	The Ninevites (Assyrians)	Josiah. He was a contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah.
606-604	Habakkuk	Conveys Habakkuk's perplexity about God's delay to punish Judah as well as his astonishment that God could use a wicked nation like Babylon to punish his people. However, he is revealed with appropriate answers to his perplexing questions.		Josiah

625	Zephania	Zephaniah speaks to the people of Judah whose moral and spiritual life had been dulled by the evil influence of the reigns of Manasseh and Amon. He warns them of God's impending judgment on the day of the Lord due to their disobedience.		Josiah
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THE MESSAGE OF THE PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS

The pre-exilic prophets delivered messages touching on various socio-political, economic and religious evils committed by the Israelites, the people of Judah and even the surrounding nations. The following is a summary of their messages:

1. Judgment

A number of pre-exilic prophets warned the Hebrew people of God's impending judgment if they were not going to repent and turn away from their evils. Both the major and minor prophets were entrusted by God to deliver this message to the Hebrews. God also raised some prophets to direct their judgment messages to some of the surrounding nations. These prophets included Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Jonah, Nahum and Obadiah among others. Their prophetic messages revolved around God's wrath against them because of their general wickedness and their mistreatment of the Hebrew people.

2. Warning against Political Abuses

The prophets took cognizance of the rampant political abuses that were exemplified during the reigns of some of the ungodly kings that ruled both in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Isaiah, Amos and Micah among others prophesied against the social injustices witnessed in both Israel and Judah. The less fortunate in the society like the widows, orphans and aliens were oppressed and treated unjustly. Amos and Micah on this same vein addressed both Israel and Judah warning them of God's impending judgment due to their oppression of the poor, corruption of the judicial system, extravagance of the ruling class and the exploitation of the Business Community who went to the extent of using deceptive scales in their business.

(How are political leaders abusing their powers nowadays?)

3. Moral Decadence

The pre-exilic prophets spoke strongly against moral decadence among the Hebrews. This behavior did not only have a bearing in social disorder but also spiritually. The widespread immorality which ranged from fornication, adultery,

incest, bestiality and homosexuality were enhanced due to the Hebrew indiscriminative mingling with the pagan nations. Prophet Jeremiah and Hosea warned the Hebrews against their high level of immorality which signified their drastic fall from the stipulation of the covenant. Hosea in particular conveys how God detested the Israelites spiritual prostitution. Amos highlights how immorality was so rampant among the Hebrews to the extent that a son and his father could even share the same woman (incest).

(How is our present-day society characterized by moral decay?)

4. Rebellion against the Covenant.

Many of the pre-exilic prophets prophesied against the Hebrews deliberate rebellion the stipulations of the covenant and asked them to repent and abide by it. Isaiah on the other hand appealed to the Hebrews of both the Northern and Southern kingdom to restore their relationship with God and abide by the covenant of the law, which if they don't, they will face the wrath of God.

5. Warning against False Prophets

During the pre-exilic era when wickedness was so rampant among the Hebrew people, they were convinced that God's wrath was about to be revealed and dreaded. However, this dread was wished away by emerging false prophets who gave soothing messages to the people assuring them of prosperity and abundant blessings to come and not touching on the people's sins. God raised prophets like Jeremiah to condemn these prophets and warn the people against relying on their deceptive messages lest they face God's judgment.

6. The day of the Lord

Some of the pre-exilic prophets were given messages of judgment which did not only focus on imminent judgment but also futuristic. Prophets like Joel and Zephaniah prophesied God's judgment and restoration which will be fully manifested during the end time or on 'the day of the Lord' (Second coming of the Messiah).

7. Idolatry

Most of the pre-exilic prophets warned the Hebrews against turning to idolatry. Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos and Micah prophesied against the Hebrews turning away from worshipping their only God as stipulated in the covenant and turned to idol gods and goddesses. These prophets warned that such practice would lead to God's wrathful judgment.

(State some idols that are being worshipped in our contemporary society).

8. Description of the suffering they will go through

Some of the prophets like Jeremiah vividly described the nature of suffering the Hebrews would undergo during the exile. This kind of prophecy earned Jeremiah the nickname “The prophet of doom.”

9. Syncreticism

This was one of the most common sins committed by the Hebrews. This is the mixture of religious beliefs. The Hebrews tried their level best to maintain their covenant relationship with God but at the same time practice pagan religious beliefs. This act was detestable to God and most of the prophets highlighted on this.

10. The Messianic Promise/Restoration

Amidst the tough prophetic messages they delivered, a good number of the pre-exilic prophets had a message of hope and restoration. Isaiah who has been nicknamed the “Messianic” prophet is known for his comprehensive message of restoration of the Hebrew people through the messiah. He prophesied of the birth and the mission of the messiah which included; his presence with his people (Immanuel), he will heal his people from their diseases, free them from iniquity, suffer to save his people from sin, establish an eternal peaceful kingdom and bring down and destroy the power of the evil one (**Isaiah 7;14,9;6-7, 53;1-10**). Jeremiah on the other hand prophesied of the **new covenant inaugurated by the Messiah** which will be written not on stone tablets but on people’s hearts (**Jeremiah 31;31-34**).

Discussion Question:

What are some of the socio-political, economic and religious evils the pre-exilic prophets could address if they were prophesying in our contemporary society?

B. EXILIC ERA

This was the period when the people of Judah were in Babylonian captivity and the Israelites in Assyrian captivity. God raised two prophets Ezekiel and Daniel to prophesy to the Babylonian exiles.

EXILIC PROPHETS (2 PROPHETS)				
DATE (B.C)	PROPHET	MESSAGE	RECIPIENTS	REIGN OF:
592-570	Ezekiel (Major Prophets)	Ezekiel’s focus is on condemnation for Israel’s sin as well as consolation and promise of	Jews captives in Babylon	Zedekiah (King of Judah) Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)

		restoration of God's people in future.		
605-536	Daniel	God sovereign power as the one true God. Who judges and rebellious world powers. Message of promise to God's people of their God's plan to triumph over their enemies and restore them back to their homeland. They should not compromise their faith but remain steadfast and God will soon usher in messianic kingdom and subject their enemies to his rule.	Jewish captives in Babylon and gentile kings.	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (Kings of Judah) Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon)

THE MESSAGES OF THE EXILIC PROPHETS

1) Highlights of God's Condemnation of the Hebrews back at home:

The exilic prophets although ministering to the exiles were also updating them of what was happening back in their homeland. Ezekiel prophesied about the fall of Jerusalem due to the abomination practiced in God's temple of Jerusalem led by the priests and the nobles. This led to the inevitable departure of God's glory from the temple and the city resulting in destruction.

2) God's Sovereignty, amidst the powers of evil

The exilic prophets encouraged the exiles that their God was sovereign and powerful over all the gods. Daniel particularly demonstrates how their God manifested his power and justice through him and his friends. He showed the pagan kings that he is God alone and there is no other like him. God through his miraculous acts proved to the pagans that he was the sovereign Lord maker of the heavens and the earth and that he will always protect and preserve his people from any harm.

3) Obedience to their God despite the challenge of polytheism

In spite of the unpleasant experience in captivity, the Hebrew exiles were always reminded not to bow to any idol god or goddess but to worship and exalt their God.

4) Assurance of God's Judgment of his People's Enemies

Ezekiel and Daniel pointed out to the Hebrew remnants how their God would punish those that mistreated them or even mocked them.

5) Messianic Promise/Restoration

Both Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied of the restoration of the Hebrew remnants back to their cradle land. The exiles were consoled that in spite of the affliction and suffering they were undergoing under the leadership of successive unkind pagan kings; a time will come when God's Messiah will destroy the enemies of his peoples and restore them and establish his eternal rule.

Discussion Question:

How useful are the exilic prophetic messages to the Christians today?

C). POST – EXILIC ERA

God raised 3 prophets to prophesy to the Hebrew remnants after the Babylonian exile. These prophets were Zachariah, Haggai and Malachi.

POST – EXILIC PROPHETS (3 PROPHETS)				
DATE (B.C)	PROPHE T	MESSAGE	RECIPIENT S	REIGN OF:
520	Haggai	Encouraged and exhorted the Hebrew remnants to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. God would bless them if they were going to faithfully serve God with their resources, without getting weary.	The Hebrew remnants from Babylonian captivity.	Reign of Cyrus the great of Persia where Israel was part of his colonial provinces.
520-518	Zechariah	Encouraged the Hebrew remnants to complete their work in rebuilding the temple. He showed that God was at work in the world restoring Israel to their spiritual inheritance. The climax of his restoration will be realized in the coming of the Messiah.		
450 - 400BC	Malachi	Warned the priests and the people against their fading love of God		

		which culminated in them offering defective sacrifices to God. He challenged them to give their tithes and offerings faithfully to avert God's curses and usher in his abundant blessings.		
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THE MESSAGES OF THE POST – EXILIC PROPHETS

The post-exilic prophetic messages revolved around, the rebuilding of the temple, the walls of Jerusalem, generous giving to the Lord's ministry and the futuristic establishment of God's kingdom.

1. The Rebuilding of the Temple

Haggai's prophecy centered on the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. He warned the Jewish remnants of concentrating in building their own houses while the house of God laid in ruins. Haggai prophesied of God's displeasure in their attitudes towards contributing to building the house of God. He stated categorically that God will not bless them if they neglected giving to the building of the temple. Zachariah also encouraged the people to finish up the rebuilding of the temple.

2. Giving towards the Lord's Ministry

The work of rebuilding the temple and the general service of the Lord required generous giving of material possession. Malachi and Haggai both challenged the Hebrew remnants to give generously towards the ministry of the Lord. Malachi in particular prophesied against the people's fading love of God which led to them offering defective sacrifices to God. He prophesied against the people's deliberate move of withholding tithes and offering. He declared to them of God's curse over those who turned away from him and refuse to offer their sacrifices and tithes to God. He prophesied abundant blessings to those that obeyed God even their generous giving of tithes and offerings.

3. Turn to God in worship

Malachi rebuked the people for their neglect of the true worship of the Lord and called them to repentance (Malachi 1:6, 3:7)

4. The Futuristic Establishment of God's Kingdom

Prophet Zachariah is the only post-exilic prophet who highlights on the messianic promise. He prophesied of the unfolding events which will lead to the glorious age in

future, when the Messiah will come for the second time as Lord and King and establish his eternal rule.

Discussion Question:

If Malachi was serving in one of the modern-day Kenyan churches would he be happy with the way Christians are offering to God's Ministry?

THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD

This was a four hundred years of God's "silence." God had ceased to speak to the Hebrew through a prophet or anyone else. It was a time when the Hebrews yearned to hear from God, but without success. The Hebrews went to the extent of almost believing that God had forgotten about his grand redemption plan for the human race through his chosen people. However, when John the Baptist appeared 400 years later their hopes for the fulfillment of the Messianic promise was revived. They literally confused John for the prophesied Messiah (John 1:19-27) because they desperately needed a Messiah who would deliver them from the Roman political oppression.

The END.

