

KABARAK



VERSITY

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY & BIBLICAL STUDIES

## INTRODUCTION

### What is Redemption?

The term redemption refers to an act of atoning for a fault or mistake or to rescue. To redeem means to set free by payment of a price; it is a marketplace term which means to repurchase, as of something sold. Several Greek words summarize the concept of redemption in the Bible

- Agorazo*: to purchase, to go into the marketplace to buy something
- Exagorazo*: to purchase and remove from the slave market. To purchase someone out of slavery with a redemption prize
- Lutron*: to purchase and remove and set free. To deliver someone from captivity.

Read the following scriptures and note how the term redemption is used Eph.1:7; Titus 2:14; Gal.3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

In the Hebrew, the verb *Go'el* –translated “Kinsman Redeemer” - family guardian, or family champion refers to one who took upon themselves to act in defense of another member of the family who had been Wronged or Facing danger or Threat:

- Avenging shed Blood - Bringing a murderer to justice: Numbers 35:6-34 he is the avenger of blood – Family Relationship
- Redeeming Land or Slaves - Helping a family member in distress, debt, and slavery: Leviticus 25 – Powerful Intervention
- Providing an Heir - Keeping a brother's family name alive: Dt.25:5-10, Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-8 – Effective Restoration

Prerequisite of a kinsman redeemer: he must be

- A kinsman
- Free himself
- Able to pay the ransom price
- Willing to pay the price.

Jesus is our kinsman redeemer; we were all slaves to sin by nature. Jesus paid the price to free us with his own blood, the price has been full paid. Therefore, redemption means being set free from sin through the death of Christ; He paid the ransom price of sin by purchasing us out of slavery to sin and setting us free from the penalty of sin

## **Why Study the Redemption Story?**

### **Redemption story:**

1. Shows the unity of the message of the Bible. How various parts of Scripture fit into each other
2. Looks at the story from Creation to the New Creation, tracing the biblical theme of redemption throughout the Bible
3. Helps us relate the specific Bible texts/stories to the greater story of the Bible
4. Helps shed light on the true and full significance of individual stories and texts.
5. Gives the overall message of the Bible in a coherent manner
6. Explains how Jesus Christ becomes the ultimate fulfilment of God's redemptive work already began in the Old Testament.
7. Gives us a holistic view of life: it addresses the fundamental questions that face us every day hence helping us make informed decisions on the same. Such questions include: who made me? **-Origin**; who am I? **-Identity**; why am I here? **-Purpose**; what is wrong with the world? **Problem with the world**; what is the remedy or How can we fix it? **Remedy**; where am I going? **-Destiny**. Redemption story will answer these questions from a biblical perspective:

## **Why Study Redemption from a Christian Perspective?**

**Is Christianity unique?** Some people say no for they, think that “all religions are the same, deep down” or say that this is provincial, narrow-minded, and blind to deny the validity of other roads than yours. God has not limited his revelation to one geographical sector/ethnic group. Yet others contend that this claim shows a problem of tolerance and arrogance. However, these claims do not hold any water for Christianity stands out unique among other world religions. Christianity is unique in several ways:

- a. **History:** Unlike other religions, it is based upon historical acts and facts. Other religions are based on ethical and religious teachings.
- b. **Teaching on Salvation:** It teaches that salvation **is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus**. Upon salvation, the believer is supposed to practice good works as a sign of the inward reality. Salvation comes only as a gift from God—it cannot be earned through human effort and that salvation satisfies the greatest desires of the human heart.

- c. **Power to Transform Lives:** Saul of Tarsus, one of those who opposed Christianity vehemently, was changed. Upon conversion, he became a great apostle who wrote many of the epistles in the NT.

d. **Holy book, the Bible:**

- i. *It Is the greatest and most widely read book ever written containing:* unity in diversity – the Bible contains 66 books written by about 40 writers, over a span of over 1500 years in different places yet its message reads as one! Contains hundreds of controversial topics, yet there's harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. Fulfilled prophecies. Accuracy – the Bible is accurate in its prophecies, about matter of history and principles of science; archaeology and historical research have confirmed the accuracy of the Bible.
- ii. *Bears claims to its unique character.* Some 3800 times, the Bible declares, "God said," (e.g. Ex. 14:1; 20:1; Lev 4:1; Deut.4:2, Isa. 1:10; Jer.1:11 etc.)
- iii. *Has survived through time:* It was written on perishable material hence it had to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, and its message remains very intact. Additionally, the Bible has survived intense persecution. It has withstood vicious attacks from its enemies as no other book has. Many have tried to ban or burn it and outlaw it. It Was written for over a period of 1000 years by more than 40 different authors from all walks of life which included kings, peasants, philosophers, medical doctors, fishermen, poets, tax collectors, scholars, etc. In three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek from three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. YET the message of the Bible is same The Bible has been read by more people and published in many other languages than has any other book in history.
- iv. *It is inspired, authoritative, inerrant, and infallible*

e. **Founder:** Jesus Christ was unique in:

- i. *His coming:* His coming was prophesied years before he was born. The prophecies contained fine details of how his birth would happen, his lineage, his birthplace, time, career, purpose, nature of his death and resurrection, among other details over 100 years before his birth. Which another founder had this about him?
- ii. *His birth:* He was [and will be] the only one born of a virgin; he has no genetic connection with parents.
- iii. *His divine-human nature:* He was fully man and fully God; he claimed he was God.

- iv. *His sinless life*: No one in history has ever been and will ever; he himself claimed that his friends and enemies claimed that he was sinless.
- v. *His death*: This was prophesied in detail prior to his birth. His last words show that he literally “dismissed his spirit” (Jn.19:30; cf. 10:18)
- vi. *His resurrection*: He is alive forever more

**Note:** This exclusive nature of Christianity distinguishes it from other religions. On matters salvation, most world religions depend on good works to make one acceptable to God (Hinduism and Buddhism-believe that salvation is attained through human effort and reincarnation-the cycle of death and rebirth). Christianity is not based on subjective experiences and feelings, but on objective, historical facts that are subject to examination and scrutiny. It teaches us that works cannot make us right with God; God took the initiative to reach out to man in the Jesus Christ. Christ died and rose again to redeem man from the market of sin; it is through his blood that we are reconciled back to God.

### **Supplementary Readings**

1. <https://www.bethinking.org/jesus/the-uniqueness-of-jesus-christ>
2. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/redemption-bible>

## **THE PREAMBLE TO THE REDEMPTIONSTORY (GENESIS 1-11)**

The preamble to the redemption story addresses the issue of the origin of the universe. That is, where did everything come from? In answering this question, we will consider the different views of creation. This is important because creation introduces us to the history of redemption.

### **Cultural Views of Creation**

Every community has a story of the origin of the universe e.g.,

1. **The ancient Greeks**: Fiery gods battled and bore children and eventually formed the universe as we know it today
2. **The Hopi Indians**: Ancestors descended from a first man in a world far below the present one and who climbed up through four successive worlds along a reed and emerged into the world we know today
3. **Ancient Near East (ANE) nations**: Believed in a pantheon of gods in which one of the god’s rose to supremacy. Others simply explain how the gods came into being (theo-gony). These cosmogonies were in fact a validation of the leadership of one god over the other gods.

**Discussion Question:** *how does your ethnic group explain the origin of the world*

## **Scientific Theories of Creation**

### **1. The Big Bang Theory**

The universe emerged from a tremendously dense and hot state about 13.7 billion years ago from a single atom. Extrapolated into the past, these observations show that the universe has expanded from a state in which all the matter and energy in the universe was at an immense temperature and density and it continues to expand today. Physicists do not widely agree on what happened before this, although general relativity predicts a gravitational singularity

### **2. Evolution Theory**

Life on earth began by chance combination of chemicals in the sea long ago. After this, simple forms of life developed over millions of years. These life forms became more and more complex. One kind of animal changed into another over a long period of time. Eventually, animals such as gorillas and baboons appeared. From these human beings appeared. Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0u3-2CGOMQ> then answer the following questions

- 1. Discuss the main presuppositions of evolution*
- 2. How has this theory affected religious beliefs?*

## **The Biblical Account of Creation**

### **Introduction**

This section gives those basic understandings apart from which the following drama is meaningless: creation and fall of man--Genesis 1-4; destruction through the flood--Genesis 6-9; Scattering of man at Babel--Genesis 11:1-9. These events are connected by the genealogies of chapters 5, 10 and 11: 10-32.

Read Genesis 1 and 2 in detail make as many observations as possible in each of the chapters. Compare and contrast the two chapters.

### **Highlights of the Creation story**

#### **God in Creation**

The Bible begins in Genesis 1 and 2 where it precisely presents God as the author of the universe. It assumes (and never argues) the existence of the God (cf. Gen.1:1 does not tell us origin of God, because God is Self-Existent). It also ends with a description of a more glorious creation (Rev.21-22). Between these two accounts lies the story of redemption.

Genesis 1:1 relates creation to the history of Israel by presenting Yahweh (LORD God) as the Creator.

- Gen.1 presents God as the Creator and Ruler who commands things to happen (Gen.1). Genesis 1 uses the name *Elohim* for God. The name, which is in plural, is the generic name for God. Notice even with the plural name, the verb is singular, when referring to the one true God. The use of the plural express intensification rather than number.
- Gen.2 presents God as the Potter who moulds man just as one would go about moulding a pot. In Genesis 2, the name *Yahweh-Elohim* (LORD God) is used 11 times instead, to show that Yahweh, the Redeemer of Israel is the Creator. *Yahweh* is the personal and covenant name of God. Yahweh is the covenant Redeemer God, the God of promise whom Israel knew by his mighty acts and revelation. He is also the God who is concerned with establishing a world where human beings experience God's presence (12:2-3; Ex.19:6).

By saying that Yahweh is Elohim-LORD God, Moses must have been alluding that the God of Israel is everything the pagans allocated to their many gods. Yahweh of Israel alone holds all the forces of nature (sun, moon, stars, sea, vegetation, fertility, life, death, etc) together. This is because, in the myths of Israel's neighbours, fate was unavoidable. They posited many gods to explain the various forces. They had no coherent explanation of all phenomena. However, we know that "the world of creation is not controlled by fate or random happenings. The God of creation gives coherence to everything (Ps.33:6-11)".

## **The Creation**

The sequence of days shows the **orderliness** of creation rather than the **order** of creative events. The sequence is **climactic**, i.e. moving from formlessness (days 1-3) to fullness (days 4-6), from inanimate creation to animal life, then human life. Some scholars have seen parallelism with each day having a counterpart.

- The first set of 3 days depicts the formation of man's home. *Read Genesis 1:1-13 then identify the things that God created in the first three days of creation.*
- The second set of 3 days presents *the filling of the world of creation. Read Genesis 1:14-31 then identify the things that God created in the last three days of creation.*

The creation account displays:

- God's creativity- God created the world perfectly ordered.
- Beauty- All that God originally created was "good"
- Divine wisdom and sovereignty, God speaks and things that were not came into being.

## **Creation of Man**

### ***Purpose of creation:***

God did not create man without purpose. He created Man so that Man would respond to him by:

- a. *Worshipping Him:* God created man primarily so that man may respond to him in worship. Man must worship God since God is the Creator. Creation exists for the praise and glory of God. God's glory is the Goal of creation. "Man's chief end" cites the Westminster confession is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever". This does not mean we are apart from creation in

glorifying God. Indeed, we and creation all glorify God. We humans do it uniquely using our hands, hearts, voices, emotions, language, art, music, and that is Human praise.

Though we may not be able to tell how God interacts with inanimate and non-human creatures, but he does! The fact that we cannot articulate the *how* of creations praise and the *how* of God receiving it does not mean it is not there. Somehow, someway, creation praises God, without words, song, and music. When the wind blows, trees grow, rivers run, birds sing, lions roar, crickets chirp...all is to the glory of God. When creation is functioning as God made it to, it tells of his glory. Psalm 148; 150:6; 145:10, 21; 148; 104:27-28.

b. *Demonstrating stewardship towards God's creation:* God is honoured through creation and particularly when humanity becomes responsible towards creation and takes care of it. God hold us responsible for our humanity. As human beings, we have a mission (Gen.1-2) to:

- Subdue (*Kabas*) and Rule (*Radah*) – Gen. 1:28- God wanted us to exercise dominion within creation. Both words imply “imposing ones will over another” *Kabas* – (Subdue)-creativity (disciplines in the university) implies no more than agriculture but covers many aspects of human creativity and ingenuity (The fact that planes can fly is testimony to this). *Radah* - (Rule) - to rule over the creation - Gen. 1:28 implies what was not assigned to any other creature, the task of ruling over others. With this word, God is passing over to man a delegated form of God's own Kingly authority over the whole of creation (Cultural Mandate)

***What Does it look like, today, for us to “Rule” or have “Dominion” as God Intended?***

- Creating order, beauty, and cleanliness in the environment.
- Innovate and create to enhance the quality of life.
- Scientific and artistic advancement
- Ruling over the cyber world
- Community development
- Eliminating health risks and diseases
- Kings ruling over their people in justice and righteousness.
- Bringing people under the lordship of Christ
- Serve (*abad*) and Keep (*samar*) (Gen. 2:15): *Abad* – (Hard work) - means to serve with the connotation of doing hard work in the process of serving - “work it; till it; cultivate it” but the essential sense is to serve, Work is worship (*abad*) to God as well as service to God and others. The Hebrew word for work in the Old Testament also means worship or serve. God calls and equips us to do our work and to view work as: a ministry, an opportunity for spiritual growth and maturity and a means to cultivate moral and ethical behaviors. *Samar* means to “keep something safe” with protection, care, and watchfulness. - worthy of devoted attention

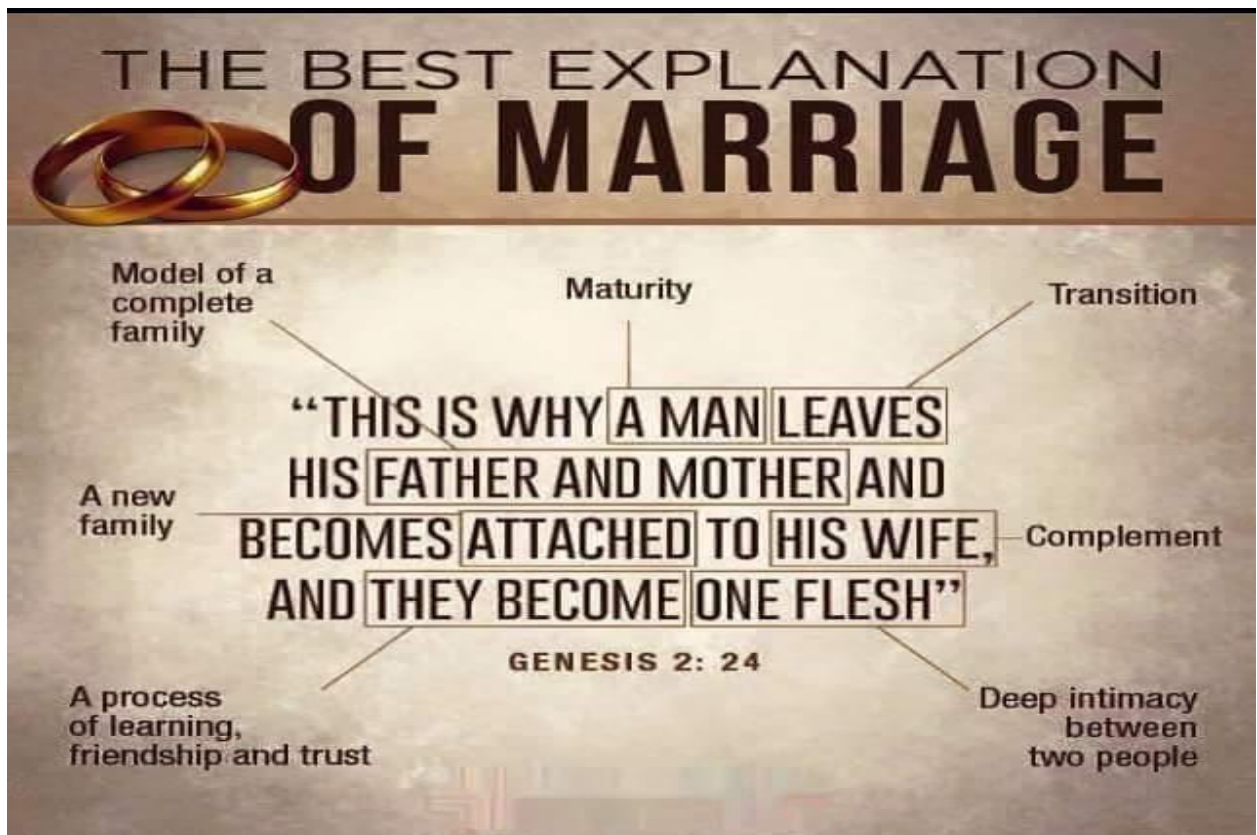
We are meant to serve the created order, doing everything in our power to ensure its best interests are attained. We are to rule over creation for its own benefit. We do not “serve” the earth in the sense of “worship it” we serve it to ensure its best interests. In

Psalms 72, we see the King mandated to defend the weak and oppressed as kings were to do in old times. That is what we should do. Proverbs 31:8-9 also shares good insights about how a king is to rule “speak up...for the weak, destitute...defend the poor and needy.” Being Kings therefore in God’s stead means to exercise biblical justice over the non-human created order. As such we should be the “voice of the voice-less and fight to defend the animals, birds, and fish.

We should take ecological action, in protection of species, their habitat and environments. ***What is the basis for our ecological involvement?***

- We believe in the creator God
  - False impression need of the cultural mandate needs to be corrected
  - There is a Biblical mandate for us to be stewards-the crisis we are facing has to do with the misuse and overuse of our resources
  - To fill the earth (just as he tells other creatures)
- c. *Upholding Relationships*: The relationships are both vertical and horizontal. God created humanity so that humanity can enjoy warm and good relationship with each other. Humanity was created in the Image of God; hence, all have value before him. Human beings must therefore seek to live in harmony with each other at all times.
- This is well reflected in the marriage institution Genesis 2:18 -25: God is the institutor of marriage, it is not man’s idea, God designed it (Gen. 2:18, 22, 24 cf. Mt.19:4-6, Eph.5:31; Heb.13:4). Man is incomplete without a woman and that is why God created a helper for man. He created EVE and not STEVE (this refutes the contemporary debate of same gender marriages). Marriage is only between two adults of the opposite sex, i.e. – Male and Female or Man and Woman = One Man One Woman for life. This union is unique, 1+1=1 Leaving (physically, financially, emotionally) & cleaving, - permanent. In this institution, man’s role is distinct from that of a woman. The husband’s role: love/lead. Wife’s role: submit/obey (Eph. 5:22 – 33).





**God’s intentions of marriage:** Companionship (Gen 2:18), Enjoyment (Gen. 26:6-11), Worship (Gen.2:24; Matt.19:4-5; Eph.5:31; Heb.13:4), Protection (1 Pet.3:7), Completeness (Gen. 2:18), Godly offspring (Gen.18:19; Mal. 2:15). Following are principles for a healthy society and home life:

1. Marriage is more than legalizing of sexual relations and the mating instinct – 1 Cor.7:2-3
2. Marriage is a binding commitment – Mal. 2:14
3. Marriage is a loving commitment –Gen. 2:23
4. Marriage is for companionship – Gen. 2:24
5. Marriage is to be a permanent union not a contract.
6. Marriage is to be monogamous
7. Marriage is to be heterosexual – Lev. 18:22 -23; 1 Cor. 6:9 -10
8. Marriage involves a new family unit – Gen. 29:14
9. Marriage implies openness and frankness - Gen. 2:25

**NOTE:** Relationship between the Ten Commandments & God’s purpose of man in creation:

- Worship: The first 4 commandments

- Stewardship: The 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> commandment
- Relationships: All the 10 commandments: Relationship between God & Man and between Man & Man.

### **Discussion questions:**

1. Why should we be involved in the environmental crisis today? Discuss this within the backdrop of the issue of deforestation, land degradation, Global toxification - dumping, over-fishing, hunting some species to extinction (Rhinos, Elephants) etc
2. How does the following affect your life and career?
3. Discuss the factors that are leading to family breakdown in the contemporary society.

## **The Fall of Man**

### **The state of man before the Fall:**

- a. He had the power not to fall. Satan, just like a suitor, only wooed/lured, and not forced, him to sin.
- b. He had lordship over the world (cf. Gen.1:28)
- c. He presumably had communion with God
- d. He was immortal
- e. He was *unique* among the creation, in **that he had dominion over the rest of creation** (Gen.1:26)-God shared His authority with man, and in the sharing, God gave man the privilege of responsibility. In His plan we have been shaped to have dominion over everything. Man was given the breath of God in them (Gen.2:7). God made man in his own image (Gen.1:27). The term ‘image of God’ means that man is like (like but not identical to) God and represents God (Gen. 1:26) as a representative. Some views have been advanced to explain the identity of the image of God in man. One of the views identifies 3 things that are evidently present in man as opposed to rest of creation. They include:
  - i. *Intelligence and will*: The ability to make decisions to enable him have dominion over the creation (Gen.1:28)- **to know him**
  - ii. *Spirit*: Man can have unhindered fellowship with God-**to worship him**
  - iii. *Emotions*: Man responds to life in various ways-**to love him**

### **The Origin of Sin**

The Bible does not explain the *origin of sin*, it however shows that God is not the source of sin. Why? The origin of sin may in some way be part of God’s plan. Its appearance on earth was not an accident that it took God by surprise (1 Pet.1:18-20). Sin has never “surprised or challenged God, neither did it overcome his omnipotence or his providential control over the universe” (Grudem, 492).

In our search for the origin of sin, we need to keep in mind that God Himself did not sin and He is not to be blamed for sin. It is we mankind who sinned and are responsible for that. God is not the source of sin for: He is holy – Isa.6:3; I Jn.1:5; Jas.1:13; He is attemptable regarding evil; He

himself tempts no one (James 1:13: and He cannot do evil (Deut.32:4). Therefore, to blame God for sin is to *deny* our *responsibility* as well as *blaspheme* His character. God never sinned.

- **Angels sinned:** Sin was present in the world angelic world before the fall of man (Isaiah 14:13-14). This rebellion against God's established order brought divine judgment. With this judgment, Lucifer, with a great number of angelic beings were judged. Lucifer's name was changed to Satan, and from his arrogance was born an unending hatred of God (Luke 10:18)
- **Man sinned:** Though the Devil tempted Adam, his fall was *voluntary* (no one forced them into the decision). In Genesis 2:17, God established a standard (God had said it was morally right for Adam and Eve NOT to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil); Satan attacked this standard in three ways: questioned the existence of the standard (Gen.3:1); cast doubt on God's motives (Gen.3:5); denied the consequences of violating the standard of right and wrong (Gen.3:4). With the questioning of God's word and motive, two opposing views now stood in contrast to one another. A choice had to be made **The following model of thinking ultimately led to the fall of man:**

- - LUST OF THE EYES: Eve saw that the fruit was good (pleasing to the eye)
  - LUST OF THE FLESH: Eve saw that the fruit was not only good but good for food (pleasure)
  - PRIDE OF LIFE: Desirable for gaining wisdom, - PRESTIGE (Power, Position, Popularity)

**Note:** Adam's fall was *voluntary* (no one forced them into the decision). The temptation centred on moral standards. Eve trusted her evaluation of what was right and what would be good for her in total disregard of God's definition of what is good and wrong (Gen.3:6). She rejected trust in God and confidence in His wisdom and, as Satan himself had before her, Eve determined to follow her own will and reject God's. Then she offered the fruit to Adam, and he too ate it.

### What was the Sin of Adam and Eve?

Some cults state that their sin was sexual immorality. This cannot be the case considering that God had made the two to be husband and wife and besides, God had blessed them to 'be fruitful' and 'fill the earth' (Gen.1:28). This sin was the sin of '**disobedience**'. You know what you need to do, but you chose to do the opposite. (Example: You know that sex before marriage and sex out of marriage is sin but you allow yourself to engage in it).

### What is Sin?

There are three primary words for "sin" in the Hebrew language. Each of them implies the existence of a standard of righteousness established by God.

- **Hata:** Means to miss the mark or to "fall short of the divine standard."
- **Pesa:** Is usually rendered as "rebellion" or "transgression," and indicates revolt against the standard.
- **Awon:** Translated as "iniquity" or "guilt," is a "twisting of the standard or deviation from it."

Therefore, “*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude or nature*” (Grudem). There are three dimensions of sin:

**Personal:** It destroys one’s inner wholeness,

**Social:** It affects and causes harm to one’s neighbour,

**Religious:** It ignores and rejects the structure established by God. Therefore, sin not only blinds us and leaves the good beyond our grasp, but sin also twists our will, moving us to desire and to choose what we know is wrong. Adam and Eve fell short of God’s requirements, they did so by obeying rationalized desire rather than obeying the command of God.

**NOTE:** Some cults contend that the Story of the fall of man is a myth or a legend and not real. However, we insist on the historical truthfulness of the narrative of the Fall. **Why?** The account of creation is tied with the rest of the historical narrative in Genesis. The NT writers see the event historically (Paul’s use of ‘one man’ in Rom.5:12-21; 1 Cor.15:21-22, 45-49; others who see the two people as historical figures – Lk.3:38; Acts 17:26; 1 Cor.11:8-9; 2 Cor.11:3; 1 Tim.2:13-14).

### **The Results of the Fall**

After Adam and Eve disobeyed, sin entered the world and it adversely affected the entire creation. The blame game started from here. The man blames the woman, and the woman blames the serpent. The blame game continues to date (boys and girls, men and women alike continue blaming others for their mistakes). From then henceforth, there arose the need for human’s salvation. Following are the effects of the fall. Notice the progression of curses. Satan the instigator is cursed first, then second, the woman, for listening to the satan, and finally the man Adam, for listening to his wife. Hi people, please be very careful **WHAT** and **WHO** you listen to **BECAUSE THAT PATTERN HAS NOT CHANGED!** Satan still lies to people, to young men and young women and tells them all kinds of lies.

- **Satan: Cursed.** He will crawl on his belly and eat dust all the days of his life.
- **Eve and women: Judgement.**
  - i. **Increased Pain in childbirth:** The command to multiply now comes with a difficulty and great pain (3:
  - ii. **Having strong desire for her husband, and will also be ruled by him** (cf. 3:16): What was Complimentary relationship becomes subordination.
- **The Ground: Cursed because of Adam**
- **Adam and man: Judgement.**
  - i. **The ground is cursed because of Adam’s sin:** Nature’s productivity was impaired. Man subdues the earth but with sweat and frustration for the earth will not respond to his touch like it did before. He was judged (3:17-19)-he will get food through sweat (Gen.5:19)-work became toil, acquiring food became more difficult.
  - ii. **Painful toil:** Because of the curse on the ground, man must struggle for his subsistence (Gen.3:17). Sin affects the whole environment of human life: earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, tsunamis, accidents, fires, etc.
- **Human race**

**i. Broken fellowships (Gen. 3:7-10):**

- **God vs man:** They were now guilty before God and sensed his displeasure.
- **Man vs God** (Gen.3:8-10): Man lost communion with God. There was separation as *they hide from God*. Fear and animosity developed between them. Man feared God's appearance/presence, which they had previously enjoyed. Shame came in where there was no shame. *They clothed themselves-dependent on themselves other than God*. Shame replaced the harmony and intimacy with God
- **Man vs man** (Gen. 3:12): Man's relationship with the woman was affected. Man tried to justify his fall by accusing the woman, whom God had created in his own image. In so doing, he was accusing God, the Giver (v.12). Other incidences: (Gen.4:8). (***Do the 'acusing finger' exercise***). Of the five fingers, one accuses the other, three point to you the accuser, and one points to God the creator.
- **Man vs creation** (Gen. 3:15): The relationship between mankind and the serpent was severed (Rom.8:20). The hitherto friendly and responsive ground becomes unresponsive henceforth and man has to really toil to make a living from it.

**ii. Distortion of the image of God**

The image of God was *distorted* but not wholly lost. Reference to the image still appears after the Fall – Genesis 9:6; Jas. 3:9. Even though man is sinful, he/she bears the image of God. For this reason, man and life must be respected let not even murdered. Whoever murders a man, attacks God himself! The distortion of the image of God in man means “We are less fully like God than we were before the entrance of sin” (Grudem, 444). The moral purity man had before has been lost; his intellect has been corrupted by falsehood, etc. The image is restored in Christ. As we grow in our Christian life, “we grow in greater likeness to God.... The goal for which God has redeemed us is that we might be ‘conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29) and thus be exactly like Christ in our moral character” (Grudem, 445). We will be like Christ when returns.

**iii. Man became by nature slave of the power of Prince of air (Eph.2:2).**

As a result of the sin, satan got what he wanted: to rule over the man. Satan now rules over all powers and faculties of man (mind, will and therefore emotions). He blinds people with ignorance (John 8:44; 2 Cor.4:4; Jer.44:17).

**iv. Death became a reality Gen. 3:8-13; cf. 2:17:**

God had warned Adam of death if he ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. With sin, death came. This death was:

***Physical:*** separation of the body and the spirit *Js.2:26;*

***Spiritual:*** separation from God (*Jn.3:36; Eph.4:18*);

***Eternal:*** final separation of sinners from God

- v. **Expulsion from Eden:** As a result of the sin, man was banished from the Garden of Eden.
- vi. **Man became an heir of God's wrath:** Because of the sin, man placed himself in harmful way. We became exposed to God's displeasure (Jn.3:36). God's wrath is infinite; not an emotion but an act of his will where he abhors sin and decrees to punish it.

### **God's Response to the Fall**

- a. **Concern:** When man sinned, God did not respond in wrath, but with wonder: "Where are you?" (Gen.3:9), "Who told you that...?" (Gen.3:11), "What is this you have done" (Gen.3:13; cf. 4:9).
- b. **God restrained the power of sin in the world in various ways:** Gen.3:15 – he put enmity between man and Satan; Gen.3:19b – he put a natural end to physical existence; Gen.3:22-24 – he expelled them from Eden lest another offence occurs
- c. **God's Promise of Redemption**  
Hope is expressed in the promise of the seed (Gen.3:15)-the *Protoevangelium* or "the first mention of the gospel.'

## **The Progress of Sin**

Dominant theme in the early chapters of Genesis is the pervasiveness of sin and guilt. It exists at all levels-both in and out of Eden, both before and after the Flood. The first revolt of man is the fall, in this section we will look at the second, third and fourth revolts.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Revolt: 1<sup>st</sup> Murder (Gen.4:1-16)**

Satan is not directly involved, jealousy, anger, and vengeance lead to murder (Heb.11:4; 1 Jn.3:12-15). The outcome of this was separation; loss of vocation-the ground will not produce and expulsion from his family 4:10-13- be a wanderer. In his justice, God cursed Cain- fugitive whereas in his love, God invited Cain to repent but he hardened himself against God's mercy. Read 4:9. Cain is given an opportunity to admit his sin & take responsibility for it. God mercifully promises to protect his life 4:14-16.

*Draw lessons for life from the second revolt.*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Revolt: The Flood (Gen.5:1-8:22)**

In 5:5, men began to die as God had planned. In each generation, there is a beginning and an end (vv. 5, 8, 11, 14), etc. Chapter 6:1-4 gives an account on the "sons of God" and "the daughters of men." As men increased in population, sin multiplied rapidly Gen.6:5 "*every inclination of the*

*thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*” Wickedness, corruption, violence, and evil thoughts Imaginations (6:5; 8:21; 9:22). The outcome of this was the flood, in his justice God, decided to wipe out the sinful generation. In his love God preserved human race through the family of Noah.

*The Noahic covenant* (Gen.9:8-17): God made the covenant with “*righteous*” (9:6) Noah (& his descendants and every living thing on earth). This was *unconditional* divine promise, God promised to protect His people and His creation from natural catastrophe. The physical *sign* for the establishment of this covenant is the *rainbow*. The ark was a symbol of God’s continuing plan for his creation. God promised to dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen.9:25-27). In all this, God is at work restoring His fellowship with man and bringing man back to himself. Unfortunately, man’s heart remained corrupt: “every inclination of his heart is evil from *childhood*” [meaning that sin affects Man from conception] (Gen.8:21 cf. Psalms.51).

In this revolt, God restrained the power of sin by reducing the lifespan of man to 120 years (Gen.6:3) and instituting justice, responsibility, and law-capital punishment to preserve the image of God (Gen.9:5-6).

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Revolt: The Tower of Babel**

This revolt was due to the plans of an evil heart (11:4) man’s heart remained corrupt just as was before the flood (8:21) meaning sin affects man from conception Psalms.51:5; Rom.3:10, 23. The people devised a plan to rebel against God: they constructed the Tower of Babel in their lust for fame and power (v.4 cf. repetition of “let us”) : the **desire** was to build it “to reach the heavens; the **goal** was to make a name for themselves, the **motivation** was not to be “scattered over the face of the earth” They were determined to interfere with God’s plan and usurp God’s authority on earth and in heaven.

The outcome of this revolt was judgment, God in his justice brought diversity of languages and scattered them across the face of the earth (Acts 17:26). In his love God promised a world-wide blessing (Gen.12:1-3). The responses are a demonstration of God’s concern for his creatures; He *grieves* as one in loss (Gen.6:6).

#### **In summary,**

- In Genesis 3-11 man became perverse and due to this,
  - The earth under a curse, humanity adds to its catalogue of evil: Jealousy, anger, murder, vengeance, violence, corruption, drunkenness, sexual disorder, arrogance.
  - Animals are eaten for food with God’s permission but hardly with the creator’s best pleasure.
  - Culture advances, as does technology. The hand that makes the harp also forges the weapon of war and destruction.
  - Male and female enjoy sexual complementarities and pleasure but with lust and domination. Every inclination of their heart is shot through with evil and as they go, they spread strife and confusion.
- Amid man’s pervasiveness,

- God showed his concern and love by restraining the power of sin in the world in various ways:
  - Gen.3:15 – he put enmity between man and Satan
  - Gen.3:19b – he put a natural end to physical existence
  - Gen.3:22-24 – he expelled from Eden lest another offence occurs
  - Gen.6:3 – he reduced lifespan to 120 years
  - Gen.9:5-6 – he instituted justice, responsibility, and law
  - Gen.11:1-9 – he scattered them and introduced languages
- God gave the promise of redemption (Gen.3:15)-the *Protoevangelium* or the first mention of the gospel; this points out how redemption shall be accomplished, Gen.3:15 holds 5 facts:
  - **I (GOD) WILL** - Redemption is *brought* by God – He is the source, originator, initiator, and procurer.
  - **WILL CRUSH YOUR HEAD** - Redemption will *destroy* the enemy - Satan – meaning evil is not a permanent scourge.
  - **HER OFFSPRING** - Redemption will *affect humanity* as a whole – refutes a narrow particularism in election and atonement.
  - **THE SEED OF THE WOMAN**-redemption will *come* through a Mediator who is organically related to humanity
  - **BRUISE HIS HEEL**- the Redeemer will *suffer* as he secures salvation – he will bruise his heel.

There will be ongoing conflict between the woman's descendants and the serpents/devils 'descendants' but the climactic battle will involve Christ's shattering the Kingdom of evil to restore creation.

## **THE TABLE OF NATIONS (GENESIS 10)**

This is a brief picture of unity and diversity of nations out of the blessing of God (vv.5, 20, 31). It contains no comment/allusion to the superiority of any region, race, or political entity. The attention it gives to Shem is to show that Israel was chosen from the nations. It shows that:

- God has created and blessed the nations
- Israel's election is by grace
- Israel's mission is not apart from, but in relation to, the nations
- God rules over the nations as well as over Israel

At no point did God abandon his creation. Choosing Israel does not mean He rejected other nations. Rather He planned to do his work of redemption through the nation of Israel. He revealed His name to them in the wilderness and the promises he had made to the patriarchs in the context of their redemption in Egypt. Hence the next block of redemption is not a matter of favouritism for:

- The nations are a great mass of humanity who though in rebellion against God, they are within God's plan of grace (Ps.47, 93, 96, 97, 99).
- The nations are God's possessions in terms of creation theology (Ex.19:5b). See Kostenberger and O'Brien.



- There is a possibility of reception into Israel, the elect nation – if they acknowledge God (Ex.12:43).
- When Israel, God's servant, fails in her service and obedience, God uses the nations to punish Israel.
- The nations witness God's mighty acts through their reactive response in Israel. On the contrary, in exile Israel is expected to be God's people among the nations (Jer.24:5-7; 29:7; Dan.2:27-30).

## **CHANNEL(S) OF GOD'S SALVATION (GENESIS 12- MALACHI)**

### **Introduction**

In the preamble to redemption story, God reached humankind: in a single cultural grouping; sovereignly without human agents; in one geographical setting. Genesis 1-11 presents man as thoroughly corrupt. God's grace shines through in his division of humanity into nations through the multiplication of languages. From this point on, God's strategy for redemption changes; he will now reach humankind: in different cultural groupings-the nations; through human agents-the household of Israel; in different geographical locations-the world

Genesis 11:27 cites the account of Terah and continues with the story of the patriarchs. Genesis 11 narrows down on the Shemites, who are the bearers of the covenant promises according to Noah's prophecies. The role of chapters 12-50 is to show that "Yahweh's gracious promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the very platform of the history of redemption" [Vangemeren, p.122]. God turns from the race to a man--Abraham--from whom there was to arise the miracle of history. Gen.12 marks the divine starting point of recovery, in this section we will look at the development of the Redemption Story during this period

- **Age of Patriarchs** (The Father of the Nation) – Abraham; Isaac; Jacob; Joseph
- **From Egypt to Canaan** (Birth and Growth of the Nation)
- **Era of Judges** (Dark Ages of the Nation)
- **United Kingdom** (Golden Age of the Nation)
- **Divided Kingdom** (Decline of the Nation)
- **Judah Alone** (The Fall of the Nation)
- **Captivity** (Subjection of the Nation to foreigners)
- **Restoration** (Return of the Nation's Remnant to its Land)

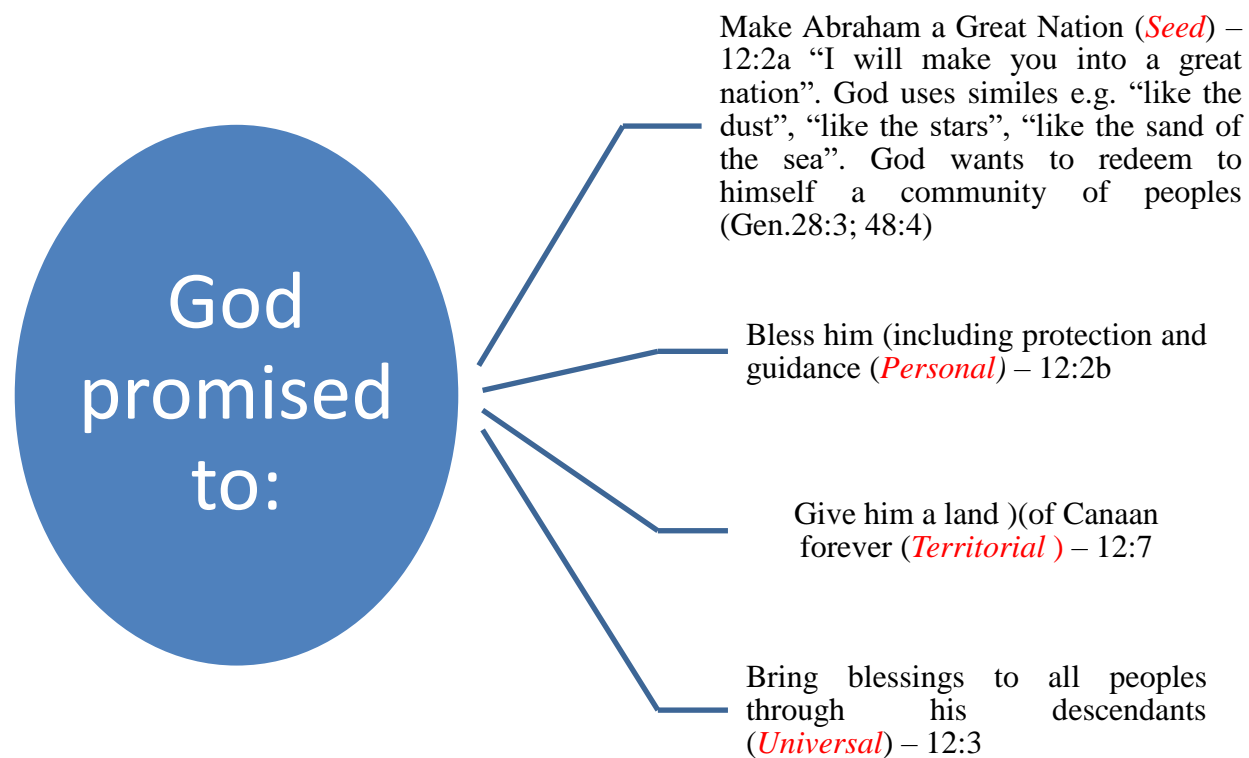
### **The Patriarchs**

God appointed individuals who were responsible in extending the redemption to mankind: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. These became the recipients of the word of promise. How did God disclose Himself?

- Epiphanies: in each of them God pointed out to them that he would bless them, rename them, or send them on a mission.
- Angel of the Lord (Gen.16:7): this was not just a mere angel for at times he received worship, respect and honour reserved for God.
- Dreams and visions: these were not confined to the patriarchs but extended even to the Gentiles e.g., Abimelech, the king of the philistines and the Egyptians.

In His revelation, God gave them a word of promise which is fourfold (Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 22:17-18; 26:3-4 and 28:13-15):

### The Call of Abraham (Gen.12:1-2)



- Offspring/seed:** through an heir the issue of the seed is revived.
- Land/Inheritance:** the borders of the land are given (15:18) and its nature-an everlasting possession (17:1-8), however, the full reality would be delayed to the “fourth generation (15:16). God enters into a covenant with Abraham as a clear indication of this promise to his seed.
- Personal blessings:** God’s word of promise came along with His word of assurance. God’s pledge (I will be with you) is important in understanding the blessing as well as the promise, Isaac (26:3, 24); Jacob (28:15, 20-21; 31:3, 5; 35:3) and Joseph (39:2-3, 21, 23). God’s presence manifested His character, power, and ability to fulfil the repeated word of promise. It was pre-eminently a word of personal relationship. Later picked up in the Great

Commission. God would protect and guide them.

- d. **Blessing to all nations/Heritage:** Abraham together with his descendants was to be touchstone of blessing to all nations for each was the mediator of life to the nations.

Blessed to be a blessing 12:2-3: this promise has two parts:

- i. Top line-a blessing to Abraham and his descendants

I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great (popularity, reputation, superiority (this is a longing expressed in 6:1-4; 11:4). Now God himself would denote to one man on his own grounds what others had so selfishly sought but failed to attain, and you will be a blessing to those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse.

**Top line**

I will bless you

- ii. Bottom line-a blessing to the nations

1. I will bless those who bless you
2. I will curse those who curse you
3. And all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.

**Bottom line**

All nations on the earth will be blessed through you.

Do you see the world-wide impact of Abraham's calling? The building of a nation is a progressive step toward the fulfillment of God's desire for Earth. All these will be granted to Abraham in order that he may be a blessing. But to whom and how was he to be a blessing? **How were the nations to receive this blessing mediated by Abraham and his descendants? The method must be the same as it was with Abraham- (15:6).**

- i. By faith: he believed in God-he trusted the Lord who had promised. This faith came from the personal God and not from Abraham.
- ii. By renouncing all human efforts: Abraham had to renounce his efforts to secure the promise and to depend on God who had spoken of the future to work on the present.
- iii. By obedience: the promise was intimately tied up with promise as a desired sequel.

Here God introduces the whole class of people who would respond variously to Abraham. Here we find one of the first great world-wide missionary texts of Scripture. At this point God's relationship with man served as a basis for blessing the peoples of the earth.

### **The call of the patriarchs shows that:**

- a. God is *particularistic* in method: He chose Abraham and called Israel to be his vehicle. Notice, in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.12:1-3), the key word is, *bless* or *blessing*. The promise of blessing is immediately followed by a purpose clause – “*so that* you may be a blessing” (v.2) and “*so that* in you all the families of the earth might be blessed” (v.3). Abraham and his descendants were to be missionaries and channels of truth, a blessing to all the nations from the very beginning. The God of election and mercy calls him out for his own redemptive purposes. God chose Abraham to choose a world (cf. 12:3c; Ex.19:4-6; II Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6).

God wants all people made in His image to be redeemed (cf. Gen. 3:15; Ezek. 18:23,32; I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9).

- b. God is also *universalistic* in his scope: this means that all families of the earth will be blessed through what he does through the agent, Israel.

## **The Election of the Nation of Israel**

### **Introduction**

Election is where God makes a special conscious choice based on his love and purpose. God's election of Israel therefore should not be a case of *favouritism* toward one to the exclusion of others (Dt.7:6-8; 28:10; Amos 3:2): remember that all the nations of the earth issue from the creative hand of God. The nations are therefore part of God's agenda-they are within his purposes; His electing of Israel was not based on any vast population, or righteousness but an expression of his grace, love and faithfulness (Deut.7:7; 9:5-6; 32:7-9); what God does in Israel is, on a small scale, what he plans for all the nations.

### **Was God biased in his choice of Israel?**

- a. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 has no comment to the Superiority of any region, Race, or Political entity.
- b. The choice of one does not mean rejection of the other.
- c. God had created and blessed the Nations
- d. God rules over the nations as well as over Israel.
- e. Israel's election is by grace – (unmerited favour).
- f. Israel's mission is not apart from, but in relation to, the nations.
- g. When Israel, God's servant, fails in her service and obedience, God uses the nations to punish Israel.
- h. He did not reject other nations but planned to do his work of redemption through the nation of Israel.

### **The Formation of the Nation**

- a. *The founding of the nation. The nation was founded on:*
  - **The Patriarchal Promises:** God forms a nation in line with his word of blessing in Gen.1:28; 35:11. From this point on, the blessings are transferred from individuals and families to a group of people. These are the people of the promise and God's promise would be reaffirmed by the whole nation. In forming the nation, God repeats the word of assurance to the people, "I will be with you." Their deliverance from Egypt is based on the covenant between God and the patriarchs Ex.2:24; 3:13, 15-16). God would lead them to the land he had promised the patriarchs (Ex.6:8; 33:1). This forms a link between the patriarchs and the people of the promise.

- **The Exodus (Deliverance):** Israel could not become a bona fide nation while planted in Egypt; politically speaking, it is impossible to have two nations in one land. The events of Exodus show how God by his grace chose the people of Israel and entered into a deeper relationship with them, as part of his broader objective to redeem the whole of his creation from the taint of sin. God was to uphold Israel so that nations would know that He is God (1 Kgs.8:59-60). He demonstrated His loyalty to the people through the plagues and the wilderness journey. The plagues had a salvific purpose for both the Israelites and the Egyptians. For the Egyptians, Yahweh had spoken and had to be feared and obeyed (Ex.8:22; 9:16, 29-30) whereas for the Israelites, He wanted them to know and to obey him (Ex.14:31; 15:11). All Israel's freedom was owed to the loyal love (hesed-Ex.15:13) Yahweh had for His people. Though others heard and trembled, Israel saw the salvation of the Lord (Ex.14:13)
- **Kinsman redeemer:** a kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who, according to various laws of the Pentateuch, had the privilege responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or in need. The Hebrew term (*go el*) for kinsman-redeemer designates one who delivers or rescues (Gen.48:16; Ex.6:6) or redeems property or person (Lev.27:9-25; 25:47-55).
  - In the case of Israel, they were being murdered, economically exploited, denied male descendants. In Israel's mind, God was their *Goel* protector, champion, liberator, avenger, and defender. It was the foundation of prayer and praise in the Psalms (19:14; 69:18; 72:14; 77:15; 78:35; 103:4; 106:10; 107:2; 119:154 also Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:6,22-24; 48:20; 52:9;62:12 and 63:9). That exactly did God do for Israel in the Exodus? Kindly read Exodus 1 carefully.
  - God alone was Israel's kinsman redeemer (6:6) who with miracles and an "outstretched arm" took them and called them "My people" (6:7). Jehovah is Israel's Redeemer, the one who promises to defend and vindicate them. He is both Father and Deliverer (Ex.20:2). Yahweh is the great Kinsman of His people. When their liberty was lost in Egypt, He rescued them from bondage. "I am the LORD . . . I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments" (Ex.6:6).
  - Notice that Redemption is political, economic, social, and spiritual
    - Political Deliverance (Ex.1:8-10): Israel was an immigrant, ethnic minority in a large imperial state. Welcomed in Joseph's time but later, government policy took a U-turn, and they were hated politically, oppressed on unfounded fears, exploited, and discriminated against.
    - Economic Deliverance (Ex.1:11-14): the sharpest pain of oppression was economic. They were exploited as slave labor, they had no rest, they worked on land that was not their own, they built cities that was not their own. Their outcry prompted God to act as kinsman redeemer.
    - Social Deliverance (Ex.1:15-22; 2:1-2): when economic exploitation failed as a strategy of population control it led to the use of Hebrew Mid-wives. Normal family life and denial of human rights becomes official government policy. God redeemed them from Egypt and in its founding documents as a nation ensured that human rights, passion for social justice and limitation of power of government were taken seriously.
    - Spiritual Deliverance (Ex.1-2): the Israelites' slavery to Pharaoh was a hindrance to the worship and service of the living God (Yahweh). The Hebrew word '*abodah*' used for service as a slave is the same word used for worship. Ex 4:22-23 can be

translated “let my son go that he may serve me OR worship me”. Massive power encounter before YHWH and pharaoh (and the gods of Egypt) -(Ex.12:12; 15:8). Exodus was a movement from slavery to covenant. Redemption was for relationship with the redeemer, to serve his interests and purposes on the earth-knowledge, Service and Worship.

#### b. *Ratification of their Election*

The covenant (Sianaitic/Mosaic Covenant) between the people and God is historically a continuation of the Abrahamic promise. God was the initiator of the covenant. Israel was to obey God’s voice and heed his covenant (Dt.5:33). The Covenant shaped Israel’s relationship with Yahweh whereby Yahweh became their patron deity-through this covenant God ratified their election.

This relationship has clear expectations on both parties and holds the promise of a glorious future.

- God, from this point vowed to be their king and revealed himself to them (*In groups note down the attributes of God in the following Scripture passages: Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9-11; Jeremiah 32:18; Jonah 4:1-3; Micah 7:18-20; Nahum 1:2-3; Psalms 86:15; 103:7-8; Nehemiah 9:17*). As their king, He reminds them of his benevolent acts toward them (cf. Ex.20:2)-he will guarantee them victory in the Land. God states the requirements (cf. Ex.20:3-17 and the other laws of the Pentateuch) of the relationship.
- The Israelites were to observe **the covenantal terms and moral obligations**: ‘You shall be my people and I shall be your God’ (Ex.3:7, 10). In response to the grace shown upon them, the people were to be obedient to the law. The goal of the law is to be holy (Lev.19:2); thus, reflecting God’s character. The Ten Commandments were the constitution to govern them: a summary of their moral duties to God and their fellow men. This shows that man has a twofold duty: to love God and to love others. These duties are both positive and negative in tone because they speak for God and against his enemies. **Apart from the 10 commandments**, the constitution also comprised of civil laws; these are based on the moral laws. **They include: the rights to persons such as slaves, parents, and pregnant women (21); the rights of property (22); personal integrity (23).**

A copy of the treaty was to be placed in the Temple and periodically was to be read publicly (cf. 31:9-13), and blessings were pronounced for those who kept the treaty and curses for those who break it (cf. 27, 28). The covenant was sealed-by a sacrifice, whose blood was sprinkled on the altar and on the people establishing a bond of relationship between God and Israel (Ex.24:6-8).

**NOTE:** **the purpose of the Law:**

- Reveal/reflect God’s character, values, and holiness, so studying the law enables us to better know God (Leviticus 19:2: “Be holy because I am holy”)
- Shape Gods people to be the agents of God’s redemptive mission to the nations. It forms the people of God into the people God wants for His use.
- Attract the nations to join Israel in the worship of Yahweh (Read: **Deuteronomy 4:6-8**).
- Make Israel distinct from the surrounding cultures. – Monotheistic faith against polytheistic.

- Point to Christ, the ultimate person who enables us to fulfil the law of God and attain God's righteousness.

### c. *The Nation's New Identity*

From this point on, God would refer to them as:

- **My Son, My Firstborn:** the seed now becomes "my son, my firstborn." God is now the father of the people (Ex.4:22-23). This title was an integral part of God's call and His deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
- **Why is Yahweh their Father?** He brought Israel into being as a nation and fostered the nation and led it (cf. Dt.32:6).
- **What was the Father's responsibility?** Show His love in tender and loyal dealings with His son.
- **What did sonship mean?** First it expressed a relationship. Son (*ben*) referred to a familial relationship: a people who made up the family of God. This sonship does not point to adoption, for Israel was a family formed, saved, and guarded by the "Father" of this family. As true members of this family the people of the promise were supposed to: imitate their Father in activity. Everything the Father is the son should aspire to be (Lev.19:2)-be holy; show respect to the wishes of the Father; and show respect and gratitude by doing what the Father commands

The title **firstborn-** (*bekor*) it meant the first child to be born (Gen.25:25) or to open the womb (Ex.13:2). In the transferred sense it denoted "first in rank", "first in prominence. It bestowed special rights and honours of inheritance and favour on its recipients. Consider the story of **Esau & Jacob**; Esau by virtue of birth was to be the heir-this position was his. Jacob by grace assumed this position hence he became God's firstborn

**NOTE:** these two terms are significant because they are used collectively just as the seed in Genesis 3:15 was a representative person for both the whole group identified with him and the ultimate or final representative person who was to come. They presented and included that one who was to come and the many who already believed him. These two terms are continued in the NT about Jesus (Mt.2:15; Rom.8:29; Col.1:15, 18; Heb.1:6; Rev.1:5)

- **My People, My Possession (Ex.3:7; 5:1; 7:14; 8:1, 20; 9:1; 10:3):**  
**My people-** shows that they were an ethnic social group with enough numerical strength and enough unity to be regarded as a corporate whole. They were so intimately linked to God.  
**My possession-segullah (Ex.19:5):** is derived from the root (*sakulu*) which means "to set aside a thing or property." It is the opposite of real property which could not be moved. God's *segullah*, then was His movable treasure. Israel's value then came from God's love and affection which He had set on her. She became His property. Israel was to be a distinct treasure set aside for a marked purpose (Dt.7:6; 14:2, 21; 26:18-19; 28:9). The whole concept here could be reduced to the phrase: "I will take you to Myself for a people" (Ex.6:7); God's jewels, could be moved around and dispersed as he pleases and function to reveal God's glory to the nations

**NOTE:** Israel's special relation to God- "**my people**" (e.g. Exod.3:7, 10), and the figure "first-born son" (Ex.4:22). Among the blessings which Israel was chosen to receive are 1.) the knowledge of God (6:7), (2.) deliverance from slavery in Egypt (3:8), (3.) the privilege of worshipping God (3:12), and (4). possession of the land of Canaan.

- **Royal Priests (Ex.19:3-6):** this means that they were kings and priests. Their responsibilities were: mediator of the nations, possession of the land as tenants and not owners-stewards of God's possessions and treatment of people (Dt.10:17-19). They were made ministers on behalf of themselves as well as the nations. This pointed to the sacred ministry of priesthood, as priests they represented their God and mediated for Him with the nations (this unfolds the third feature of the Abrahamic covenant). They were to be mediators of God's grace to the nations of the earth even as in Abraham "all nations of the earth were to be blessed."

**NOTE:** Israel declined the privilege of being a national priesthood in preference to presentation under Moses and Aaron (Ex.19:16-25; 20:18-21). This led to delay of God's original purpose until the NT times when the priesthood of all believers was again proclaimed (1 Pt.2:9; Rev.1:6; 5:10). Nevertheless, Israel's role of being the agents chosen by God to minister to the needs of the nations was not rescinded.

- **A Holy Nation (Ex.19:16):** Israel was to be a holy nation-a distinctive lifestyle; set apart wholly for God. They were separated to serve the nations. This was linked with their spiritual response; they were to be holy, separated –holiness wasn't an optional feature (Lev.20:26; 22:31-33). Therefore, they were not to enter in any rival relationships (18:2-5) Taken together, these events establish Israel's core identity as a delivered people in covenant with God.

## The Purpose of Election

Election is not primarily a *privilege* but *responsibility*. God calls Israel to the service of nations of the OT. God chose Israel so that he might reveal himself to Israel and through them to the nations (Deut.4:5-8, 35). He intended to use Israel for other nations to know him. Election here includes both "calling and sending". Therefore, they were elected to

1. To purify and use them for His purpose of reaching out to the nations
2. To hold up a Worship of one true God in polytheistic world.
3. To receive and preserve God's Revelation of Himself (Bible).
4. To be a light to the nations.
5. To be a vehicle for his unique work of communication, revealing the blessing of God to the nations. The nation was to do so by:
6. **Proclaiming God's plan to the nations** (Gen.12:1-3). Israel was to participate in God's priesthood as His agents of blessing to the nations. Ex.19:4-6—they were to serve by being **God's special people**—the message of redemption was portable, and God had elected them to make it known to the nations. secondly, they were to serve as **a kingdom of priests**: they were to mediate between God and the nations. Unfortunately, Israel rejected this priesthood when



they asked Moses to go up the mountain on their behalf and as their representative. Lastly, they were to serve as *a holy nation*, they were to be wholly for the Lord-this means whether politically or religiously. They were to be set apart not only in their lives, but also in their service. Their calling and election of God was for service-to be a blessing to the nations. Therefore, Israel was to assume two relations: one towards God as their king and other side towards the nations. They were to be a nation for all times and for all people-(set apart).

7. **Proving God's purpose to bless the nations Psalm 67-** to make his ways known upon the earth and his salvation among the nations (Ps.67:2). This agrees with Genesis 12:3b. This is derived from the Aaronic benediction Numbers 6:24-26. This psalm applies what God gave through Aaron and the priests to all people. This psalm was sung during the Pentecost-the event where God was to pour out his Spirit on all nations and an unusual ingathering of the harvest as first fruits and a symbol of spiritual harvest from every tribe, tongue and nation.
8. **Being the Channel through which the Saviour would come to reign over all creation (Gen.49:10)-**the Israelites were reminded of the promised Messiah from generation to generation, through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. They however, misunderstood the promise and made themselves the object of the promise rather than the channel. They developed a self-centered religion (Judaism) that condemned the world.

## The Opportunity to Serve

As priests they were to mediate between God and man. But how were they to go about fulfilling this role? What kind of opportunities were they to seek? In fulfilment of their election there were two forces at work

- a. **Centripetal** (inward focused/ attractive force): this force had its centre and focus on the temple (1 Kgs.8:41-43). Nations were to come to Israel. This happened in 3 ways:
  - **"Strangers were permitted to enter congregation of Israel** Examples: at Exodus (Ex.12:38); later Rahab and Ruth the Moabite widow, who became great-grandmothers of King David. Once admitted
  - **Entire nations were to be attracted to the God of Israel.** Prophets foresaw this coming in of nations in their own accord (Isa.2:2-3; Jer.3:17), drawn by the centripetal force of Israel's ethical monotheism and the power and glory of her God and King. Israel was to function as both a prophet and a priest among the nations
  - **All nations would know and worship the Lord.** Prophets foresaw a time when the knowledge of the one true God would be universal (Hab.2:14; Isa.11:9; Mal.1:11). Therefore, the expression "the ends of the earth" (Psa.22:27; Isa.49:6).
- b. **Centrifugal** (outward/expansive force): this served to carry God's message beyond the borders of Israel. The responsibility to go to the nations is not as clear as the centripetal but we have some examples of Israelites proclaiming God's message to other nations: Abraham was sent to a new land; Moses led people back to the land while exhibiting wonders to Egypt; and Jonah was sent to preach repentance to the hated Assyrians in Nineveh

## Redemption during the Time of Joshua and Judges

God gave Israel the land promised to Joshua' a land strategically placed to accomplish its mission to the nations. The law that was given in Mt. Sinai guided the life of the nation. **Human kings were not given because God was there as their king.** During Joshua's time the people were faithful to the covenant; but the successive era of Judges witnessed violation of the covenant despite God's repeated gracious deliverances (Judges 2:11; 3:7, 12).

## Redemption During the Monarchial Period

The **People lost faith in their Judges and asked for a** king (1 **Samuel 8:7-9**), to be like other nations. First, God gave them the type of "worldly" king they desire (Saul). God then chose David as his own choice for king, fulfilling the promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:6. God initiated a covenant with David (Note the key aspects in 2 Samuel 7). David was supposed to rule on God's behalf, reflecting God's character (and modeling for the people what it looks like to fear Yahweh) and doing what God would do (Read: Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Psalms 72:1-4, 12-14). During Solomon's era, the expanded kingdom started to disintegrate. After his rule, the kingdom was divided, and the covenant is disregarded. The succeeding kings of Judah and Israel ranged from godly to most wicked.

In the Psalms, the psalmists emphasize the universal redemption plan of God in the Messianic Psalms; psalms occupied entirely with the Person and the thoughts and feelings of messiah; they include an isolated reference to the Messiah. These include:

- **Psalms 2:** this one addresses rulers and kings. It challenges them to serve Yahweh who rules Zion.
- **Psalms 47:** Yahweh here is presented as Ruler of the whole universe (Elohim)- King over all the earth who subdues nations and peoples (vv. 2-3). By saving and delivering Israel, he subdued the nations under Israel (v. 4) and therefore, nations will have a share in the promises declared to Abraham and his descendants (v.9)- we have the assembling of all the princes as well as the Jews, apparently in recognition of His sovereignty.
- **Psalms 67:** this psalm was sung at the feast of Pentecost. Here God was to pour out His Spirit on all the nations-a symbol of spiritual harvest from every tribe and nation. This psalm is a request that God bless the nation of Israel so that when the peoples of the world look at Israel, they will see God's hand and come to know God. It is a treaty for the nations. God, the sovereign king of the world, blessed Israel to make his ways known to the nations (v.4).
- **Psalms 87:** Zion is the city of Jerusalem where the name of the Lord was. Eschatologically, it refers to God's people. Rahab is a figure for Egypt. Other gentile nations are mentioned (also Babylon; Philistia, Tyre, Cush). The point here is that God includes gentile nations into Zion (v.4).
- **Psalms 96:** nations are called upon to praise the Lord. The gospel language of proclamation and declaration is echoed on vv.2-3. God wanted his people to declare his news.
- **Psalms 117:** this Psalm impresses upon us the universality of God's salvation. It tells us that God is saving men from all nations, not just from one nation. From all peoples, and not just one people. It reminds us that God's covenant faithfulness has been great toward

us, not small. And it reminds us that God's truth has always been true, and always will be. These things all place in crystal clarity the universality of God's salvation. All nations are called upon to worship God who is good to all: because God is working so great a salvation, then let us praise the Lord! We see that from Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever!

## Prophetic Voice on the Redemption Plan of God

The prophets never tire in reminding Israel that her election is not a privilege that she may selfishly keep for herself; election is a call to service, a duty to witness to the nations, and a sign to the nations that Yahweh is both Creator and Liberator.

### a. The book of Isaiah

Four passages in Isaiah are often identified as "the Servant Songs" because they focus on the call and work of "the Lord's servant" (or "God's servant"): 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12.

- **The nature of the Messiah:** one divinely chosen, called, anointed, equipped, and commissioned.
- **His Mission:** God chose him to: "bring justice to the nations" (42:1); "lead back the people of Israel" to God (49:5); be "a light" so that other nations will recognize God's "saving power" (49:6). She is to become "a light to the nations" (Isa.42:6; 49:6). The *purpose of God's people as light for the gentiles* is that the nation was to serve a mediatorial role by being a centre where the nations would come; all the earth will see salvation (49:6) and all earth will be full of knowledge of him (11:6-9). The Servant will suffer physical pain and humiliation (50:6; 52:14; 53:3-5,7) in the work the Lord called him to do-his own suffering will ultimately take away the sins and guilt of others (53:4,5,10,11), and the Lord will reward the servant for sacrificing his life for others (53:12).
- **The nature of his mission:**
  - One of justice, gentleness, enlightenment, and liberation (42:1-9)
  - Worldwide-He will **carry it to the ends of the earth**-proclamation" Isa.49:6; (I will make You a light of the nations. So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth (v. 6)
  - Successful- "He won't stop until righteousness prevails throughout the earth" (Isa.42:4). He will keep at the task until it is finished. "He will not be disheartened or crushed, until He has established justice in the earth"
  - Involves rejection and apparent failure (49:4; 50:6-8) in restoring Israel to God. He will discharge his mission with suffering; he will incur God's judgement to all the peoples and nations.
  - Nations will be gifts to the servant in return to his willing obedience to suffer death. In response, his mission will be extended to include the nations (49:6)

The Mission of the Servant: ***the narrowing of the means of deliverance from a people to a person (seed)***: As promised in Genesis 3:15, this narrows down to an individual who will redeem Israel and provide hope for the nations. Through the servant songs Isaiah makes it clear that salvation must spread throughout the world. This salvation is God's saving grace and Eternal purpose for mankind- is redemption, and He works out that eternal purpose in history.

- b. **The book of Jonah:** the *universality* of God's loving concern – Nineveh, though wicked, was the object of God's love and compassion. Jonah did not embrace this view (4:1-2, 10-11-notice Jonah's ethnocentrism: he was very angry when salvation was provided but very happy when the vine was provided).
- c. **Joel** prophesies the outpouring of God's spirit on all people (2:28) and His judgement on all nations (3:11-12)
- d. **Amos** predicts that God's restoration will involve all the nations that bear his name (9:11-12)
- e. **Habakkuk** declares that the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, as waters cover the sea (2:14)
- f. **Micah** looks to the day when the nations would come to worship the Lord (4:1-4)
- g. **Zephaniah** prophesies universal judgement (3:8) and restoration of God's people before the eyes of the nations (3:20).

### **How Effective Was the Nation of Israel Over Their God-Given Responsibility?**

Israel struggled in her responsibility to be God's agent of blessing. She did not perform her basic duty to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with her God. Had she lived a holy life, she would have demonstrated to the world God's identity, character and saving power. Sadly, at almost every step Israel demonstrated unfaithfulness to the Lord.

From the giving of the Law until the Babylonian captivity, Israel's chief sin was disobedience to the covenant relationship with God; idolatry (Ex.32; Judg.2:17; 10:6; 1 Kgs.11:5); political unions with other Nations (Isa.39; Hos.7:11); intermarriage with other nations. Whereas Israel was to be separate from the nations of the world, Israel maintained an idolatrous and political union with them (Isa.39; Hos.7:11). Sauer captures this in these words: "against divine exclusion they set fleshly inclusion, against centripetal force, centrifugal, against holy love, faithless whoredom" (Ezek.16-23; Hos.1-3; Isa.1:21) [p.114]. This ultimately made God to bring His judgement upon them (Jer.32:31).

Their ultimate downfall was completed in 3 stages:

1. They rejected the *direct* rule of God (from Moses – Samuel): since their birth at Sinai, Israel had God as their King (Ex.19:5-6; 15:18; cf. Deut.33:5 cf. 32:15). All other human leaders (Moses-Joshua-14 Judges to Samuel) were appointed for a specific time to accomplish a specific task; at times they returned to private life again (Judg.8:29-32). There was no earthly kingdom: Gideon declined it (Judg.8:23). When his son, Abimelech tried, in opposition to God, it worked towards his ruin (Judg.9). There was no permanent external central government, only a central altar and tabernacle at Shiloh-the common centre for public worship God and visible expression of unity (Josh.18:1, 10; 19:51; 1 Sam.1:3; 4:3). God used the prophets (Deut.18:15), the priests (Deut.33:8-11) and judges as his earthly instruments, whom He called (Judg.2:16; 3:15; etc.). Such kind of an organisation/Constitution could only operate with people devoted to God. Soon the people demanded to have an earthly/visible king (1 Sam.8).

2. They further snubbed the *indirect* rule of God (Saul - Zedekiah). God reluctantly granted their request for earthly king because, from the standpoint of the kingdom of God, an earthly kingdom was a retrograde step, in fact, a rejection of Yahweh as king (1 Sam.8:7). Nonetheless, God held fast to his kingly rights. He appointed earthly kings (Deut.17:15) who acted only as agents or governors with the title of a king; also, nothing more but leaders over God's inheritance (1 Sam.10:1). Notice that the choice was not democratic election by the people; the people only installed (i.e. public recognition) the kings (1 Sam.11:15; 2 Sam.2:4; 5:1ff). The prophets held a higher office than that of the kings; they were counsellors, consciences, ears, eyes, guardians, and supervisors unto the kings. Reason: the spiritual office stood nearer to the heavenly king than the secular one. This period marked a further downward trend from the rule of God.
3. They maintained the *suspended* rule of God (captivity to messianic kingdom) – this was the rule of God without any formal legal attachments. The 'times of the gentiles' began with Nebuchadnezzar where Israel has stood under the rule of nations of the world. Israel has become a "reproach and scorn, a byword and a curse in all places" (Jer.24:9; 25:18; 26:6; 29:18; 42:18; cf. Deut.28:65, 67). God nonetheless has and will preserve Israel from annihilation

### **God's Response to Israel's Failure**

#### **Despite Israel's Failure . . .**

- God promised to restore the kingdom in a form that will be even bigger and better than before- universal and diverse.
- God promised a new covenant that the people will not break (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-30).
- A new heart for the obedience of the law.
- Daniel the prophet foresaw an everlasting kingdom, indestructible kingdom of God that will crush all human kingdoms.

**Note:** their failure proved no nation, no people-even with the righteous examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and with the great laws of God-could solve humanity's problems and live peaceful, abundant lives without a special ingredient of which only God can supply.

## **PREPARATION OF SALVATION: THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD**

The Old Testament closes with the northern kingdom of Israel, having been taken captives by the Assyrians and the southern kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians, the return of some of the exiles under the Persian rule. The period of 400 years between the Old Testament history and the beginning of the New Testament history, that period that separates the time of Nehemiah from the birth of Christ is known as the *Intertestamental period* or the *400 silent years* (because of the gap in the biblical record and the silencing of the prophetic voice). The events, literature and social forces of this time shape the world of the NT.

## The History

Following are the four kingdoms of the Intertestamental period (Read Daniel chapters 2, 7 & 8):

Vision in Daniel 2	Vision in Daniel 7	Vision in Daniel 8	Identification- Kingdoms	Chronology of events
Head of gold	Lion		Babylon 2:48	626 – 539 BC
Chest and arms of silver	Bear	Ram	Medo-Persian 8:20	539 – 330 BC
Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard	Goat	Greece 8:21	330 – 63 BC
Legs of iron and feet of clay	Terrifying and frightening beast		Rome	63 BC – AD 70

Alexander the Great conquered the Middle East from the Persians in successive battles. He was determined to create a world united by Greek language and culture; a policy (known as *Hellenization*) followed by his successors. Greek language became the *lingua franca* of his empire- the only common tongue of communication amongst all the nations of the then known world, which was used as a vehicle to promulgate Christianity, that addressed peace and love between nations, condemned racial discrimination and declared religious freedom (Acts 6; 9-10)

Alexander the Great is significant in the redemption story for

- He brought the Hellenic civilization to the East, established the Greek language as the only common tongue of communication amongst all the nations of the then known world, which was used as a vehicle to promulgate Christianity, that addressed peace and love between nations, condemned racial discrimination and declared religious freedom (Acts 6; 9-10)
- Prepared the translation of the OT into Greek; this Greek translation is the formal text used in East and West. The New Testament was also written in Greek.
- His arrival to Jerusalem signified the encounter of Hellenism with Judaism and the meeting of monotheism with the pagan religion of the ancient world, which prepared the world's transition to Christianity (Jn.12; 20-23).

At his death (323 BC), the empire was divided into 4 parts by his generals. Two of them are important for our purposes in that they formed dynasties that contented for the control of Israel for over a century. These are:

- The Ptolemy Empire (rulers were called Ptolemies) centred in Egypt - dominated Palestine for 122 years (320-198BC), were considerate of Jewish religious sensitivities. This led to a thriving community of Jews in Alexandria. The Alexandrian Jews demonstrated the ability of a Jewish community to flourish in a new context without losing its identity. They were the first ones to use the word *diaspora* to describe Jewish communities living outside Israel. Due to this with time many of them could no longer understand Hebrew. It was under Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246BC), when 72 Jewish scholars began to translate the

Hebrew OT into a Greek version known as the *Septuagint* in Egypt-the first translation of the Bible.

- The Seleucid empire (leaders known as *Seleucus*, some *Antiochus*; together were called *Seleucids*) centred in Syria-aimed at the eradication of Jewish religion. He appointed his own Hellenizing Jews as high priest. Later, after relinquishing the control of Egypt to the Romans, he prohibited some of the key elements of the Jewish practice (it was a capital offence to practice circumcision, observe the Sabbath, celebrate Jewish Festivals etc). He also attempted to destroy all copies of the Torah and, erecting the statue of the Syrian high god Zeus in the Jerusalem temple, required offerings be made to Zeus. He sacrificed a pig there. This prompted outrage from the Jews led by Mattathias, an elderly man from a priestly family, and his 5 sons: Judas (Maccabeus that probably means hammerer), Jonathan, Simon, John and Eleazer (the family is called *Hasmoneans*). Mattathias destroyed a Greek altar put up in his village and killed Antiochus' emissary (messengers).

This triggered the Maccabean Revolt, a 24-year war that resulted in the independence of Judah for a time until the Romans took over in 63BC. This gave birth to the Maccabean Dynasty. The Maccabees were the descendants of Judas. After a rapid series of victories over Seleucid armies, in 165 BC. Judas cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem of Greek abominations and rededicated it to the one God- an event celebrated each year in the Jewish festival of Hannukah. Twenty-five years later, Simon secured a treaty which gave Judah political independence as well as religious freedom; in turn, the people appointed Simon Maccabaeus their political leader and high priest. Simon therefore became the founder of a ruling house sometimes known as the Maccabees; the Hasmonaean dynasty. The Hasmonaean rulers brought prosperity to Judah, though not without a considerable amount of internal strife and drama.

## The Literature

During this period, the Jewish people had a substantial body of literature, *three* of which are significant for our study:

- **The Septuagint:** This is the Latin name for 70 (Roman LXX), a term for the translation which is the work of the 72 scholars who under the leadership of Ptolemy Philadelphus gathered on the Island of Pharos near Alexandria and in 72 days translated the OT into Greek. It was to be used by the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria. It became the Jewish Bible of those outside Palestine, and later the Bible of the early church.
- **The Apocrypha:** The term is derived from the Greek word that means, "*hidden*" or "*secret*". In technical sense, the term refers to a variety of books that were added to the canonical books, These are: 1&2 Esdras, Tobit 3, Judith, Ecclesiasticus or the wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach, Susanna, Bel and Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, 1&2 Maccabees. These were repudiated as not inspired or canonical. However, the Roman Catholic Church during the Council of Trent in 1546 and Vatican II of 1869-70 affirmed them. The books however, distorted the image of the Messiah and the Salvation message. Also, their apocalyptic consciousness was extreme.
- **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** An Arab shepherd in 1947 stumbled upon a cave in the hills overlooking the Dead Sea, which contained what has come to be known as "**the greatest manuscript discovery of our times**". The documents and fragments found in the caves have

come to be known as the *Dead Sea scrolls*. They include OT books (the Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah), a few apocryphal books, apocalyptic works, and others.

## Social and Religious Developments

### Diaspora

The Diaspora (dispersion) of the Jews began in the exile. It was accelerated in these inter-testamental years. They were of two types: The *Hebraic Jews*: This is the group of those who retained their Judaistic faith, language, and customs, and The *Hellenistic Jews*: This is the group of those who adopted Greek language, dress, and customs while retaining their Judaistic faith. Philo is an example. He allegorized the OT. The Jews in Diaspora concentrated their religious life in the study of the Torah and the life in the synagogue. The synagogue as an institution that arose as a result of the dispersion. It became the meeting place of the Jews in diaspora.

### Judaism

#### Introduction

The word “Judaism” derives from the Greek *Ioudaismos*, a term first used in the intertestamental period by Greek speaking Jews to distinguish their religion from Hellenism (see 2 Macc. 2:21; 8:1; 14:38). In the NT, the word appears twice (Gal.1:13-14) in reference to Paul’s prior consuming devotion to Jewish faith and life.

Babylonian exile brought certain modifications in Jewish religious life: deprived of land, temple, and cultic priestly ministrations, Judaism began to adopt a non-sacrificial religion. Jews gathered in homes to read Scripture, conduct prayer, and instruction, rather than “blood sacrifice” (sheep and goats). This forms the earliest roots of the synagogue; they established the **synagogue** (assembly) as an institution where 10 Jewish men could be found. They concentrated on the Law, personal piety, and prayer.

#### Sects within Judaism

- **The Scribes:** Scribes of the OT (*sopherim*) differ with those of NT (*grammatist; less frequently called lawyers or nomikoi*). OT scribes were penmen, recorders, transcribers, and secretaries whereas in NT they were the guardians, the expounders, the doctors of the Law and of the older Scriptures, to the whole nation, and whose power as a class increased the more as time went on. The scribes become legalistic to the point that their authoritative explanations of the Law were seen to be more important than the Scriptures themselves. They emphasized on dos and don’ts: what people should do to please God. They were legalistic and at a certain point their rules became more important than the word of God.
- **Pharisees:** This group was the most influential sect during the time of Jesus Christ. The word “Pharisee” literally means: “The Separated Ones; Separatists,” probably descended from *Hasidim* (pious ones). Because of their role in teaching and interpreting the Torah, they naturally became leaders in synagogues. They regarded themselves as religiously & spiritually superior to all other Jews (had a holier-than-thou attitude). They considered themselves as more



acceptable to God. They understood His Law better and practiced it more perfectly. They were “the only ones going to heaven.”

They enjoyed the support of the people. They championed popular rights against the aristocratic Sadducees. It is through the Pharisees that the oral law was handed down and expanded, till finally codified in the *Mishna* and eventually completed in the *Talmud*. In an attempt to counteract acculturation, they came up with a body of rules that were ‘guidelines by which the righteous ought to walk’. This body of rules came to be known as (Halakah). It eventually came to be viewed as equally authoritative and at times, even exceeded it. Mark 7:1-23. They were a very extreme group,, kind of what we would say ‘extremists’ today.

- **Sadducees:** The name “Sadducees” is related to the Hebrew verbal form *sadaq* (*tsahdak*), “to be righteous.” Tradition says they derived their name from *Zadok*, the High Priest during the time of King David and King Solomon of Israel. They were fewer than Pharisees but had more political power. They formed a council that later evolved to be the Sanhedrin. Membership was by virtue of being born into one of the high-priestly or aristocratic families. When the temple was destroyed, they lost their power base. Religiously, they were the “liberals,” (cf. Pharisees were considered the “conservatives,”) of the day. They embraced the Greek culture and way of life. They accepted the Torah but rejected the prophetic writings of the OT as being in any way authoritative. They also rejected the existence of angels and spirits, they denied resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:6-10).

They also actively mixed their religion with politics. They combined traditional religious outlooks with politics. Their political position and sense of survival led them into openness to Hellenistic cultural influences. After the coming of Rome, they encouraged collaboration with the ruling power and were concerned in maintaining the status-quo, which secured their position. The principal agency of the Sadducees power was in the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of justice. This administrative and legal body consisted of 71 people, the majority of whom, including the high priest, were Sadducees. They were not popular with common people, because they heavily taxed the Jews to maintain the Temple.

**Note:** The fundamental dogmatic differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees concerned:

- The rule of faith and practice: The Sadducees did not lay down the principle of absolute rejection of all traditions as such, but they were opposed to traditionalism as represented and carried out by the Pharisees
  - The after death: The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and spirits.
  - Free will and pre-destination: the Pharisees accentuated God’s preordination, the Sadducees on man’s free will; and that, while the Pharisees admitted only a partial influence of the human element on what happened, or the co-operation of the human with the Divine, the Sadducees denied all absolute pre-ordination, and made man’s choice of evil or good, with its consequences of misery or happiness, to depend entirely on the exercise of free will and self-determination.
- **Zealots:** The term “zealot,” in Hebrew means ‘*one who is zealous on behalf of God*’. The term derives from Greek (zelotes), “emulator, fanatic, admirer or follower.” They defended the Law of Moses and the national life of the Jewish people relentlessly opposing any attempt to bring Judea under the dominion of idolatrous Rome. The Zealots objected to Roman rule and

violently sought to eradicate it by generally targeting the Romans, their Jewish collaborators, and the Sadducees, by raiding for provisions and other activities to aid their cause.

- **Essenes:** Though their precise nature is not certain, scholars agree that they were a small separatist group that grew out of the conflicts of the Maccabean period. They too had a holier-than-thou attitude. They believed that:
  - *all* the rest of the Jewish people were completely corrupt in every area of life.
  - The Temple worship was being performed incorrectly.
  - They were the only true, pure people of God in all Israel, since all others were polluted by worldliness.

As a result they completely shut themselves off from the rest of society and even from their own people. They practiced monasticism: retreated into the Judean wilderness where they often lived very simple, ascetic lives-many lived in monastic communities, others living alone in caves and in the mountains. They resorted to prayer, study and reading of scripture in place of the sacrificial system. They emphasized outward purity (symbolised by wearing white robes), separation from world (celibacy), imminent coming of God's kingdom, etc.

### **Summary of the Redemptive work in the Intertestamental Period**

When Israel failed in her missionary role, God sent them to captivity. This also changed their missionary role completely; it became *centrifugal*, i.e. instead of the nation's flocking to Jerusalem to learn the law of the Lord, Jews of the Diaspora literally took the law to the ends of the earth. They engaged in winning converts through *proselytism*. They won 2 kinds of converts:

- **Proselytes:** Gentiles who adopted the complete range of Jewish beliefs and practices, including the rite of circumcision; such a one become a full-member.
- **God-fearers:** Gentiles who accepted most of the Judaism ethics but stopped short of the surgical blade; such a one remained a second-class citizen.

Jewish message was however very different from the New Testament gospel of God's kingdom. Those in Palestine worked hard to have the convert assimilated into the Jewish fellowship. Their message was to a great degree *auto-soteric*-a person could save him/herself, i.e. if one maintained the ethical and ritual requirements; one can reconcile himself to God. This was what later Jesus and Paul sharply hit out (Mt.23:15; Rom.2:17-24 respectively).

NOTE: this kind of salvation is futile because

- Total Depravity Isaiah: no one can please God by practising good works, because of 64:6-all our righteous acts are before Him like filthy rags. Man is marred by sin; our righteous acts are futile Lk.17:19; Rom. 3:21-22.
- Slight breaking of the law equals breaking the whole law James 2:10- it is hard to follow rules. The Law was given to lead us to Christ. The Law: showed men what sin is (Rom.3:19-20), condemned the sinner (Ezek.18:20), showed men that they needed a Saviour (Gal.3:24). Only through Christ are we granted the righteousness of God (2 Cor.5:21; Eph.1:4). Therefore, man must be born again by the Spirit

# PURCHASE OF SALVATION

## Pre-existence of Christ

Pre-existence means that Jesus existed before His birth and therefore He is divine: his pre-existence is significant for if he did not pre-existent then he could not be God, because among other attributes, God is eternal. Also, he would have lied because He claimed to be. He is the eternal God though there was added to His person full humanity. Following are some evidences of Christ's Pre-existence.

## Old Testament

The OT gives us indirect evidence of Jesus Christ. The Angel of Yahweh and other theophanies (theos-God, phaino-to appear- thus the appearance or manifestation of God usually in visible bodily form) in OT are identified as the pre-incarnate Christ. Read the OT text and identify the common activity of the angel of Yahweh in the OT and that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Angel of the Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ

Angel of the Lord	Common Activity or Attribute	The Lord Jesus Christ
Gen.16:7, 13		Jn.20:28
Gen.48:15-16		Heb.1:8
Ex.3:2, 5-6, 14		Jn.8:58
Judg.13:15, 18		Isa.9:6
Ex.23:20		Jn.5:30; 6:38
Ex.14:19		Mt.28:20
Isa.63:9		Eph.5:25
Josh.5:13-15		Rev.19:11-14

## New Testament

John: 1:1-4, 14 (fulfils Micah 5:2); 6 - Jesus declared seven times that He came from Heaven (33, 38, 41, 50-51, 58, 62); 8:56-58; 13:3; 17:5; Phil.2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; 1 Tim.3:16; Heb.1:3; 13:8 Note that whenever the Scripture teaches the deity of Christ, it also teaches His pre-existence. As the creator of all things (Jn.1:3; Col.1:16; Heb.1:2), He must be an uncreated being. If He existed endless, then He never came into existence, nor was He ever caused to come into existence. He is endlessly self-existent.

## Names/titles

Identify some of the titles/names given to Him indicating His eternal Being...

## The Birth of Christ

### Incarnation of Christ

The eternal second Person of the Trinity took on Himself humanity or flesh (Jn.1:14). Then, why did He incarnate? He incarnated to: Reveal God to us, Provide an example for our lives, Provide an effective sacrifice for sin, Fulfil the Davidic Covenant, Destroy the works of the devil, Be a sympathetic High Priest, and Be a qualified judge. The Person of the Incarnate Christ included undiminished deity and perfect humanity united in one person

### The Forerunner of Christ

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. His father's name was Zechariah which means "*God remembers.*" Read Luke 1:67-80 and show how Zechariah in his song links what God is doing with the previous blocks of salvation. The name John means "the Lord is merciful." He was prophesied in the OT:

His messenger before Him in spirit of Elijah	Malachi 4:5-6	Luke 1:17
Preceded by a messenger to prepare His way	Malachi 3:1	Matthew 11:7-11
Messenger crying "Prepare ye the way of the Lord"	Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:3

### The Virgin Birth

The virgin birth was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Mt.1:18. Now the seed prophesied in Genesis 3:15 finds fulfilment in the Birth of Christ. He is the seed of the woman. However, before the Messiah was born God made announcements to both Mary and Joseph. God did not want to take them by surprise, he wanted to them to prepare and participate willingly and knowingly. Both Mary and Joseph were engaged Read Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25

The baby that is to be born is to be given the name Jesus. In Hebrew (or Aramaic), the full name is *Jehoshua*, which is then abbreviated to either Joshua or Hosea and can be translated as "the Lord saves." It was a very common name in biblical times. The Old Testament is full of Joshuas and Hoseas (actually in Greek: Jesus-es). But not one of them was really what his name said. No one of them could bring real, true, permanent deliverance. The baby that is to be born will be the very first Jew who really will be what his name says: Saviour.

The virgin birth is a mystery. It cannot be explained scientifically. The alternative to accepting its historicity (that is, that it happened as the Bible tells us) is however much more serious than is often realised. The virgin conception is a historical fact, and like all biblical facts, it conveys a message. It has a meaning: Its significance is threefold.

- Jesus truly is the *mediator*: He is of divine origin: He is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He also has a human side: He is born of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, He can represent God to the people; He can represent the people before God. Indicates not merely that Jesus was God's Son through the power of the Holy Spirit but that He was a unique person who was the product of both the divine and the human in a manner unlike any others before or since.
- The *awful heritage of sin is not off-loaded* on Him. He was born with human nature not tainted with original sin. In Him God made a new beginning. He is the second Adam, however, there are similarities and differences between him and the first Adam. He will not suffer for his own sins, for He had none, hence his suffering was for the sins of everyone who believes in Him.
- It explains how the incarnation transpired and stresses that Jesus was fully human, participating in the whole human cycle from womb to tomb.

## Jesus' Childhood and Youth

Very little is known about the childhood years of Jesus. No wonder that the Apocrypha tried to fill the gap and satisfy the people's curiosity.

- **The Visit of the Shepherds:** they had a very bad reputation. Their testimonies were not accepted in court unless confirmed by somebody who was not a shepherd. However, God choose them to be his first evangelists, to be the first to receive the good news, the gospel, of the birth of the Messiah, and to carry it out. This shows that God visits (and uses!) the poor and the despised, the humble and the rejects of society. They went, saw, and rejoiced. They glorified and praised God and spread the good news all around.
- **Circumcision:** according to Genesis 17:11-14 this had to happen a week after birth. It was the responsibility of the father to see to it that the law was kept, and right from the outset it was mostly the father who performed the act himself. Circumcision was the *induction* of that person into the covenant, a visible sign of his incorporation into Israel, the people of God. It was customary that a baby was named during the ceremony.
- **Presentation and Purification (Luke 2:25-38):** every firstborn belonged to the Lord in a special way (Ex.13:2; 22:29). However, the Levites were to take their place (Num.3:12-13), and the firstborn of the other tribes had to be redeemed at a price of 5 shekels of silver (Num.18:15-16) which was then used to support the Levites.  
This was expressed by a symbolic ritual: the mother handed the baby to a priest in the temple; the priest then blessed the baby, and accepted the price paid to buy him/her back; thereafter he returned the baby to his parents. Simeon was a righteous and devout Jew who earnestly awaited the coming of the Messiah before he died. Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts, when he saw Joseph and Mary, he took their baby in his arms and praised the Lord with hymn of praise! He realized very well that the Messiah will not only be a Saviour to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. He did not only see the glory of the Messiah but also his humiliation. The child was destined to cause the falling and the rising of many in Israel. He was a sign that is

spoken against, **a sword will pierce Mary's soul - the shadow of the cross**. Anna was a prophetess. She too became a witness of Christ to all who, like her and Simeon, expected the coming of the Messiah.

The second prescript that had to be fulfilled was the purification of Mary. Nobody is born innocent. A baby is infected by sin even before birth (Psalm 51:5). By giving birth to a sinner, the mother herself becomes ceremonially unclean. Therefore Leviticus 12:2-8 makes provision for a sacrifice to be offered for her cleansing: a year-old lamb for a burnt offering; a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. However, if a woman cannot afford this sacrifice, she can substitute two doves or two young pigeons. Joseph and Mary could only afford this poor man's sacrifice.

### **Why was Jesus subjected to these actions?**

Surely, He does not need them! He is the eternal Son of God. How can there be any need to induct Him into the covenant by circumcision? Why redeem Him from God? How could He, the only baby that ever was without sin, by his birth cause his mother to become ceremonially unclean, so that a sacrifice must be brought to purify her? All these show that:

- Jesus is truly man amongst men, born to live and die in our place.
- He follows the path of all Jewish babies of his time; He was born under the law (Gal.4:4), to fulfil the law in our stead (Mat.5:17). Right from his birth He is totally subjected to the law - on our behalf.
- He had to walk the road of a sinner: although He was without sin, He walks the road of a sinner as if He himself is sin (2 Cor.5:21).

### **The Wise Men from the East (Mat.2:1-12)**

Who were they? Probably they came from the vicinity of Mesopotamia, perhaps from Babylon. For many centuries, this area had been the stronghold, first of the Assyrian and later of the Babylonian Empires that destroyed Jewish cities and towns, including Jerusalem itself, and took the Jews into exile. The significance of their visit:

- **Pagans (or non-Jews) too have access to the Messiah.** He is not only the King of the Jews (as the wise men call Him) but also the Redeemer of the whole world.
- **They represent the educated section of society.** Jesus does not only come for plain and simple people like the shepherds; he is also the Christ of the educated, the people of culture and science.
- **Christ is the Lord of the universe.** The magi are led by a star to worship Him. However, general revelation is insufficient and so they needed guidance from the Holy Scripture finally to get to Bethlehem (Mic.5:2). This shows that nature and Scripture join their efforts, to direct these men to Christ. It was only when they viewed nature (the star) through the spectacles of Scripture (the Old Testament), that they found Christ.
- **The total lack of interest from the side of the spiritual leaders in Jerusalem:** the Magi provide the necessary information to them, but they did not care to go themselves.
- **The heavenly Father takes care:** God warned the wise men in a dream, and they return home by another route and not via Jerusalem. Why? The hour had not yet come for the Messiah to bring the supreme sacrifice. He first must travel along a steep and arduous road.

### **Visit to the temple**

At the age of twelve a Jewish boy, at least as far as his religion is concerned, comes of age. He is now regarded as an adult with full religious responsibility. There is a beautiful Jewish expression for this: to take up the yoke of the Kingdom; to become part of God's team; to be in spanned in his harness. The Jews today call it that person's *Bar Mitzvah*.

His parents found him in the temple listening and asking questions. This amazed those who were present. Jesus' response to his parents "*Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?*" (Lk.2:49) show that already there was a clear realisation of his special relation with God. It was not something that developed over the years; it was already there in his early youth.

## Jesus' Ministry

### Introduction

The term ministry is derived from the Greek word *diakonia* meaning service. Ministry therefore refers to the faithful service of God's people rendered unto God and others on his behalf to bring him glory, build his church, and reach out to his world.

### Preparation for Ministry

### Baptism

*Read Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22 with special attention to the significance of Jesus' baptism.* His public mission started with John- the forerunner-he came to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. He introduced him into ministry by baptising Him. Baptism had 3 facets:

- **Baptism and Sin:** John's baptism was called "*a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin*" which symbolised the conquering of sin by the two images: cleansing and dying (by being immersed in the water). Jesus was amongst those who came to be baptised. John however flinched-he felt it should rather be the other way around: that He should be baptised by Jesus. Jesus is the only human being that need not to be baptised, whose sins need not to be washed away, because He has no sin! Is He not "*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?*" (John 1:29). But Christ insisted, "*It is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness*" (Mt.3:14). That is, to do what God commands, to act according to his will. The path the Father had destined for the Son was to go through everything a sinner has to, without sinning Himself (2 Cor.5:21). It is not only on the cross that Christ takes our place. He does that right through his whole life.
- **Baptism as Induction:** circumcision inducted, incorporated somebody into the Old Covenant. Likewise, baptism inducts God's children into the New Covenant. Christ was circumcised and baptised. He is the bridge between the old and the new. He was born under the Old Covenant: that is why he was circumcised. He initiates the New Covenant: that is why, at the very beginning of his ministry, he had to be baptised.
- **Baptism as Anointing:** during his baptism, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. The voice of the Father was heard, "*This is my*

*Son, whom I love; in Him I am well pleased.*” The voice from heaven combined the two lines in the Old Testament regarding the Messiah, “*This is my Son, whom I love,*” (Psalm 2:7), the formula for crowning the messianic king. “*With whom I am well pleased,*” is an **echo from Isaiah 42:1**, the formula to install the Servant of the Lord - the very same Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. His baptism was the induction of the Messiah, the anointing of the Anointed One (literally, the christening of the Christ). This was his official installation, equipping Him to perform his task.

## **Temptations**

*Read Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13 with emphasis on the significance of the temptations of Jesus Christ.*

Note that there is a difference between temptation and sin. Temptation refers to the enticement or invitation to do evil whereas sin is when we fall into temptation or when we cooperate with the devil’s enticement.

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights he was hungry. Why was Jesus led by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil? Read Deuteronomy 8:1-6 compare this with Matthew 4:1-11. The introduction of the first two temptations, “**If you are the Son of God,**” may have been an attempt to make Jesus doubt the voice of assurance at his baptism.

- First Temptation: change stones into bread (the lust of the flesh)
- Second Temptation: Throw off yourself from the pinnacle of the temple (lust of the eye)
- Third Temptation: I will give you all these things if you bow and worship me (pride of life). Satan tempted Jesus to gain his destiny as Messiah by voiding the cross.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How did Jesus respond to each of the temptations?
2. Compare and contrast Jesus’ temptations with the temptations in Genesis 3.
3. What lessons can we draw from the temptations of Jesus?

## **Purpose of the Temptations**

1. **Proved the kind of messiah he was:** the temptations involved the necessity of Jesus deciding at the twinning of his ministry what kind of messiah He would be. It is not the intention of Satan to doubt the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah of the Scriptures. He does not challenge Christ to prove this fact. What he does is to use this as his starting point, as basis for his argument. The “*if*” with which he starts every one of the three temptations, is to be understood as “*because*” or “*since*”: given the fact that. What Satan does attempt to do, is to make Jesus turn into a different kind of Messiah than the one the Old Testament did promise; to make Him change module, to tempt Him to take a shortcut, to bypass the cross and to grab the crown immediately.
2. **Defined the strategy by which He would accomplish His work:** what Satan wants, is for Jesus to be a Messiah to the liking of the Jews of his time: a mighty, miraculous figure with divine glory, but with basically a political agenda ... and no cross. His supernatural powers by



jumping from the highest point of the temple without getting hurt, and finally to strike a deal with the devil and join forces with the powers of hell. Christ never abuses his miraculous powers to promote Himself, or to benefit from it in any way. He feeds others but suffers hunger Himself. He does not overwhelm people to force them to believe. He never makes a demonstration of his divinity. A coalition with Satan is totally inconceivable. The unclean spirits would try to achieve this later, but He will reject them just as sharply as He did their leader, Satan. He knows that as the Messiah He first must descend to the depths before He can ascend to the heights of glory.

3. **Determined the extent of His warfare against evil.** Time and again Jesus answers the devil by using the Bible. It is abundantly clear that for Him the Bible speaks with final authority. He quotes Dt.8:3; 6:16 and 6:13 in that order as his answer to the temptations of the devil, and as far as He is concerned, that is the end of the debate. Satan can abuse the Bible; he can apply Ps.91:11-12 totally different from what it means in context. But Christ exposes him. Do you know the Bible well enough to use it in this way against Satan? After all, the Bible is the offensive weapon par excellence of the Christian soldier, the sword of the Spirit! (Ephesians 6:17).

### **Jesus' Mission Statement**

After the temptations Jesus went back to Nazareth and in the temple, he declared his mission (Lk.4:16-20). He described his mission as a fulfilment of the OT prophecies (Isa.61:1-2). His mission statement comprised of five things:

1. Preaching/proclaiming good news to the poor (Lk.4:18a): who are the poor referred by Jesus? These are the poor in the spirit not in finances. The poor in the spirit are those who know that they need God. They admit spiritual destitution due to sin and helplessness to deliver themselves from their situation. They recognize utter worthlessness of spiritual currency and inability of their own works to save them. Proclaiming in this case refers to revealing Jesus Christ as Lord of lords, King of kings. Such proclamation would lead to justice-concern for marginal people in society-widows, orphans, the aliens, the poor and the refugees, and preservation of the peace and wholeness of the community.
2. Proclaiming freedom for the captives: without Jesus there is no real freedom. We struggle to find the meaning of life unfortunately we only become more thirsty, empty, and restless. We become prisoner to despair and fatalism. This is because we sold ourselves slave market of sin and the only Jesus can rescue us from that. The task of liberating involves power-encounter-spiritual warfare to liberate mankind from demonic and human oppression-ATR- superstition, myths & magics, discrimination, violence, and exploitation
3. Recovery of sight to the blind: spiritual blindness is far worse than physical blindness (2 Cor.4:4). We are blinded by sin and it is only Jesus who can open our eyes.
4. Releasing the oppressed: physical oppression is abuse; spiritual oppression is hurt from a life of sin; fear and captivity under the devil (2 Tim.2:25-26). Only Jesus has the power to release us from this oppression.
5. Proclaiming the year of Jubilee: see Leviticus 25:8-55-this is the year of the Lord's favour.

Thus, the proclamation of the Gospel aims at societal transformation. God is concerned about the whole person and all manner of societal problems including health, poverty, corruption, and injustice; since God is concerned then we should be as well. Nevertheless, what God has given the

church to offer the world is first and foremost a *message*, that is, God reconciling all things in Christ. The root problem behind all societal problems is human sin, so if society needs to be transformed this issue must be addressed. It is only the gospel and Christ himself who will truly and effectively be able to transform society through transforming individual human hearts.

Therefore, importance must be placed on the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, including the coming kingdom. We should do good to everyone as we have opportunity, especially to those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). Part of discipleship is equipping those in the workplace to do as much as they can where they are and benefiting society as whole.

### **Discussion Question:**

In what ways, using our gifts, can we continue the ministry of Christ to proclaim: good news to the poor; liberty to the captives; recovery of sight to the blind; liberty those who are oppressed; and the year of the Lord's favor?

## **Jesus' Message**

### **Introduction**

His message centred on the kingdom. **What is the kingdom of God?**

- Broad meaning: Ps.103:19; 113:5; Matt.5:34; Eph.1:20; Col.1:16; Heb.12:2; Rev. 7:15-
- Narrow meaning: 1 Chr.16:31; Ps.97:1-2; Matt.6:10)

This kingdom is related to the cultural mandate in Gen.1:28: blessing-rule of God. Man was created as an instrument to realise the rule of God. The focus includes the rule of God on earth (land).

### **The Kingdom of God in the OT**

Kingdom of God was a reality in the OT. The Lord is revealed as great King over all creation (Ex.15). He established His kingdom in Israel (Ps.114:2; cf. 132:7, 13-18): as a king He provides, protects, and guides Israel. God covenanted with David that David's dynasty will serve as governors over His people. Sin made God to set them aside for a while in exile. They stayed in expectation of the messianic age, also known 'as age to come'. God's kingdom is yet to come in fullness

### **The Kingdom of God in the NT**

Jesus contrasts OT era (Law and Prophets) with his presence (good-news of the kingdom) in Luke 16:16. Jesus in a sense is the Kingdom of God: he reveals the dynamic and spiritual nature of the kingdom in healing the sick, casting out demons (Mt.12:28), forgiving sins (Mk.2:10), proclaiming the gospel (Lk.4:16-21), etc. These were signs that Kingdom of God had come on earth. Jesus presents the kingdom as follows:

- It is both present and future: between the *already* of the kingdom which has come and the *not yet* of its final manifestation. Jesus came to Nazareth his hometown at outset of his ministry. After reading the scriptures he added the comment: “*today in your very hearing this scripture has been fulfilled*” (Lk.4:21). This meant that salvation had arrived: it marked the beginning of God’s kingdom. In his 1<sup>st</sup> assignment, he stated his mission (Matt.4:17), meaning, he introduced the coming of the kingdom, a government to earth. He invited men to enter the kingdom, meaning he was after occupation and reclamation of the earth – the return of the dominion power over earth and its environment that Adam lost in his sin
- It is both spiritual (Lk.17:21) and political
- It is both earthly and heavenly
- Universal – Matt.8:11; 25:31-46; Lk.13:29
- Upside down: it is for children (Mt.11:25); for sinners and prostitutes (Mt.21:31); for the meek (Matt.5:5); for the poor (Lk.6:20) and it is closed to the wealthy (Lk.18:25).

## **The Mystery of the Kingdom of God**

In scripture, a *mystery* is NOT something mysterious, deep, dark, profound, and difficult, but “something which has been kept secret through times eternal but is now disclosed.” From OT perspective, the coming of God’s kingdom will come as a single great event that will sweep away the wicked kingdoms of human sovereignty filling the earth with his righteousness/God’s sovereignty (Dan.2:31-35). John did not understand it: instead of destroying human sovereignty, it was destroying the sovereignty of Satan. Instead of making changes in the external, political order, it was making changes in the spiritual order in the lives of men and women.

This is the mystery of the kingdom. The kingdom is *yet* to come in the way prophesied by Daniel. It is *now* operating quietly in the spiritual realm, offering men and women the blessings of God’s rule, delivering them from the power of Satan and sin. It is an offer, a gift to be accepted or rejected. The parables in Matthew 13 show this mystery.

## **Relationship between the church and the kingdom of God**

Some of the misconceptions we make about the church and the kingdom of God are: we wrongly identify the kingdom of God and the Church (as in Roman Catholic theology); we see it as entirely future distinct from the Church age. The kingdom is the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God and the sphere in which the rule is experienced; the Church is the community of the kingdom but never the kingdom itself. FIVE aspects of the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God:

- The church is *not* the kingdom – Jesus and the early church preached the near of the kingdom not the church (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:35; 28:23, 31)
- The kingdom *creates* the church – we enter the kingdom through human fellowship of the church
- The church *witnesses* to the kingdom – Matt.24:14 the church proclaims people come into the church and begin to experience the blessings of God’s rule in their life.
- The church is the *instrument* of the kingdom – Holy Spirit works through the church to manifest the power of the kingdom as in Jesus time (Matt.10:8; Lk.10:17)

- The church is the *custodian* of the kingdom (it has the keys – Matt.16:19)

## **Jesus' Method**

### **Particularistic:**

He confined his ministry to the Jews (Mt.10:5-6; 15:24; Mk.7:24-30)-Jesus had a deep conviction of a special mission to the Jewish nation that has led some to conclude that he had no mission beyond Israel. The pointers to this include most of His public ministry was conducted in Jewish territory. He prohibited his 12 disciples from going to the non-Jews (Mt.10:5-6). He was refusing to heal the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Mt.15:21-28, cf. vv.24, 26; Mk.7:27). He even condemned the Jewish-proselytizing mission (Mt.23:15). His seemingly demeaning attitude: Mt.6:7, 32-pagans prayer-babbling in prayers and Matt.18:17-pagans same as tax collectors-social outcast

### ***Why did he do this?***

- a. He had a short time for his ministry – 3 years
- b. He was making a transition from the Old Testament. We ought to understand his ministry in light of the OT background. Jesus consciously knew he had come to accomplish what Malachi had prophesied (Matt.3): He is “the messenger of the covenant” not only for Israel but also for the whole world. God is concerned about the dreaded “the day of the Lord” when He will bring judgement on all Israel and her leaders and exalted among the nations (1:11); he will send a forerunner to prepare the way
- c. The Gentile mission was only a question of *timing*. The need for Israel was more urgent (doom was coming to the nation – Matt.10:23) than that of the Gentiles whose judgement would come later. His full intention would later be seen in the Great Commission (Matt.28:16-20)
- d. Jesus’ seemingly exclusive attention to the Jews (It) was a matter of *strategy*. He himself even concentrated more on his disciples than he did on the Jews (Mk.7:24; 3:7, 13). When he sent the 12 or 72 within the boundary of the Jews, it was for the sake of training. In Matthew 10:5-6 – he restricted them to the Jews because of the message they were to take to them (“the kingdom of God is near”- the messianic kingdom), which would not make a lot of sense to the gentiles. In Matthew 15:24-Jesus must have been testing the faith of the Canaanite woman, which she passed. In Mark 7:27 – the gentiles would still be included; the messianic kingdom had first to be offered to the Jewish (God’s covenant) people. Because of their rejection, they forfeited their claims and promises of the covenant thus opening the door for the gentiles (Rom.11:25).

## Universalistic:

Jesus perception of the kingdom included the Gentiles

- a. His first sermon at Nazareth shows that his life purpose extended beyond the nation of Israel. Luke 4:16-22-Jesus mission statement reveals that salvation is not for the Jews alone, but also for the gentiles
- b. His words indicated that salvation is for all people: John 3:16-“the world”; John 17:21-his prayer “that the world may believe”; John 1:29-reference by John the Baptist as “the lamb of God”; Mark 10:45; 14:24 – to give his life as ransom for “many”
- c. His titles indicate that he came for all: *Son of Man* – he preferred this title than son of David, the popular designation of the Messiah. By claiming the title for himself, Jesus was identifying himself, not with the Hebrew people or the Jewish nation, but with the whole human race. He derived it from Daniel 7:13-14. In Ezekiel it appears 87 times, talking of his human status, the term came to be used of the Messiah by the time of Jesus. He is also referred to as the *Saviour* of the world (Jn.4:42) and the *Light* of the world (Jn.8:12)
- d. The Lord’s prayer-the phrase “your will be done on earth...” shows universality
- e. The parables he used indicate that he came for all: the parable of the *great banquet* (Lk.14:15-24) shows a universal invitation-both Jews and gentiles; the parable of the *prodigal son* (Lk.15:11-31); the parable of the *weeds* (Mt.13:36-43, cf. v.38); the parable of the *seed*, the *fishnet*, the *harvest*, the *mustard seed*, and the *leaven*- all tell how the kingdom shall reach all nations and peoples
- f. The stories and illustrations he used indicates he came for all: the story of the *good Samaritan* (Lk.10:29)-the one hated becomes hero in the story and the woman who poured oil (Mt.26:13). He used illustrations of gentile people with a positive bend the widow of Zarephath (Lk.4:25-26) and the cleansing of Naaman (Lk.4:27).
- g. His contacts with gentile people: Jesus rejected the Jewish prejudicial sentiments against the Samaritans and gentiles the Gadarene demoniac (Mt.8:28-34); the centurion, certainly a Roman-showed faith than any other (Mt.8:10); one of the 10 lepers he healed was a Samaritan (Lk.17:12-19) a Samaritan came back to thank Jesus; the Samaritan woman (Jn.4)-recognised a time is coming when God will be worshiped in spirit and truth all over the world); (Lk.9:50-55) the Samaritans; (Lk.10:29) the good Samaritan;
- h. The events of the last week in Jerusalem indicate that he went to the cross for the world.  
1 John 2:2-his death and resurrection makes the gospel to be universal; he is saviour of the world
  - **Triumphal entry:** He entered the city on a donkey. This was to fulfil Zechariah’s prediction of a king who would speak peace to the nations, and whose dominion would be from sea to sea (Zech.9:9-10).
  - **Cleansing of the Temple:** He cleansed the court of the Gentiles declaring sternly, “*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations*” (Mk.11:17).
  - **Declaration of the Kingdom:** In the temple, he denounced the chief priests and Pharisees for failure of being good stewards of the truths of the kingdom, which had been entrusted to chosen people. Therefore, he declared, “Will be taken away” (Mt.21:43)

- **Destruction of the temple:** He predicted the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple within that generation (Mt.24:34; Mk.13:30; Lk.21:32)
- **Anointing at Bethany:** When he was anointed with costly ointment at a house in Bethany, just before the Passover, he defended her in these words “in the world” (Mt.26:13)
- **Institution of the Lord’s Supper:** He sealed the new covenant with his disciples in the upper room in anticipation of his death (cf. his words on the cup – Matt.26:28 “many”).

## **The Cross**

### **Did Christ have to die?**

Someone may say, “Why couldn’t God just forgive us? Why did Jesus have to die?” The cross was inevitable because: the protoevangelium pointed to the suffering of the redeemer. The OT prophets had also prophesied of the same and so the cross was a fulfilment of these prophecies. The reason God could not “just forgive us” is because He is a righteous judge. We have broken his laws. He said, “the soul that sins shall die” (Ezek.18:4). By sending Jesus, God balances his attributes of justice and love. As our lamb, Jesus had to shed blood for the forgiveness of sins (Heb.9:22). We do not need to sacrifice a lamb today because Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God (Jn.1:29), died for sins once for all (1 Jn.2:2). When he cried, “it is finished”, he meant he had finished the work he had come to do – being the perfect and complete sacrifice for sins (Heb.10:12, 14). As our lamb, Jesus bore the sins of men (2 Cor.5:21)

### **The practice of crucifixion**

Death on the cross-undoubtedly is one of the cruellest forms of death by torture of all times. The Persians or the Phoenicians probably invented it. It was something for runaway slaves (30 bob), or foreign rebels. The pain and suffering somebody who was crucified had to endure, was indescribable.

The hatred of the Pharisees brought Jesus to the cross. Sauer says that it was the most cowardly murder of an ambassador...” Josephus, a Jewish historian, describes the cross as “the most wretched of deaths”: the victim went through flogging using a flagellum; then carried their cross to the place of crucifixion; they were stripped, nailed to the cross and left to die; to hasten death the soldiers broke their bones; and to confirm death, soldiers pierced the side.

Jesus underwent this process and He actually died on the cross for: the Bible testifies he died: these words were written on accounts that have been fully paid, “*It is finished*” (Jn.19:30). And now He can depart, fully conscious, He calls out in a loud voice: “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*” (Lk.23:46). As professionals, the Roman soldiers would not let the body down the cross before they had confirmed it was dead. Joseph of Arimathea got permission to bury Him because he was confirmed dead. His bones were not broken because he had already died, the Romans often left the bodies of criminals for days after their death on the cross as a frightening warning to passers-by. After that, the bodies would be taken down, the bones broken, the corpses burnt (or cremated) and the ashes strewn in the four directions of the wind to indicate to everybody that the

Roman Empire completely demolishes such criminals. However, with Christ it is different. His Father takes care. He does not let his Son be cremated; He sees to it that He is buried. The gashing out of blood and water indicated that death had occurred

## The Significance of the Cross

It is the focal point of the Redemption Story. It shows:

- God's *love* (Rom.5:8), righteousness/justice (Rom.3:25-26) and riches (Rev.5:9)— purchase of people for God
- Christ's highest expression of love for the Church (Eph.5:25; Gal.2:20), his way of possession of his redeemed church: he only way to become firstborn among many brethren (Rom.8:29), and Head of his members (Eph.1:22); the only way to be made perfect as a leader of salvation (Heb.2:10) and win the joy laid before him (Heb.12:2). As the Redeemer and second Adam, he attained a fresh exaltation (Phil.2:9-10).
- Individually, it is the basis for:
  - *Justification*—put the past in order legally. Basis: our sins are put on Him (Isa.53:6) as our substitute (1 Pt.2:24; Heb.9:28) so that we live in righteousness (2 Cor.5:21). For forgiveness of sins (Heb.9:22). By the death of Christ death is dealt with (Heb.2:14; 1 Cor.15:54-57; cf. John 3:14).
  - *Sanctification*— ruling of the present morally. The OT uses the same word (*chata*) for *sin* and *sin offering*. In Ex.34:7 and 1 Sam.2:17 is used of sin. In Num.32:23 and Isa.5:18 are used of the *punishment of sin*. In Lev.6:18, 23 and Ezk.40:39 of sin offering. Similarly, Christ who knew no sin was made sin (2 Cor.5:21); he gave his life as a ransom for many (Mt.20:28; 1 Tim.2:6). Therefore: we are crucified with Christ (Rom.6:6, 11); the world is crucified (Gal.6:14); the spiritual world is crucified (Col.2:15); the curse of the law is done with (Gal.3:13); the indictment of the law is paid (Col.2:14); we are dead to the law (Gal.2:19)
- Corporately, the cross means:
  - The “end of the law” The term speaks of the commandments of God given to the people by God on Mount Sinai. It goes beyond the 10 commandments. The law demanded perfect obedience (Jas.2:10). Those who broke God's law came under a curse (Deut.27:26; cf. Gal.3:10). The law was limited in that it could not: forgive sin; give eternal life; make men good. It could only tell people what to do but did not give them the power to do it. The law did 3 things: showed men what sin is (Rom.3:20); condemned the sinner (Ezek.18:20); showed men that they needed a Saviour (Gal.3:24). Christ redeems us from the curse of the law (Gal.3:13; Rom.10:4) and surety of a better covenant (Heb.7:22), the new covenant (Matt.26:28) through which the called will receive an eternal inheritance (Heb.9:15-17)
  - Admission of the nations to salvation: the law, which was a barrier to the nations (Eph.2:14) has been removed. The nations did not have the law (Rom.2:12) and aliens to covenant of promise (Eph.2:12) creating ‘enmity’ between the two (those ‘far’ and ‘near’). The fulfilment of the law through the death of Christ means that the ‘promise to Abraham had broken through the bounds of the mosaic law’ (Gen.12:3; Gal.3:13-14)

- Universal triumph of Christ: he triumphed (Rev.5:5-6); robbed the principalities of its powers (Col.2:14-15); destroyed him who holds the power of death (Heb.2:14). Hence his victorious cry “It is finished” (Jn.19:30)

## **The Resurrection**

### **Introduction**

The centre and meaning of the redemptive history is the resurrection of Christ for without it, there is no Christianity, no basis for Christian preaching, and no hope (Vangemeren, 358). Each gospel writer wrote from the perspective of the resurrected and glorified Christ. The resurrection was central to the preaching of the Apostles. The truth of the gospel rests on the historicity and meaningfulness of the resurrection as a redemptive-historical event. Fully assured that Jesus arose, they presented Him to both Jews and gentiles as the only hope. However, some critics contend that Christ’s resurrection is a fiction not a fact. Some of the claims from Critics include:

1. **The Wrong Tomb Theory:** The women who reported the body missing mistakenly went to the wrong tomb.
2. **Swoon Theory:** Jesus did not die, he merely fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood everyone thought he was dead, he later resuscitated.
3. **The Stolen Body Theory:** The Body of Christ was Stolen by the disciples while the guards slept
4. **Jesus Jumped out from the Cross when He was about to die and went straight to Heaven.** The person who died was one of His disciples, and not Jesus himself.

### **Evidences for the resurrection of Christ**

1. ***The Evidence of the Stone:*** Matthew 28:1-4; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1-9
2. ***The Seal on the Stone:*** (Mt. 27:62-66). The seal included two things: (1) a Roman guard, and (2) a seal consisting of a cord set in wax around the stone where it was connected to the tomb. No bribery; No stealing of the Body
3. ***The Stone Rolled Away:*** The guards were present; The women were unable to remove the stone (Mark 16:2-8). Matthew 28:2-4 tells us it was an angel of the Lord. This shows divine intention.
4. ***The Evidence of Empty Tomb:*** John 20:2-9
5. ***The Evidence of the Grave Clothes:*** Peter observes the linen wrappings lying undisturbed. Had a thief stolen the body he would have taken the body--linen wrappings and all.
6. ***The Evidence of Christ's Appearances:*** The women and the disciples saw, heard, and even touched the Lord. In fact, 500 brethren saw him at one time (1 Cor. 15:6).
7. ***The Evidence of the Transformed Disciples:*** The disciples had seen their master die. They had lost all hope, down-trodden, utterly disheartened, and meeting in obscure places. But after the resurrection, we find them joyous, fearless, and bearing public testimony. They were even willing to die--and it is not likely they would be willing to die for a lie.



8. ***The Evidence of Pentecost (Acts 2-4):*** Only 50 days after the death and resurrection, Peter preached the doctrine of the resurrection to people who had access to the tomb. The resurrection was not a new fact, and he was preaching its meaning from the Old Testament Scriptures (Ps. 16:8-10).
9. ***Old Testament prophecy.***
10. ***The prophecies of Christ himself.***
11. ***The existence of the church.***
12. ***The observance of Sunday, the first day of the week.***
13. ***The transformation and witness of Paul***

Apostle Paul has adduced some proofs that authenticate the bodily resurrection of Jesus. They include:

- The proof of *experience* (1 Cor.15:1-2).
- The proof from *scripture* – “according to the scriptures” (15:3-4)
- The proof of *witnesses* – more than 500 people (15:5-12)
- The proof from *necessity* (15:13-19)

## **The Significance of the Resurrection**

- Authenticates the incarnation, mission, and authority of Jesus (Acts 2:36); it is a seal of the Father on the work of the Son (Acts 2:32). The involvement of the father in the resurrection proves that the work of Christ was a perfect atonement, and that Jesus was the messiah.
- Seals on: the prophets’ testimony (Psa.16:10; Hos.6:2; Isa.53:8-10); Jesus’ testimony (Mt.16:21; Jn.2:19-22); that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom.1:4; Acts 13:33); the kingship of Jesus (Acts 13:34); the authority of Jesus as the universal Judge (Acts 17:31); our own future resurrection and glory (1 Thes.4:14). His glorious body is a pattern and type of our own future bodies (Phil.3:20-21; 1 Cor.15:49)
- Signifies the glorious rule of Jesus as the Messiah of God. While the ascension marks the actual enthronement, the resurrection proves that Jesus is the Messiah whom the Father had appointed for rule (Acts 2:22-36). The millennial kingdom is based on the resurrection of Jesus. The promise of the Davidic covenant speaks of an eternal transfigured human kingdom (2 Sam.7:13 cf. Acts 13:34; Isa.55:3), an eternal human king will appear from the clouds (Dan.7:13; Matt.26:64; Rev.1:13)
- Guarantees that the new people of God are heirs of the new covenant.
- The resurrection as an eschatological event is the pivot around which the future glorification, consummation and renewal revolves. (cf. Acts 3:24-26).

## **Summary of the Purchase of Salvation**

- The following set Jesus apart as the Messiah:
  - **His birth:** He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born, as prophesied, in Bethlehem to a virgin. Though angels announced His arrival, and He reigns over all creation, Jesus entered our world in a lowly manner so He could be identified with the meek and the poor.
  - **His wisdom:** At age 12, with rabbis, asking questions that showed his uncommon understanding.

- **His baptism:** Jesus asked John to baptize Him so He could identify with sinners and demonstrate His love to them.
- **His temptation:** Satan tempted Him relentlessly for 40 days, yet He did not sin. (Mathew 4).
- **His ministry:** He challenged man-made religious traditions. And by healing people—regardless of nationality—raising the dead, and forgiving sins, He revealed that God wants to be involved personally in our lives. Leading Pharisees wanted Him dead, but the Father protected His life until the crucifixion.
- Salvation means a comprehensive restoration which is:
  - Made known in Jesus: everything he said and did was directly related to the coming of the kingdom. He reversed all the consequences of evil in the world: disease, possession by inhuman spirits, guilt, ritualistic and empty religion, a caste system of purity and impurity, scarcity of food, a hostile nature, commercial exploitation, and death.
  - Accomplished in his crucifixion: the work of Christ is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage: sin, death, and the devil John 12.31-33; Col. 2.15; Rev.12.7-12. Public battle and victory for the whole creation
  - Installed in the resurrection: the resurrection in Jewish thought: arrival of life of new creation. In Jesus there is the dawning of new creation-firstborn from the dead (Rev.1:5) and first fruits (I Cor. 15:20)

## **PROCLAMATION OF SALVATION**

### **Introduction**

The purpose why Christ came was to bring salvation to humanity, the Jew first ,and, and then the rest of humanity. Proclamation of the gospel is what followed after death and resurrection.

### **The Great Commission**

This is a call for the church (Christians) to reach both Jews and Gentiles for Christ because God loves the whole world and He sent His only Son to die for the world (Jn.3:16); his death and resurrection have implications for the whole world, because, “all have sinned and come short of God’s glory” (Rom.3:23). There are different emphases of the Great Commission in the gospels:

- **Matthew 28:16-20:** emphasizes on *discipleship*, a disciple is a follower or learner (emphasis is on obedience) whose life is changed by the master’s teaching. Unlike the other gospels, Matthew talks about the exalted Messiah-He is King of kings and Lord of lords, an honour conferred to Him by God the Father (Jn.17:1, 5) in recognition of his obedience (Phil.2:5-11). Hence, he is the undisputed Ruler of the universe, with all things under His feet, and Head of the Church (Eph.1:21-23). He is the universal Lord. Eventually all men (Rom.14:11) and all nations (Rev.11:15) must come to terms with Him (Psa.2:7-12). This establishes Christian authority (cf. use of term “therefore”). Thus, the missionary mandate issues from His absolute

authority-He is the sovereign Lord of the universe. He is the Lord who sovereignly rules. According to Matthew, the scope of discipleship is the entire world- “all nations”-the Gospel must be proclaimed to all human beings wherever they live. Our task is to go, make, baptise and teach and we are to carry out this task till the “end of age” not in our power for Christ promises, “I am with you always”

- **Mark 16:14-20** – proclamation, confrontation (with evil forces) and passion. The urgency: “whoever does not believe will be condemned” (v.16)
- **Luke 24:44-47** – proclaiming the Jubilee: the year of Jubilee was a celebration year when slaves were released (Lk.4:18-22) – emphasising *universality*
- **John 20:21** – Christians sent into the world just as Christ was. Spiritual in nature.

## The Universal Appeal of the Gospel

Clearly, Jesus died for all – cf. 2 Cor.5:15; John 3:16 “the world”, “whosoever” – cf. Rom.10:13; Rev.22:17. The gospel appeals to men of all *races* (both Jews and gentiles Rom.10:12-13) and all *social status* (no slave nor free, male or female Gal.3:28). The gospel points out to the fact that:

- *Sin* is universal – Rom.3:23
- *Offer* of salvation is universal – 1 Tim.2:4
- *Command to repent* is universal – Acts 17:20
- *Invitation to believe* is universal – Rom.10:9-11

Note: the church was the only institution in the Roman empire that admitted everyone (1 Cor.1:26)

## The Apostolic Witness

The book of Acts presents an authentic missionary record of the apostles and the early church-after Pentecost. Empowered by the Spirit the witness of the apostles centred upon a *central theme* – Jesus Christ (Acts 2:32; 8:5, 35; 2 Cor.4:5). The identity of Christ’ the nature of His death; the fact of the resurrection; the hope of his return. The witness:

- Involved the entire church, not a few individuals. It was based on 2 assumptions: the chief task of the church is world evangelisation; the responsibility of carrying out the task rested on the entire Christian community
- Extended to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8): Philip took it to Samaria (Acts 8); Peter took it to Judea (Acts 9); Paul and his companions covered a big chunk of the Roman Empire (Rom.15:19, 24).
- Included all classes of people:
  - **It solved racial issues** it began as a reform movement within Judaism at first the gospel was preached to the Jews only (Acts 11:19) with great reluctance they included the gentiles in their plans (Acts 10:9-20). Philip broke the ice; he went to Samaria (Acts 8), Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10) the church at Jerusalem remained more Jewish than Christian (cf. Acts 21:20-26). Paul took the gospel to the gentiles on a full scale
  - **It solved social issues** – both Jews and gentiles from all walks of life and all levels of society were welcome as full members of the church (Gal.3:28)

The method of evangelism was to be *centrifugal*– ‘*As you Go.*’ The motivation for the witness being:

- A sense of gratitude for the love of God through Jesus Christ (cf. Paul – Eph.3:8)
- A sense of responsibility (2 Cor.5:10-11)
- A sense of concern – that men are lost without hope in the world (Eph.2:1, 3, 12)
- The apostles knew God had acted – sovereignly, decisively, and redemptively
- The apostles were convinced that the decisive, redemptive act of God had taken place in Christ Jesus, the man of Nazareth
- The apostles were convinced that the act of God in procuring salvation was a historical event with consequent historical results
- The apostles were convinced that all that had happened was in perfect harmony with the prediction of the OT prophecy
- The apostles were convinced that the redemptive act of God in Christ was for the benefit of Mankind
- The apostles were convinced that repentance and faith were God-ordained way to enter the Redemption of God

**Note:** the witness was costly for all the apostles sealed their mission with their own blood

## **The Church in the World**

Early Christians followed the example of the Apostles in witnessing to their faith in Christ, even to the point of death. Faith spread rapidly despite the hatred for Christians and Christianity being outlawed. Significantly, during the reigns of Nero, Domitian, Aurelius, Decius and Diocletian, Christians were greatly persecuted.

1. 100s-1500s: early Christians gave themselves to prayer, the Word, and public confession of sins. Monasticism appealed to many Christians because of the persecutions, corruption in the church and state and the belief in the imminent return of Christ. Manuals on Christian faith, life and worship were written and widely used in churches. Constantine made Christianity the state religion, this brought in the problem of secularisation.
2. 1600s-1900s: The Reformation period is marked by the concern for one’s immediate relationship with God. The Solas: scriptura (the landmark in the period was the letting scriptures to speak without the overshadowing of the traditional interpretation or authority of the Roman Catholic Church.), fide, gratia, Christus. Also, missionary agencies send missionaries to the new world. And there were the great awakenings.
3. 2000 to present-the Church is faced with difficult issues that it must address:
  - a. the place of the Bible
  - b. Political and social involvement: the debate here is on whether the Church and State should be separate. We are seeing many spiritual leaders going into politics. What will be the outcome?
  - c. The challenge of responding to the Jews, Arabs, and the state of Israel

- d. Confessing Christ in a meaningful way

**NOTE:**

**1. The transformational nature of the Gospel today**

- From the first church, the church and the kingdom of God has expanded.
- It has brought people from all walks of life- rich and the poor, educated and the less educated, men and women, young and old...
- The Church in the world today continues to proclaim the Full Gospel – the authentic truth.
- The gospel continues to spread among every tongue, tribe, and nation.
- It continues to influence social, economic, political structures and conditions, as well as the spiritual lives of people.

**Question: How does this biblical story challenge young people like you who long to bring redemption (political, social, economic, and spiritual) to the contemporary world?**

**2. Significance of redemption story to the society**

- Forgiveness and reconciliation
- Love for God's creatures
- Hard work and commitment to duty and service to humanity
- Holiness-moral uprightness
- Good role models-conformity to God's unchanging standards
- The institution of marriage and family must be respected faithfulness in marriage
- Stewardship-being a good manager of God's resources
- Respect for authority
- Avoid any form of prejudice by treating others with dignity and respect

**3. Redemption produces people who:**

- Care for creation
- Are a blessing to the Nation
- Walk in God's way
- Are redeemed for redemptive living
- Represent God to the world
- Attract others for God
- Know the one living God and Saviour
- Bear witness to the living God
- Live and work in the public square

# **COMPLETION OF SALVATION**

## **Introduction**

According to the biblical promise, one day Jesus Christ will return. At Christ's return, the kingdom will be visible and total: Satan, death, and evil will be defeated permanently; Sin will be no more; the wicked will be punished decisively; Christ will reign visibly as king (Rev. 11:15). God's original intention to rule over a kingdom with humanity representing him as kings over the world is realized: our bodies will be resurrected in a similar form as Christ's (John 5:28-29; 6:40, 54); we will be fully human as intended in Genesis 1:28; we will live in a renewed and perfected world (Rev. 5:9-10; 21:1-4; 22:3-5)

The events that we are yet to see as a culmination of salvation include the following, however, note that there are diverse views on the outline of these events.

### **1. The Rapture of the Church (1 Thess.4:13-18)**

The term rapture means to be caught up-a sudden irresistible act of carrying by force. It is a supernatural event, in which true believers will suddenly be caught up in the air, by the power of Christ to meet him up in the air. It marks the climax of the church age and it will come unexpectedly (1 Thes.5:2)-a thief in the night and during a time of peace (1 Thes.5:3). The Living saints and resurrected dead saints will be caught up just prior to the tribulation period. This will be a literal and bodily resurrection (Lk.24:34-40; 2 Cor.4). The resurrected bodies will:

- Be redeemed from the corruption of the fallen man (1 Cor.15:1-4, 20, 23; Rom.8:23; Phil.3:21).
- Correspond to the body of the grave (Lk.24:31, 36; Jn.20:13, 19): it will have a material relation to our present bodies and yet it will be gloriously fashioned anew, perfectly, and remodeled
- Be glorified like Christ's (Phil.3:20-21).
- Be God given body (1 Cor.15:38; 2 Cor.5:1-5)

**Note:** Jesus' resurrected body is our model (1 Cor.15:20). His body was:

- Recognizable (Lk.24:31-36; Jn.20:13, 19),
- Real (Lk.24:39),
- Free from earthly limitations (Jn.20:19).

### **2. The Judgement Seat (Bema Seat) of Christ (1 Cor.3:9-15; 2 Cor.5:10; Rom.14:10)**

Yahweh the King of kings will exercise judgement over his subjects both because of his rightful prerogative and because nature so requires. The *Bema* judgement is the event where the individual believer's works will be evaluated regarding reward. This will take place in the air and will be based on how the believer used their talents, gifts and opportunities entrusted to them. The results: rewards-crowns (Rev.22:12) and loss of rewards (2 Jn.8; 1 Cor.3:15; 1 Jn.2:28)

### **3. The Marriage of the Lamb**

It will occur somewhere between the Rapture and the Return of Christ (Rev.19:7). This will unite the church with Christ forever.

#### **4. The Tribulation Period**

Its nature: a day of unparalleled judgement on earth (Isa.2:19; 24:19-21; Jer.30:4-7; Dan.12:1; Joel 2:1-2, etc). See Daniel 9:24-27 for a description of this period. The period will be experienced worldwide (Isa.24:1-6, 21; 34:2)

##### **a. Its source**

- i. Satan: he directs it to God's people (Rev.12:12-17; 13:7)
- ii. God: he brings judgement to bear upon sin (Rev.6:15-17; 11:18; 14:7, 10, 19; 15:7). God will chastise both Israel (Jer.30:7; Dan.9:24) and the nations/gentiles (Isa.13:9; Ezek.30:3; Obad.1:15)

##### **b. Its purpose**

- i. To pour out judgement on unbelieving sinners (Matt.13:36-42, 47-50; 25:41-46; Isa.26:21; Rev.3:10)
- ii. **To prepare Israel to receive her Messiah** thus enter the kingdom he will establish (Zech.12:10; 13:1; 1:7)
- iii. **To bring a multitude of gentiles** to Christ; these will in turn populate the messianic kingdom with Israel (Rev.7:9, 13-17 – martyrs who serve God in heaven; Mat.25:31-40 – those who enter the messianic kingdom)

#### **5. Its prominent figures**

##### **a. The Godless**

- i. *The anti-Christ*: his other names include 'the little horn' (Dan.7:8, 21-26), 'the prince who is to come' (Dan.9:26-27), 'the king who does as he pleases' (Dan.11:36-45), 'the man of lawlessness' (2 Thes.2:3-10), 'the son of destruction' (2 Thes.2:3), 'the beast coming out of the sea' (Rev.13:1ff). He will rise out of an end-time federation of nations that will parallel that of the Roman empire of old (Dan.9:26; Rev.13:1; 17:3, 7, 9-16). He will be satanic (authorised and powered by Satan – 2 Thes.2:9; Rev.13:2, 7), beastly (Rev.13:1-2), blasphemous (Dan.7:25; 11:36; 2 Thes.2:4; Rev.13:1, 5, 6), antichristian (Dan.7:21; Rev.13:7), destructive (2 Thes.2:3) lawless (2 Thes.2:3) and arrogant (Dan.7:8; 11:37; Rev.13:5). He will give a rather inauspicious coming (Rev.17:3). He will be slain and return to life (Rev.13:3, 4). This will be followed by his second coming (Rev.17:8; 2 Thes.2:9) when he will establish his kingdom (Rev.17:12-13) that will be worldwide (Rev.13:3), short-lived (Rev.13:5), and will involve political (Rev.13:7), economic (Rev.13:16-17) and religious (2 Thes.2:4; Rev.13:4, 8, 12) domination. Finally, he will be judged (Rev.17:8, 11; 19:19-20; cf. 20:10).
- ii. *Babylon the Great* (Rev.17-18): this is a gentile world power in the tribulation period in a form of religio-economic cartel. Babylon, because like it, it will epitomise human self-assertion against God.
- iii. *Earth dwellers* (Rev.3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8; 17:8): these refer to those who have affirmed earth as over against heaven as the focal point and ultimate goal of their existence. They are opposed to the people of God and are special objects of God's wrath.
- iv. *Satan* (Rev.16:13): he will be the central-god figure, the beast his messiah and the false prophet as his third member.

## **b. The Godly**

- i. *The 144,000 sealed Israelites (Rev.7:1-8; 14:1-5)*: these are a representative of the 12 tribes of Israel protected by God for some divinely appointed task
- ii. *Two witnesses (Rev.11:3-13)*: these are 2 unidentified prophets, especially gifted by God who will announce God's message of judgement during the first half of the 7-year period with the 144,000.
- iii. *Believing multitudes*: during this period, large numbers of both Jews and gentiles will be redeemed by the grace of God through faith in the finished work of Christ. Many will be martyred for their faith (Rev.7:9-17); others, both Jews (Zech.12:17) and gentiles (Matt.25:31-34) will be preserved alive to populate the millennial kingdom.

## **6. The Millennial Kingdom:**

The term millennium means a thousand, this will be 1000 literal years of Christ's rule on earth. The kingdom of God will take overt political form in this earth when Christ comes again. He will rule over the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (Lk.1:32-33; 22:28-30; Rev.11:15; 19:11-16; 20:4). We are currently living in the church age which began at Pentecost and will continue until the rapture which will be followed by the great tribulation of which at the end Christ will literally return to this earth. This is the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant with Christ as the king. He will defeat his enemies, bind Satan and his demons in a bottomless pit and establish his millennial kingdom.

The millennial kingdom will be characterized by:

- a. A perfect environment physically and spiritually – Gen. 1&2
- b. A time of Peace (Mic. 4:2-4; Isa. 32:17-18; Joy (Isa. 61:7,10), Comfort (Isa.40:1-2), No Poverty (Amos 9:13-15) & No sickness (Isa.35:5-6)
- c. A time of righteousness – since only believers will enter it (Matt.25:37; Ps.24:3-4), obedience (Jer.31:33) holiness (Isa.35:8), truth (Isa.65:16 and fullness of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).
- d. Christ will be the king (Isa.9:3-7; 11:1-10) while David will be his regent (Jer.33:15, 17, 21; Amos 9:11).
- e. Jerusalem will be centre of the world; the place from where Christ will rule.
- f. The Spirit will be upon the king (Isa.11:2-3) and in God's people (Jer.31:33).

## **7. The Final Great White Throne Judgement**

God's justice will be meted on humankind when the righteous will be rewarded and the evil punished. The Unbelievers will be resurrected after the millennium (Rev. 20:5,12-14)-2<sup>nd</sup> Resurrection and appear before God for judgment. They will be judged according to record of deeds in the book (Rev.20:13) and the roll of names in the Book of Life (Rev.20:15). They will then be cast into the lake of fire forever

## **8. Eternal States: after the millennium, people will live eternally in:**

- a. The New Jerusalem (heaven) – all the righteous of all ages



- b. The lake of fire (hell) – Matt.25:41; Rev.20:10, 14-15; 21:8 All the unbelieving will inhabit this horrible place and experience forever.

### ***What Will We Be Doing in the New Creation?***

- **Worshipping:** This is the purpose for which we were created, and we will now fulfil this purpose. Isaiah 66:23; Rev. 7:9-10; Rev. 22:3.
- **Enjoying God's presence-** Fellowship with God himself. God's glory will fill creation, and we will bask in it as we continue to grow in knowledge of God (Rev. 21:22-23; Isaiah 11:9; Psalms 16:11; 27:4; 73:25-26).
- **Honoring God with our "glory"**- nations will exist and cover the earth; they will honor God by bringing all their glory and wealth to the nations (Rev. 21:24-26; Isa. 2:2-4; 60; 66:18-24). The glory being the combined product of generations of human beings whose lives and efforts will have generated the vast store of human cultures and civilizations.
- **Reigning-** All believers will serve as kings who reign with King Jesus over all the new creation (Rev. 5:9-10; 22:5). It likely includes everything from care for creation to innovative, "technological" advancements, developing hidden potentials in God's creation.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE GRID WE NEED TO VIEW GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN**

1. Creation provides our foundational values and principles
2. The Fall helps us assess the realities of the cursed earth, pervasiveness of evil, depths of depravity and satanic wickedness
3. The OT shows the scope of God's redeeming purpose, worked out in a specific historical and cultural context and models for us in amazing details (from the law, narratives, prophets, wisdom and worship of Israel the kind of practical responses that please God and those that don't)

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<sup>1</sup> This material and the one with the 3 downward steps is from Erich Sauer. *The Dawn of world of Redemption: a survey of historical revelation in the OT*. Translated by G.H. Lang. (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1964).

4. The Incarnation brings God right alongside our struggle and calls us to embody and be agents of the reign of God.
5. The Cross and the Resurrection enable us to experience the power of true reconciliation, love, hope and peace and to seek the atoning redemptive work of God even in the most, apparently so, irredeemable human situations
6. The Holy Spirit in the Church provides the guidance and the power to expect real change in individual lives and society, while keeping an eye on the corporate, dimensions of Christian mission
7. Our great hope for a future new creation gives impetus and value and worth to all we do, for our labor in the lord is never in vain. God shapes our actions and responses in the present with the revealed shape of how things will be in the future

## **RELATIOSHIP BETWEEN GENESIS & REVELATION**

<b>GENESIS 1–3</b>	<b>REVELATION 20–22</b>
“God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1)	“I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1)
“The darkness He called Night” (1:5)	“There shall be no night there” (21:25)
“God made two great lights” (sun and moon; 1:16)	“The city had no need of the sun or of the moon” (21:23)
“In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (2:17)	“There shall be no more death” (21:4)
Satan appears as deceiver of mankind (3:1)	Satan disappears forever (20:10)
Garden into which defilement entered (3:6–7)	City into which defilement will never enter (21:27)
Walk of God with Man interrupted (3:8–10)	Walk of God with Man resumed (21:3)
Initial triumph of the serpent (3:13)	Ultimate triumph of the Lamb (20:10; 22:3)
“I will greatly multiply your sorrow” (3:16)	“There shall be no more death or sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain” (21:4)
“Cursed is the ground for your sake” (3:17)	“There shall be no more curse” (22:3)

Man's dominion broken in the fall of the first man, Adam (3:19)	Man's dominion restored in the rule of the new man, Christ (22:5)
First paradise closed (3:23)	New paradise opened (21:25)
Access to the tree of life disinherited in Adam (3:24)	Access to the tree of life reinstated in Christ (22:14)
They were driven from God's presence (3:24)	"They shall see His face" (22:4)

**THE END!**