

SCHEME OF WORK FOR SS2 ON CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THIRD TERM ACADEMIC SESSION

1. EFFECT OF GREED
2. THE SUPREMACY OF GOD
3. RELIGIOUS REFORM
4. CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION - 1
5. CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION – 2
6. FAITH IN GOD &
7. SOCIAL JUSTICE
8. TRUE RELIGION
9. DIVINE LOVE & THE MESSAGE OF GOD
10. REVISION
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CRS LESSON NOTES FOR SS 2 – 3RD TERM

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – 3RD TERM WEEK, LESSON 1

TOPIC: GREED AND ITS EFFECT

SUBTOPIC: THE GREED OF GEHAZI AND ITS EFFECT

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Luke 12:15(GNB) – *“And he went on to say to them all, “Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be.”*

The Meaning of Greed

Greed can simply be defined as excessive desire for something. It can be money, opposite sex, wealth, food, power, etc.

Greed is an insatiable desire for acquiring more and more things than necessary in life. A greedy person is never satisfied with the power or material things that he has.

A greedy person is covetous and selfish.

Story of Naaman (The Leper) and Gehazi (Elisha's Servant) – II Kings 5:1-27.

Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army but he was a leper. This sickness prevented him from performing official functions.

A maid, captured by the Syrians in their war with Israel who was serving Naaman told Naaman's wife that her husband would be healed if he could go to Israel.

Naaman's wife told her husband who also told his master the king of Syria. The king sent Naaman to the king of Israel with a letter telling him to heal Naaman of his leprosy.

The king of Israel wondered if he were God who heals sickness, he also saw it as a ploy to by the Syrians to attack Israel. He rent his clothes. Elisha the prophet heard that the king rent his clothes and asked Naaman be sent to him that he might there was a prophet in Israel.

When Naaman went to Elisha, Elisha told him to go and wash himself seven times in River Jordan. Naaman was so annoyed that he asked if the rivers of Syria were not better than the rivers of Israel. He returned back to go home. His servant pleaded with him to obey the prophet's simple instruction. Naaman reluctantly obeyed and washed seven times in River Jordan and became healed.

He happily sent gifts to Elisha who rejected all. He requested some quantity of Israeli soil and promised to worship the God of Israel since that day. He asked for forgiveness should he worship Syrian gods while performing his official duty. Gehazi, Elisha's servant was not happy that his master rejected all the gifts. He secretly ran and met Naaman as he was returning home, lied to him that Elisha sent him to get some of the gifts for his (Elisha's) visitors. Naaman gave him more than he requested.

When Gehazi returned, Elisha, his master asked him where he went, he lied to him. Elisha cursed him that Naaman's leprosy shall cleave to him and his descendants for ever. He became a leper immediately as a result of committing the sin of greed.

Consequences of Gehazi's Greed

- Gehazi's sin of greed and falsehood was exposed.
- Gehazi and his family were cursed by Elisha.
- He was ostracised (that is, refused to be accepted by members of the society) and became outcast in the society.
- Naaman's leprosy was transferred to Gehazi and his descendant.
- Greed breeds mistrust, disharmony, hatred, pain, etc.
- Gehazi was dismissed from service.

Virtues/Lessons That Can Be Learnt From Gehazi's Greed

- It is showed that God's blessing and healing are not exchange for earthly material or money.
- Obedience to God's instructions is more rewarding than silver and gold.
- Everybody should be seen and treated as important in the society, as the information that led to the healing of Naaman came from a little Israelite maid captured in one of Syria raids of Israel.
- God works in mysterious ways and not the way men think.
- All things are possible with God.
- God is seen here as the God of both the rich and the poor.
- People should be humble in their dealing with fellow men.
- It pays to be honest.
- God's blessing is found only in the path of trustful obedience.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS THE TOPIC: THE GREED OF GEHAZI AND ITS EFFECT

1. (a) Relate the story of the healing of Naaman.
(b) How was the name of the glorified through his misfortune? (SSSCE 2002 Q3)

2. (a) Who was Naaman? Narrate the story of Naaman.
(b) Mention TWO important lessons which Naaman learnt from his healing. (SSSCE 1996 Q2)
3. Narrate the story of Naaman and Gehazi and state the consequence of greed. (SSSCE 1990, Q2)
4. (a) What circumstances led to the dismissal of Gehazi?
(b) State THREE lessons that can be learnt from Gehazi's conduct. (SSSCE 2006, Q2).
5. (a) (i) Discuss the circumstances that led to the healing of Naaman.
(ii) State Naaman's reaction to his healing.
(iii) What incident followed this reaction?
(b) Identify TWO virtues that can be learnt from the entire episode. (SSSCE 2005 Q3)
6. (a) Give an account of the healing of Naaman.
(b) What THREE lessons can be derived from this story? (SSSCE 2013 Q2)
7. (a) How was greed demonstrated in the life of Gehazi?
(b) Give THREE areas in the society where greed is prevalent. (SSSCE 2013 Q3)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK ,LESSON 2

TOPIC: GREED AND ITS EFFECT (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: THE GREED OF KING AHAB AND ITS EFFECT

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Eph. 5:3(GNB) – *"Since you are God's people, it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you."*

Naboth, His Vineyard and Ahab's Greed

Ahab was the king of Samaria. Just like Solomon, he married a foreign wife from Sidon called Jezebel (A princess). His reign witnessed an upsurge of the encroachment of foreign religions, especially the worship of the Sidonian god called Baal brought by Jezebel upon her marriage to King Ahab of Israel.

Naboth was a Jezreelite. He had a vineyard beside the palace of King Ahab in Samaria. Ahab wanted this vineyard from Naboth to use it for a vegetable garden. He told Naboth: "... I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money." But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

Ahab was displeased with Naboth's statement. He was so sad to extent that he was unable to eat. Jezebel his wife inquired what the problem was. Ahab told her of Naboth's refusal to sell his land. Jezebel then promised to get the land for her husband (Ahab) at all costs.

Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. She wrote in the letters that they should "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; and set two base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death." The instructions were carried out.

As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give

you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

Effect (Consequences) of King Ahab's Sin – I Kings 21:17-29.

God sent Prophet Elijah to tell Ahab: 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed, and also taken possession?"' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.'"

God's judgment pronounced by Prophet Elijah to Ahab could be summarized as follows:

- (a) God would sweep him away and cut off from Ahab every male.
- (b) Ahab's house would be like the houses of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.
- (c) The dogs would eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel.
- (d) Any one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat.
- (e) Any one of his who dies in the open country the birds of the air shall eat.

The Bible records that Ahab humbled himself before God because of what he did, but the Lord only postponed the evil day to the days of his children.

Significance of the Study on Ahab's Greed

- (i) We should be contented with what we have. Contentment is the cure of greed.
- (ii) Poor people in the society should not be looked down upon.
- (iii) We should not use our position of authority to amass wealth at the expense of the poor.
- (iv) Wives should not encourage their husbands to do evil.
- (v) Ahab's greed for Naboth's vineyard led to the destruction of his future generation.
- (vi) God inflicts punishment upon those who oppress the weak.
- (vii) There is no evil act committed secretly that escapes God's notice. (That is, God sees us in all we do secretly).

Areas In The Society Where Greed Is Prevalent.

- 1) **Homes** – children steal their parents' money.
- 2) **Offices** – bribery and corruption in offices.
- 3) **Market** – people use false measures to sell.
- 4) **Schools** – students cheat to pass examinations and also steal their colleagues' belongings.
- 5) **Churches** – some greedy pastors embezzle church's money and inflate the price of things bought for the church.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS THE TOPIC: THE GREED OF KING AHAB AND ITS EFFECT

- 1. (a) Describe the event that led to the death of Naboth.
(b) List TWO reasons why Ahab should be held responsible for his (Naboth's) death.
- 2. (a) How did God react to Naboth's death?
(b) List THREE evil effects of greed in the society today.

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 1

TOPIC: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

SUBTOPIC: RELIGIOUS TENSIONS DURING AHAB'S REIGN

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: **James 5:17-18** – *“Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.”*

Definition of Supremacy

The word Supremacy means Lordship, dominion or sovereignty.

The supremacy of God then refers to His absolute rule and control over the world.

Religious Tension During Ahab's Reign (Tracing the event that led to Elijah's pronouncement of drought in Israel) – 1 Kings 16: 29-34; 17:1-16.

Ahab is being described as the king who “did evil in the sight of God more than all that were before him. “He married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. Ahab made an Asherah. He did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

Consequently, there arose a religious tension in Israel, as Baalism almost supplanted and overthrew the worship of the true God.

Jezebel persecuted the prophets of God by putting them to death while the ones that were alive went into hiding.

This was the picture of things in Israel when God sent Elijah to Ahab to proclaim a three-year drought (lack of rain) in Israel.

During this period of drought, God directed Elijah where to stay, provided him security and fed him at different places. First is the brook Cherith. He drank from the brook while the ravens fed him with bread and meat both in the morning and in the evening.

When the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to the widow of Zarephath who fed him.

Lessons can be learnt from the action of Elijah during the religious tension in Israel.

- Most inter-religious marriage has been seen to have negative influences.
- The weakness of the ruler may cause the downfall of the nation. Hence, King Ahab's weakness paved way for Jezebel to replace the worship of true God (Yahweh) with the worship of Baal.
- God is always on hand to defend His course. Hence, He called on Elijah to defend the serving Him as true God.
- Christians should have the moral courage to challenge people in authority over their apostasy.

Lessons about the supremacy of God in the event of drought in Israel

- God withheld rain for three consecutive years as punishment for sins of Israel was an epitome of His supremacy over nature and controller of the universe.
- God made provision for Elijah while the drought lasted.
- God used Obadiah to protect all His prophets throughout the duration of the drought.

1Kings 18:4 – and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

ASSIGNMENT

Mention FIVE ways the church can fight against immoral acts in the society.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS THE TOPIC: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD (RELIGIOUS TENSIONS DURING AHAB'S REIGN)

1(a) Why did Elijah pronounce drought on Israel and how did Ahab react to this?

(b) What lessons about the supremacy of God do we learn from this event? (SSSCE 1991, Q2)

2(a) Trace the event that led to Elijah's pronouncement of drought in Israel.

- (b) What TWO lessons can be learnt from the action of Elijah? (SSSCE 2003, Q3)
- 3(a) Narrate Elijah's flight to Mount Horeb.
- (b) In what THREE ways did God plan to punish the house of Ahab and Israel? (SSSCE 2009, Q3)
- 4(a) Give an account of the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah.
- (b) What TWO lessons can be learnt from the encounter? (SSSCE 2010, Q3)
5. How was Baalism introduced into Israel during the reign of Ahab and how did Elijah champion the cause of the Lord before the contest on Mount Carmel? (SSSCE Nov. 1992)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

SUBTOPIC: ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Heb. 12:29 – *"for our God is a consuming fire"*.

Elijah Meets King Ahab – I Kings 18:1-19

After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab.

Obadiah (who was over the household of Ahab) sent by King Ahab to look for spring of water and valleys for the animals so that they might not die. Ahab went to different direction while Obadiah went on another in search of green pastures.

In the process, Obadiah met Elijah and he recognised Elijah, he bowed down and fell on his face and said, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?" After an assurance to Obadiah that he (Elijah) would remain to see Ahab (to prevent being killed) after Obadiah had told Elijah how he saved one hundred of the LORD's prophets and fed with bread and water, hid them in the cave by fifties during Jezebel's persecution.

So Obadiah delivered the message of Elijah to Ahab; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, *"Is it you, you troubler of Israel?"* And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals.

The Contest on Mount Carmel – I Kings 18:19-46.

The contest of Mount Carmel was meant to show that Baal was not the true God. The contest was between Elijah, the prophet of Yahweh, and the prophets of Baal.

It was Elijah who asked for the contest during the time he met King Ahab, in order to prove to all the Israelites the supremacy of God.

Elijah requested for two bulls. He told the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal to choose one while he would take the other one.

Both groups would cut each bull in pieces, lay it on the wood without putting fire to it. Any group whose God answered by fire would be acknowledged as the true God.

Elijah asked the prophets of Baal to offer sacrifice to their god (Baal) and ask him to send fire from heaven to burn the offering if he was really God. The prophets of Baal offered sacrifice and called on Baal to send fire from heaven. But there was no response till noon.

Elijah mocked them, told them to cry aloud, that their god might be musing or gone aside or on a journey or perhaps sleeping and must be awakened.

They cried aloud, and cut themselves with swords and lances according to their custom, until blood gushed out upon them, but there was still no response.

And as midday passed, Elijah said to all the people that they should come near to him; and they did so. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down.

Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar. He then put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he told them to fill four jars with water, and pour it three times on the burnt offering, and on the wood. The water ran round about the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

Elijah called on God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to prove that He was God and that he (Elijah) is His servant. God answered with fire and consumed everything.

And when all the people saw it, they immediately acknowledged God as true and supreme.

All the prophets of Baal were seized and Elijah killed them at the brook Kishon.

Shortly after this, a heavy rain fell and the drought ended. Ahab in defeat, rushed to report to Jezebel who threatened to kill Elijah but he ran to Mount Horeb.

How Mount Carmel Contest Proved The Supremacy of God

- (i) The contest at Mount Carmel proved the supremacy of God over baal.
- (ii) The killing of the four hundred and fifty prophets of baal brought God's supremacy to light and put an end to the worship of baal in Israel.
- (iii) By sending rain after the contest, God proved His supremacy as being able to withhold rain and release it.
- (iv) God has power over His creation and can exercise power for His own glory.

Lessons Learnt About The Supremacy of God at Mount Carmel

- ✓ God hates idolatry and forbids it.
- ✓ God shew His supremacy as Creator and controller of the universe, including the earthly rulers and their subjects.
- ✓ God controls times and seasons.
- ✓ God protects and cares for those who submits to His instructions, especially His anointed, like Elijah and other God's prophets hidden and fed in the cave by Obadiah.
- ✓ Punishment is seen as inevitable for anybody who turns away from God's side (that is, apostasy).
- ✓ We should have the courage to refuse doing wrong things, even when many people are doing such things; we should have the courage to say 'no'.
- ✓ The Mount Carmel contest was an act of God to flush out Baalism in Israel; due to the fact that all the prophets of baal were killed by Elijah.
- ✓ It brought the drought to an end and signified a turning point for the people to reconcile with God.
- ✓ It shows that God as a consuming fire. He is slow to anger. He always gives sinners long time to repent.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS THE TOPIC: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD (ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL)

1(a) Describe God's intervention on behalf of Elijah.

(b) State TWO lessons about the nature of God. (SSSCE 1999, Q2)

2(a) Describe how the supremacy of God was made manifest during the contest on Mount Carmel.

(b) In what THREE ways can the church fight against immoral acts in the society? (SSSCE 2015, Q3)

3. Narrate Elijah's experiences when he escaped from Jezebel into the wilderness. What final assignment was given to him by God? (SSSCE Nov 1995)

4.(a) Give a brief account of the contest on Mount Carmel.

(b) What TWO lessons did the prophets of Baal learn after the contest?

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK, LESSON 2

TOPIC: RELIGIOUS REFORMS

SUBTOPIC: KING JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORM

(II Kings 22)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: II Kings 22:1-2 – *“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem... And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD...”*

Religious Reform

Religious reform seeks to rectify the deplorable or worse conditions in the religious lives of the people with regard to pure worship of God to achieve practical righteous living.

The reform of Josiah started because of the discovery of the book of the law during the repairs of the Jerusalem temple.

Who was Josiah? – The Background of Josiah – II Kings 22:1-2

Josiah was the grandson of King Manasseh of Judah, a king who was notorious for his introduction of many other religious beliefs and doctrines into the orthodox mode of worship.

Manasseh was succeeded by Amon his son, who walked in the ways of his father by serving idols. After his death his eight-year old son, Josiah was crown king. He reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

Josiah was rated one of the best king of Judah. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Pre-religious Reformation of King Josiah

- 1) One of his first assignments was the repair and the renovation of the temple.
- 2) The book of the law was found in the temple by Hilkiah the high priest. Then Shaphan the secretary told the king that Hilkiah the priest has given him a book. Shaphan read it before the king.
- 3) When King Josiah heard the content, he rent his clothes as a sign of repentance because he knew that they had transgressed.
- 4) The king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found ..."

They went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they talked with her – II Kings 22:13-14.

- 5) Huldah the prophetess sent words back to King Josiah, these words stirred him up to carry out the reformation.

Aspects of King Josiah's Religious Reforms

- 1) **He ordered the removal and burning of all vessels and ritual objects installed in the temple by his forefather king Manasseh.**
- 2) **Priests of all the foreign gods were demoted; their idols destroyed and their altars pulled down.**
- 3) **The houses of cult prostitutes were destroyed. Cult prostitutes were women with whom the priests of those idols (especially Baal) made love to, with the belief that through the sexual act, the god of fertility will make the lands fertile.**
- 4) **Josiah restored the feast of Passover which commemorates their journey from Egypt.**
- 5) **He abolished witchcraft, sorcery, sooth-saying and divination and banished the practitioners.**
- 6) **He extended his reform to the Northern kingdom. In Samaria and Bethel, he destroyed shrines built by Jeroboam, son of Nabat; as well as slaughtered their priests.**
- 7) **The destruction of the shrines of female cult prostitutes went alongside their male counterparts.**
- 8) **He brought out the Asherah from the temple and burnt it, he ground it to powder and upon the graves of the common people.**
- 9) **He centred all worship at Jerusalem and ordered the priests out of the cities of Judah to go to Jerusalem.**

- 10) **He removed the horses that were dedicated to the sun at the entrance of the temple by the kings of Judah.**

Josiah's reforms, steadfastness and faithfulness to God brought him into God's good books

Similarities Between Today's Religious Situations and that of Josiah

1. **Crimes and various vices are rampant in our society and the church today.**
2. **There are many corrupt preachers in our society and the church today.**
3. **Existence of corruption and evil practices in our society today and churches as well.**
4. **In place of true worship of God, Nigerians today are worshipping idols and materialism. E.g. money and mammon.**
5. **As it was in the days of Josiah when the people were filled with immoral acts, so also we have in our society today, people we think are practicing the religion are doing something else.**

WAYS CAN THE CHURCH FIGHT AGAINST IMMORAL ACTS IN THE SOCIETY

1. Counselling those who go astray.
2. Christians' living an exemplary life as doers of God's word.
3. Helping the needy in the society.
4. Christians' speaking against social injustices or corruption.
5. Avoidance of partiality.

Significance of Josiah's Reforms

- i. Josiah's reforms brought about spiritual revival in Israel. The temple in Jerusalem was repaired and established as the legitimate centre of worship in Israel.
- ii. The reforms made the people to rededicate themselves to the service of God.
- iii. They gave the worship of God added impetus, significance and stronghold.
- iv. The ordinances and statutes of God were now made clearer to the people.
- v. Public morality received a boost even as the corporate image of the nation received good laundry.
- vi. They offered an opportunity for the people to take stock of their relationship with God, with an aim of making amends and reconciling. This is a lesson for our leaders.
- vii.

Lessons to Learn from Josiah's Religious Reforms

- i. **Age is no barrier to good leadership.**

- ii. Any reformation or stock-taking should begin with the leader himself.
- iii. Although Josiah's fathers did what was evil in the sight of God, he did not follow their steps
- iv. People / leaders should not follow bad examples of their elders and predecessors.
- v. People should endeavour to emulate good things and abhor evil at all times.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: RELIGIOUS REFORMS

- 1.(a) Describe Josiah's immediate response to the discovery of the Book of the law in the temple.
 - (b) In what TWO ways is the religious situation today similar to that of Josiah's time? (WASSCE June, 1993)
 2. Discuss the various religious reforms carried out by Josiah.
 3. Explain the significance of Josiah's religious reforms.
- Enumerate the various lessons derivable from Josiah's reforms.
5. What role did the book of law play in Josiah's reforms?
 6. What nature of reforms could be carried out today in our society in terms of religion?
 7. (a) How was the book of the law discovered in the reign of King Josiah?
 - (b) What religious reforms did King Josiah execute during his tenure? (NECO June 2002)
 8. State FOUR ways by which Christians can maintain the purity of their religion. (WASSCE Nov. 2002)

CRS LESSON NOTES FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK, LESSON 1

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION

SUBTOPIC: KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S ATTACK ON JUDAH

(II King 24:1-20; 25:1-17)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: II Kings 23:25 – *“Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.”*

Concern for Our Nation

A nation at times undergoes some difficult periods. These may be economic, social, political or socio-religious.

We are said to show concern for our nation when we are concerned about the problems of our nation, showing dissatisfaction with existing deplorable conditions and have a strong desire to do something positive to change, correct or improve upon the situation.

The Condition of The Nation

The First Deportation (Defeat and Exile of Judah) – II Kings 24:1-17

When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated Neco of Egypt and Babylonians took over Judah. Jehoiakim became servant for three years of Babylon. Jehoiakim against the Babylonians and this made Nebuchadnezzar to attack Judah repeatedly to weaken her. Later Nebuchadnezzar sent an army to Judah but Jehoiakim died before they arrived.

Jehoiachin, his 18-year-old son became king and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. He gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign. The king of Babylon carried off all the treasures of the temple (the house of LORD) and king's house. He cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the LORD.

The king of Babylon deported (carried away) all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, except the poorest people of the land. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah (Jehoiachin's uncle), king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Second Deportation – II Kings 24:18-20; 25:1-17

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king of Judah. He later rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. This annoyed him (Nebuchadnezzar) who came to Jerusalem with his army, besieged the city for two years and eventually plundered it.

Zedekiah tried to escape, but he was caught by the Babylonians and taken to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah who passed sentence upon him. The Babylonians king killed his sons before his own eyes and later plucked out his eyes. He was then taken in chains to Babylon

Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, he burned the temple, the king's house and all the good buildings and took all the able men captivity to Babylon and left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen. Jerusalem was left desolate.

Effects of war on a nation.

- Famine on a nation.
- High crime rate.
- Other countries might take advantage and conquer the country that is fighting a war, especially if that country is rich in resources.
- Collapse of national economy.
- There will be loss of lives and property.
- War leaves people homeless.
- Poverty.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION
(KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S ATTACK ON JUDAH)

- 1(a) Describe King Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Judah.
(b) List FOUR effects of war on a nation. (WASSCE 2012)
- 2(a) Narrate the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and his men.
(b) Comment on any two points of significance in the story.
- 3(a) Narrate the circumstances that led to the state of the nation of Judah.
(b) What is the state or condition of your country today?
- 4(a) Give an account of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians during the reign of King Zedekiah.
(b) Identify FOUR causes of social unrest today in Africa. (WASSCE 2002)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK, LESSON 2

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR HIS NATION

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Nehemiah 1:4 – *"When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven."*

Report on the condition of Jewish Nation (The news about the state of affairs in Jerusalem) - Nehemiah 1:1-3.

Following the conquest of Israel by Babylon, Israel did not exist again as a nation. Most of the people were taken as captives to Babylon, though they were not enslaved but they settled in a particular area of the land. They were allowed to own property and practice their religion.

Prophets were also taken to exile like Jeremiah, Nehemiah and Ezekiel also ministered to their people while in exile. Gradually many Jews in Babylon became prosperous while others attained high position of authority.

Later, Persia defeated Babylon and became world power with Susa as its capital. Babylon and its empire became were now under the Persian king Artaxerxes. Under him, many Jews became high-ranking officers, including Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was the king's cup-bearer, he had an unrestricted access to the king and later used his position for the welfare of his people. It was not long that a delegation from Jerusalem visited Babylon. The delegation was led by Hanani, one of Nehemiah's brethren. Hanani briefed Nehemiah on the condition of the once glamorous city of Jerusalem.

They told Nehemiah that: "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire. When Nehemiah heard these words he sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and he continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah's Prayer On Receiving The News about the state of affairs in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:5-11)

Nehemiah prayed that God should hear the prayers of His servant. He confessed that he and his father's house had sinned and not kept the commandments, statutes and ordinances as commanded by Moses.

He therefore asked God to remember His words to Moses that if they were unfaithful, He would scatter them among the peoples. But if they return to Him (God) and keep His commandments and do them, though their dispersed be under the farthest skies, He will gather them thence and bring them to the place which I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.

Nehemiah further reminded God that He had redeemed His people by His great power and great hand. He therefore prayed to God to grant him success and mercy.

Virtues that can be learnt from Nehemiah's reaction.

- Nehemiah was seen to be patriotic and it pays to be patriotic and nationalistic.
- Nehemiah was a man of prayer, he confess the sins of his people. A prayerful life is necessary for success in every situation.
- We as Christians should always intercede for our nation.
- There is the need for a nation to confess their sins. Hence, Nehemiah was conscious of the nation's wrongdoings and confessed to God.
- There is the need for national repentance.
- It is also important to have faith in God.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR HIS NATION)

- 1.(a)i. Explain how Nehemiah received the news about the state of affairs in Jerusalem.
ii. Relate Nehemiah's prayer when he received the news.
- (b) Identify THREE virtues that can be learnt from Nehemiah's reaction. (WASSCE 2006)

CRS LESSON NOTES FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK, LESSON 1

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM (Neh. 2:9-20; 4:1-23)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Nehemiah 2:20 – *"Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build; ..."*

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls (The Events That Led Nehemiah To Embark In The Rebuilding Of The Walls Of Jerusalem) – Neh. 2:9-20.

Nehemiah, by the good hand of LORD had obtained letter of authority from King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem. The king sent Nehemiah with officers of the army and horsemen. When he got to Judah and Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

So Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and was there three days. Nehemiah arose in the night and a few men with him; and he told no one what his God had put into his heart to do for Jerusalem. The officials did not know where he had gone or what he was doing; and he had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work.

Then Nehemiah addressed the people and gave them a challenge, *"Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace."*

The people responded to the challenge courageously, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. But Samballat and Tobiah opposed the reconstruction works which was however completed.

Rebuilding of The City Wall Despite The Opposition – Neh. 4:1-23.

Nehemiah was not the only Jew who undertook to rebuild Jerusalem. Before him, Zerubbabel and Ezra had made attempt to build.

When Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he ridiculed the Jews. Tobiah in his own mockery of the Jews said, "Yes, what they are building--if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!

Nehemiah himself did not take action against his enemies but called down on them a redress from God. Later, the enemies planned to disrupt the work by attacking Nehemiah and his men unawares.

But Nehemiah got to know of the planned attack, that is, to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. They prayed to God, and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

The enemies, however, refrained from the planned attack. They employed various means to sabotage the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Very many people who were inspired with nationalistic zeal eventually volunteered to join in the rebuilding of the walls of the city. Nehemiah eventually completed the project, with a unique determination and sense of purpose.

Lessons Learnt from Nehemiah's Rebuilding of the Wall

- Nehemiah showed a spirit of love for his nation.
- Nehemiah was committed and showed great concern for his people and country or nation.
- He mobilized his people for the reconstruction.
- Nehemiah's faith in God was demonstrated through prayer.
- It shows that, there are bound to be opposition in the service of any nation like the actions of the Samballat and Tobiah, but victory is sure.
- We should not be afraid to perform our responsibilities even in the midst of dangers.
- We should use our position (like Nehemiah) to help our nation.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)

(REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM)

- 1(a) What necessitated Nehemiah to embark on the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem?
(b) What assistance did he get from the king?
2. What do we learn from Nehemiah's role in the construction of the city wall?
3. (a) Trace the events that led Nehemiah to embark in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.
(b) What do we learn from Nehemiah's role in the construction of the city wall? (WASSCE 1990)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE’S NATION (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: THE RETURN OF THE EXILES.

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Ezra 1:2 – *“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.”*

The Return Of The Exiles From Babylon During The Reign Of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-11)

During the first year of King Cyrus of Persia 538BC, the LORD stirred up his spirit so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom which he put in writing, that the LORD, the God of heaven, has given him all the kingdoms of the earth and therefore charged him to build a house for Him in Jerusalem.

Hence, he directed that interested Jews among the exiles are allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel (the temple).

He ordered that such returnees should be assisted with silver, gold, goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. Thus legal and financial assistance were promised and given.

In quick response, the heads of families, the priests and the Levites and others whose spirit God had stirred by this request made by Cyrus, rose up to the situation. Other like minds rendered all physical assistance in cash and kind. They were assisted with vessels of silver, gold, goods, beasts and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered.

King Cyrus on his part brought out all the vessels of the house of the LORD which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and handed them over to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah who was the head of the returnees.

Sheshbazzar and a large company of the exiles left Babylon with these items.

Reasons for the positive response from the people.

- ✓ Their return was a confirmation of God’s promise to His people.
- ✓ Freedom was seen as a blessing while slavery was seen as a curse to any person or nation.
- ✓ The feeling of nationalism and patriotism was made possible.
- ✓ The freedom to practice their culture and religion at home as against the constraint in foreign land was cherished.
- ✓ The belief that home is home.

Effects of The Exile on Judah

- The exile was God’s way of punishing Israel for abandoning the Almighty God:
 - It made the people of Israel to realize their sinfulness.
 - It created in them the desire to come back to God.
 - It awakened in them the spirit of nationalism which led Nehemiah and others back to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)
(THE RETURN OF THE EXILES.)

- 1(a) What circumstances led to the return of the exiles during the reign of Cyrus?
(b) What specific assignment did the king give to the returning exiles?
- 2(a) Describe the return of the Exiles from Babylon during the reign of Cyrus.
(b) Give TWO reasons why those for the positive response from the people. (WASSCE 2000)

CRS LESSON NOTES FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 1

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

(Ezra 4:1-24; 5:1-2; 6:13-15, 16-22; 7:1-10)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Ezra 6:14 – *“And the elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of Israel ...”*

Opposition and Suspension of Rebuilding The Temple – Ezra 4:1-24

When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the leaders of the people and said to them, *“Let us build with you; for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here.”*

Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest of the leaders refused and stated that they alone would build to the LORD as commanded by King Cyrus the king of Persia. Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

In the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. Also, in the reign of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated. The letter informed the king that Jerusalem was a rebellious and wicked city.

The king (Artaxerxes), as a result ordered the work on the house of God which is in Jerusalem stopped; and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Prophecy of Prophets Haggai and Zechariah – Ezra 5:1-2

Prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

Resumption of Work, Completion and Dedication of The Temple – Ezra 6:13-15, 16-22.

Work resumed on the temple during the reign of King Darius who made a search and found the decree by King Cyrus concerning the house of God in Jerusalem. King Darius, as a result made a decree that the house of the LORD be built with all diligence.

The elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building in 515BC, by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia; the building was completed in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

The Jews and the returned exiles celebrated the dedication of the temple with joy. They set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses for the service of God in Jerusalem.

They kept the feast of unleavened bread for seven days with joy for the LORD had made them joyful.

Ezra Went To Jerusalem from Babylonia – Ezra 7:1-10

- ❖ After this, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra went up from Babylonia.
- ❖ He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses which the LORD the God of Israel had given.
- ❖ The king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.
- ❖ Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Lessons and Significance of The Study on Concern for One's Nation

- ✓ War is not good for any nation.
- ✓ Though the Jews were in prominent position in Babylonia government while in exile, yet they were not carried away so as to forget their own country. Therefore, we should use whatever position we find ourselves to develop our nation.
- ✓ People should not their home nation anywhere they find themselves.
- ✓ There must be a positive concern for our nation on our part. Everybody should be involved.
- ✓ Everybody must contribute his or her part in national building by paying expected taxes and levies.
- ✓ The activities of Jerusalem, Joshua and Ezra showed that nation building is achieved greatly by joint effort.
- ✓ Even in the midst of danger, we should not be afraid to perform our responsibilities. Nehemiah at the risks of death from armed opposition was not deterred in his service to his people.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION (CONTS.)

(REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM)

- 1(a) What circumstances led to the suspension of work on the temple?
(b) List TWO faults against Israel that led to the suspension of the work.
- 2(a) Narrate the circumstances that led to the completion of the temple.
(b) State TWO lessons that can be learnt from the exile.

- 3(a) What problems did the returning exiles face in the rebuilding of the temple?
(b) What lessons do we learn from the obstacles that faced them? (WASSCE)

TOPIC: FAITH IN GOD

SUBTOPIC: FAITH AND COURAGE

(Daniel 3:1-30)

Faith and Courage

Faith and trust are interchangeable. Both imply in God's ability to solve any problem one encounters, abandoning self-interest, self-reliance, arrogance, pride and self-trust.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith implies firmness in one's confidence in God in the midst of unfavourable circumstances.

Faith can also mean man's personal conviction and trust in God arising from a direct spiritual relationship with God.

Courage is the ability to face opposition, persecution or hardship without fear.

Courage itself implies total boldness, firm stance and fearlessness in the midst of unfavourable circumstances.

Courage gives us the power to be loyal to God and not to give in to the enemy.

The lessons on Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego will throw more light on the issue of faith and courage.

The Background of The Four Jews (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego)

In 598BC when king Nebuchadnezzar over-ran Judah and took its people to exile in Babylon, among the young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. King Nebuchadnezzar renamed them. Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION SUFFERED BY SHADRACH, MESACH AND ABEDNEGO

The command to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's image (Daniel 3:1-7)

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon during his reign made and set up an image of gold on the plains of Dura and assembled all his nobles to worship it at the sound of the Royal music, all his subjects including the three Jews Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were to bow and worship the image. Anyone who failed to do so according to his decree will be thrown into the fiery furnace (burning fire).

As soon as the royal music played, all the subjects were ready to bow down and worshipped the image, except the three Jews (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) who were high ranking officers that refused to bow and worship the image.

Refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to worship the King's image (Dan. 3:13-18).

The Chaldean officials reported to King Nebuchadnezzar how the three Jewish officials disobeyed the king's order. Provoked by their actions, the king ordered the three Jews before him and gave them chance to comply or face the consequences

The three told king Nebuchadnezzar that they had no answer to give, for the God they worship was able to deliver them. But even if no deliverance was forthcoming, nothing would compel them to succumb to his threat and worship his golden image.

Punishment of the refusal and God's deliverance (Dan. 3:19-23)

The king, on hearing this, ordered that the furnace be heated seven times more, and his mighty men to cast the three Jews into the furnace. This they did. But the men that threw the three Jews into the furnace died due to the great heat from the furnace. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were bound in their clothes before they were thrown into the furnace were not hurt.

The king was surprised that he saw four men (Dan. 3:24-28) as against the three Jews thrown into the fire. King Nebuchadnezzar said that: *"But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."*

The king came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace and called out the three men. They answered and came out unhurt to the amazement of everybody.

Effects of their faith and courage on the people of Babylon and Jews (Dan. 3:29-30)

Nebuchadnezzar blessed the God of the Jews who did not allow them to be hurt and decreed instantly that any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Points of Significance On The Account Of The Religious Persecution Suffered By Shadrach, Mesach And Abednego

- The unshaken demonstration of faith, trust and firmness in the God these three Jews (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) worshipped.
- The courage or boldness of the three Jews in the face of all odds (including death) was also unique and should be emulated by Christians.
- They never doubted that God would deliver them from the hands of king Nebuchadnezzar.
- It shows that God as trustworthy that could be relied upon at any time.
- The universality of God and His angels (e.g the fourth man in the fire) is unique and manifested on this important occasion.
- Since the incidence happened outside Israel, it shows that God is the God of all races and could use anybody to propagate His work. Hence, king Nebuchadnezzar passed a decree of total worship of the God of the Jews, who is the true God.

Examples of cultural practices which are contrary to the Christian faith in your society.

- The crude practice of female children's circumcision which is seen to be scientifically, dangerously and religiously unacceptable.
- Burial ceremonies of kings and chiefs where human beings are sacrificed or killed to act as escort to the king in his journey to the grave.
- The worship of the goddess of the earth (Ani) among the Igbos believed to enhance fertility before planting seasons commence instead of seeing God as the Creator and sustainer of all things.
- Activities of secret cult or societies are also contradicting to Christian religion.
- The new yam festival celebrated annually in most areas in Nigeria before new yams could be eaten after harvest.
- The Ogun (god of iron) festival celebrated in some parts of Yorubaland where people worship the pieces of iron as god instead of the Supreme God.
- There are masquerades and other idols worshipped as gods in some places in Nigeria when women should not come out.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: FAITH AND COURAGE

1. Give account of the religious persecution suffered by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and comment on any point of significance about it. (WASSCE 1988, Q2)
2. (a) Explain how the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was tested in Babylon.
(b) Give FOUR examples of cultural practices which are contrary to the Christian faith in your society. (WASCE 2007)

TOPIC: FAITH IN GOD

SUBTOPIC: FAITH AND POWER OF GOD

(Daniel 6:1-28)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Mark 10:27 – *"Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*

The story of Daniel in which his faith was put to test

Daniel who found favour in the sight of king Darius was appointed as one of the presidents to govern 120 satraps of his empire. Due to this he was to be made the chief administrative officer, a prestigious position which was envied by the other presidents.

The other presidents and satraps out of jealousy persuaded the king to sign into law and make a decree that anyone, who made petition to a god or man except the king, for a period of thirty days would be thrown into a lion's den.

Daniel ignoring this decree, continued with his prayers to God three times daily. He was caught in the act by his conspirators who accused him for disobeying the decree. Daniel was brought before king Darius, tried and was ordered to be cast into the lion's den.

While Daniel was in the lion's den, king Darius continuously prayed and fasted for Daniel's safety (Daniel 6 :16-18), thus "may your God whom you serve continually deliver you!" king Darius then ordered that a stone be placed upon the entrance of the den and sealed it with his signet. The king became downcast throughout the time Daniel remained in the den.

On the following day, the king rose early and went in a haste to the lion's den where Daniel was and cried out in a tone of anguish on to Daniel "O Daniel, the servant of the living God, has your God whom you continually serve been able to deliver you from the Lions" (Daniel 6:20).

When the king realized that Daniel was still alive, with great joy, he ordered him to be brought out and commanded Daniel's conspirators and their families to be thrown into the den of lions. King Darius finally issued a decree that everybody in his empire should worship the God of Daniel. And Daniel prospered during the reign of king Darius and Cyrus the Persian. (Daniel 6:26-28)

Suggestions to prevent day priests facing opposition.

- Priests are to maintain their firmness in God.
- The church should embark on fasting and prayers.
- Priest should be advised to continue to grow, strong in faith with God.
- Priest should update themselves educationally and in current affairs and should not relax and be self-sufficient in knowledge.

Lessons Learnt From The Life of Daniel

- The faith and courage Daniel had made him steadfast in his obedience to God even in period of trial. This is worthy of emulation.
- Those who spend time plotting evil against innocent people, in most cases perish by their evil plot while the innocent is set free.
- Faithfulness to God (as of Daniel) could make any authority or person to be loved, or favourably inclined to the children of God.
- Our faith and steadfastness in God could lead to our recognition and enhance conversion of non-believers to God as was the case of the pagan King Darius who acknowledged the God of Daniel.
- Those who proved to be the enemies of God or enemies of those who serve God will never go unpunished, just as the transgressors fall into the pit they dug for Daniel.
- We should be conscious of the presence of God wherever we find ourselves.
- No matter how much we are threatened by our tormentors, we should stand firm and trust God.
- Let us not be afraid to proclaim our faith in God or to defend our allegiance to God even in danger just as exhibited by Daniel and other three Jews.

Lessons to Present-day Priests and Evangelists

- Some priests and evangelist may be facing opposition in the work of God like Daniel, such people are advised to dedicate more time and their church to prayer and fasting for God's support and strengthening of faith.
- Maintaining personal moral integrity and holiness are needed to ensure continuous presence of God with them when facing opposition.
- Where the opposition that is a treat to life, they should report to the authorities of the land.

ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Highlight qualities of Daniel from the following Bible verses: (Daniel 1:3-8, 6:3-5,10, 16:6; 22-23)

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: Faith and Power of God

1. (a) Trace the circumstances that caused Daniel to be cast into the lion's den.

(b) What TWO lessons can we learn from this episode? WASSCE 1989, Q3.

2. Narrate the story of Daniel in which his faith was put to test. What TWO suggestions would you give to a present-day priest who faces opposition in his work of evangelization? (WASSCE 1995)

3(a) Describe God's intervention on behalf of Daniel when he was thrown into the lion's den.

(b) Identify any THREE ways faith in God and His power can influence people to worship. (NECO 2019)

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CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 – WEEK , LESSON 1

TOPIC: SOCIAL JUSTICE.

(Amos 2:6-8; 4:1-3; 5:1-24.)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Amos 2:6 – *"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes--."*

Meaning of Social Justice

Social justice is the recognition that all men are created equal and all are therefore equal before the law. It is the recognition of the rights of individual in the society.

It is the practice whereby we make sure that there is no oppression or discrimination against anyone in the society on the ground of race, nationality, culture, tribe, political affiliation, religious belief or socio-economic status.

SOCIAL LIFE OF ISRAEL DURING THE TIME OF AMOS (AREAS OF SOCIAL DECAY WHICH AMOS ATTACKED)

Amos 2:6-8; 4:1-3, 5:1-24.

Amos was one of the eighth century prophets who though from southern kingdom prophesied in the Northern kingdom of Israel.

The main theme of Amos' prophecy in Israel was on JUSTICE and RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The prevalent situation that Amos addressed were:

The wealthy sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes... That is, the general oppression of the poor by the wealthy.

- The judges took bribes and perverted justice.
- The poor had no fair trial in the court.
- The poor were exploited by the rich.
- The alarming level of prostitution that even a son and his father could have sexual intercourse with the same woman.
- At the altar, the rich men sat on clothes given as pledge to them by their poor debtors and also drank wine of those who had been fined.
- Their women who fed on the proceeds of their husbands' oppression of the poor drank wines from bowls. Hence, Amos referred to them as 'cows of Bashan'.
- The rich built houses of hewn stone and lived and lived in great luxury with proceeds derived from their cheating of the poor.
- In the markets, the rich used false weight and measures.
- In spite of various forms of punishments, famine, drought, blight and mildew, locust infestation and all curses of Egypt, defeat and slaughter of the young men in battles, depopulation, etc. Following their refusal to listen to the voice of God, they should be prepared for total doom / God's wrath instead of desiring the day of the LORD.

Amos' Encounter with Amaziah (The circumstances which brought Amos face to face with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel) - Amos 7:10-17.

Amaziah was the priest in charge of king Jeroboam's chapel (sanctuary) in Bethel. He was a professional prophet i.e. paid for his job as a prophet. He prophesied favourable, comfortable prophecies to the king.

Amos denounced the high places of Israel and pronounced that God would rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. Then Amaziah (the priest of Bethel) sent word to king Jeroboam that Amos has conspired against him (the land is not able to bear all these words). He has that Jeroboam shall die by the sword; Israel must go into exile. To Amos, Amaziah said, "O seer, go, flee to the land of Judah, eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel". Amos replied: "I'm no prophet, nor prophet's son. I am a dresser of sycamore trees." The Lord took me from following the flock to go and prophesy to my people Israel.

Therefore, for ordering me to shut up, Amos told him to hear the word of the LORD against him (Amaziah):

- a) His wife shall become a harlot in the city.
- b) His sons and daughters would be slain by the sword.

- c) His land would be parcelled (divided) out by line.
- d) He himself would die in an unclean land (foreign land)
- e) Israel would surely go into exile away from its land.

Reasons Why Those Who Oppose God Should Be Condemned

- Since God is our creator, it is condemnable to oppose Him.
- Opponents of God are evil to others, they deceive others.
- They should be opposed because their teaching leads to unhappiness or distraction.
- They violate God's law or word or will.

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: SOCIAL JUSTICE (CONTS.)

(Amos 2:6-8; 4:1-2, 5:7-13; 8:1-14)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: I Cor. 6:9-10 – *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”*

SOCIAL VICES (SINS) CONDEMNED BY AMOS WHICH ARE STILL IN PREVALENT (RAMPANT) IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY

These sins/vices include:

- Oppression of the poor by the wealthy.
- Sexual immorality: fornication, adultery, pornography, prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest and other sexual sins are very rampant.
- Merchants, low wages paid to the poor for services rendered to their employees, etc.
- Injustice in the courts: the accused rich bribe their way through in the courts and the poor rarely receive justice.
- False swearing/bearing false witnesses.
- Cheating in business: some rich and influential businessmen have perfected the art of edging or push the poor out of business.
- Luxury: with much of the national revenue in the hands of a rich few who daily become richer at the expense of the poor, the rich build palaces and own expensive cars. They indulge in all forms of luxury at the expense of the poor.
- Cult prostitution (marriage to gods and priests).
- Cheating in markets with false measures/weights.
- Idolatry/false worship/false prophets.
- Paying lip service to God.
- Robbing the poor of their properties such as lands, houses, etc.

- Not keeping the Sabbath and feast days holy.

AMOS' VISION OF A BASKET RIPE OF FRUIT (A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT)

Amos 8:1-14

Prophet Amos, was among the shepherds from a hilly country town called Tekoa. God showed Amos a basket of ripe fruit (a basket of summer fruit) which represents harvest time/ripe quickly deteriorates. God would no longer spare His people Israel. So, Israel was ripe for punishment. The songs of the temple would turn into wailings. Joy would be turned and silence of despair would exist. There would be many dead bodies in every place.

Amos saw the end of those who trample upon the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end. Those who ask when will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain; and the Sabbath, that they may offer wheat for sale, that they may make the ephah small (ephah is a measurement for selling foodstuff) and the shekel great, (shekel is money) and deal deceitfully with false balances, that they may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and sell the refuse of the wheat.

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The LORD would make sun to go down in broad-day light. Their feasts would be turned into mourning, and all they songs into lamentation. The LORD would bring sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness on every head; He would make it like the mourning for an only son, and the end of it like a bitter day.

God will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.

The fair virgins and their young men shall faint for thirst; both physical and spiritual thirst. They shall fall, and never rise again.

RISKS OFTEN FACED BY THOSE WHO CARRY OUT DIVINE MESSAGES

The risks often faced by those who carry out divine messages include the following:

- Persecution.
- Denial of promotion.
- Loss of job.
- Hatred and castigation.
- Death, etc.

In spite of all these, there is the need to remain steadfast.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: SOCIAL JUSTICE.

1. 'I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees....' Give an account that led to this statement. What else did the speaker say on this occasion? (WASSCE 1996)
2. (a) Describe the circumstances which brought Amos face to face with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel.
(b) Give TWO reasons why those who oppose God should be condemned. (WASSCE 2000)

3. (a) Describe social life of Israel during the time of Amos.
(b) Mention FOUR vices condemned by Amos which are still in rampant in your society. (WASSCE 2002).
4. (a) Outline Amos' vision of a basket ripe of fruit.
(b) State THREE practices that Amos condemned. (WASSCE 2014)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 –THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 1

TOPIC: TRUE RELIGION

(Amos 2:6-8; 4:1-2, 5:1-24; 8:1-14)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: James 1:27 – *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

TRUE RELIGION (Amos 5:21-24)

- ✓ True religion: It is not merely attending Church services, programmes and contributing to the Church. (Amos 5:21-23, 25, 4:4-5) It demands purity of heart, honest desire and justice. (Amos 5:4, 14-15; 24)
- ✓ True religion demands purity of heart, honest desires and faithfulness to God.
- ✓ According to Amos, true religion is described as one which justice and righteousness flow like an endless stream. That is, being just and righteous.

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICES WHICH AMOS CONDEMNED IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ISRAEL

(Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-23; 8:4-6, 13-14)

- 1) Attendance of sanctuaries and of worship. (Amos 4:4-5)
Amos condemned peoples attitude of trooping out on every Sabbath and ceremonial days to all worshipping centres; Bethel, Dan, Gilgal and Beersheba. Amos discovered that their actions amounted to lip-service to religion and multiplication of sins and transgressions. The places meant for the worshipping of God (sanctuaries) were abodes of dividing cult prostitution with a view to profaning the name of the lord.
Solemn assemblies. (Amos 5:21-23)
- 2) The people's pretense of attending solemn assemblies was used as a camouflage to practice, heathen orgies copied from the nations. The people in their false worship, danced to the noise, of their music they offered tithes and free will offerings. These were far of the items they got from the poor. God pronounced that he will no longer appreciate their false assemblies.
- 3) Observances of holy days. (Amos 8:4-6)
The Sabbath days, the festival of the new moon and all other feasts were no longer kept holy. They were to keep these days holy, instead, the days constituted a hindrance for them to have all the time to amass and to oppress the poor. They wished that the days were shortened in order to allow them to make more wealth.
- 4) False swearing. (Amos 8:13-14)
As a result of their contact with false and foreign religion, they had adopted the habit of

swearing to heathen gods, e.g. Ashimah of Samaria, the god of Dan. The LORD would inevitably punish them for this single act for he would no longer tolerate it.

THINGS AMOS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLACE OF THE WRONG PRACTICES WHICH AMOS CONDEMNED IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ISRAEL

1. Israel should seek God and live.
2. They must come back to God to ensure national survival.
3. They should hate evil and love good.
4. They must do away with foreign religion and heathen practice that are contrary to God's wishes.
5. Failure to do this, the day of the lord will be a day of gloom and darkness and not of glory.
6. The importance of returning to the lord is by allowing justice to roll down like water and righteousness like an overflowing stream.
7. Justice should be established in the gates.

PUNISHMENTS AMOS WARNED ISRAEL ABOUT IF THEY FAILED TO REPENT.

(Amos 2:6; 4; 5:1-24; 7:10-17; 8:1-14)

Punishment Amos warned Israel about include:

- (i) As Amos prophesied the transgressions of Israel, God made it clear to them that He not revoke the punishments if they refused to repent.
- (ii) Amos prophesied that the Samaritan women would be taken to exile in hooks like a fish and cast into Harmon.
- (iii) The women who supported their husbands to oppress the poor would be humiliated and also taken into exile.
- (iv) People who cheated the poor to build hewn houses would not dwell in them nor would they live to drink the wine of the vineyards they planted. They would suffer exile as their punishment.
- (v) In all the squares, there shall be wailing, and in all the streets they shall say, Alas!, alas!. This implies that the people would endure bitter punishment leading to wailings here and there.
- (vi) Their wives would be harlots in the city and their sons and daughters would fall by the sword. This implies that, a nation would attack and defeat Israel and send them into exile.
- (vii) All businessmen who exploited the poor in the course of their transactions would have their hope dashed while their feasts would turn into mourning.
- (viii) Those who looked forward to the day of the LORD as a day of joy and exoneration would be disappointed as it would turn out to be a day of judgement and severe punishment.
- (ix) Worship involving sacrifices, prayers, songs of feast and sacred days would incur God's displeasure, hatred and rejection.
- (x) Their songs of thanksgiving for harvest would be turned into sadness.

- (xi) God will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: TRUE RELIGION.

1. Describe any THREE practices which Amos condemned in the religious life of Israel and indicate the THREE things he recommended in their place. (WASCE 1991)
2. (a) Highlight FOUR punishments Amos warned Israel about if they failed to repent.
(b) List THREE sins Amos condemned which are prevalent in our society today. (WASSCE 2018)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: DIVINE LOVE

(Hosea chapters 1 to 4; 6:1-11; 14.)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

HOSEA’S THEME MESSAGE

Hosea’s message is on the permanence of divine love. The book of Hosea is meant to illustrate God’s love and mercy. Hosea teaches that repentance and restoration could be attained through steadfast love and knowledge of God. Hosea described Israel’s relationship with God as that of a faithless wife and a loving husband.

HOSEA’S MARRIAGE WITH GOMER AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAMES OF HIS CHILDREN.

God instructed prophet Hosea, son of Beeri to marry a harlot named Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. God told Hosea: "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry, for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the LORD." Gomer typifies Israel. Hosea is generally referred to as prophet of love.

From the marriage, THREE children were born.

- The first child a son was named Jezreel meaning vengeance. That is, God will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel and would put an end to the House of Israel.
- The second child, a daughter was named Loruhamah (**‘Not Pitied’**). Meaning that God would no longer have pity on the House of Israel to forgive them at all.
- The third child, a son was named Loammi (**‘Not my people’**). Meaning that Israel will no longer be God’s people neither would God be their God.

Gomer in her harlotry abandoned Hosea and her three children and went after her lovers (other men) to become a temple prostitute.

Out of love, Hosea implored Gomer to come back but she refused. He asked his children to plead with their mother to return home but she did not. Gomer was influenced by the worldly things she was getting from her lovers (other gods).

Finally, Hosea had to buy her back from those men. Despite Gomer’s unfaithfulness and disappointment, Hosea’s love for her persisted and did not fade.

INTERPRETATION OF HOSEA’S MARRIAGE WITH GOMER

The story of Hosea and Gomer his wife was similar to the story of God and the children of Israel. It was a demonstration of God's love for Israel. God loved Israel but they left God to worship other gods. This symbolized Israel's harlotry just like Gomer's harlotry to prophet Hosea.

The names of the children of Hosea are similar to the punishment Israel will receive from God.

WHY NAMES ARE SIGNIFICANT IN OUR SOCIETY

Names are significant in our society for the following reasons:

- The name of a child indicates the character and circumstances surrounding the birth of a child.
- Names point to the position and title held by parents at the time of birth.
- Names point to the desire of parents, that is, what the parents want their children to be.
- Names are used in remembrance of their ancestors. (E.g. Babatunde or Iyabo in Yorubaland meaning father or mother has come back)
- Names could represent the position of a child in the family.
- A child could be named in commemoration of important events in the family and village.
- Name could be to indicate ethnic / tribal and religious identity.

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 –THIRD TERM WEEK LESSON 1

TOPIC: DIVINE LOVE (CONTS.)

(Hosea 6:1-11 and chapter 14)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Hosea 6:6 – *“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.”*

Factors That Ensure A Stable Marriage

- There must be mutual trust, respect and understanding.
- Economic security and prudent use of financial resources.
- Existence of effective communication and quality time with each other.
- Endurance or patience and courage to withstand family problems and friends.
- Spirit of forgiveness, no matter the offence or circumstance.
- Praying together, a family that prays together stays together.
- Faithfulness and commitment are essential.

How God's Love was Demonstrated for Israel – Hosea 6

- Just as Hosea tried to win his wife back, God also tried to bring back Israel with righteousness and justice.
- In spite of Israel's unfaithfulness, God still remained faithful.
- God promised future glory and unity of Israel and Judah.
- Provision of their needs in spite of disappointment.
- God provides messengers to recall them to faithfulness to God in His love.
- For God's love to be permanent, it must be reciprocal.

- God's covenant with Israel is unchangeable. Once Israel repents of their sins, God will surely forgive them. He is a covenant keeping God.
- God's punishment for Israel was to serve as corrective or disciplinary measure. God is willing to bring her back, just like Hosea brought back his wife Gomer back despite her unfaithfulness.

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE (Hosea 6:1-11; 14)

God loves mankind but we rarely respond to this love. We tend to remember God only when the need arises and as soon as we are okay, we go back to our sinful ways.

Israel's immediate response to God was not genuine, it was superficial and short-lived. They worshipped God with their lips but their hearts were far from him. They went back to their idolatry. Hosea 6:1-3 portrays their attitude and motive. They failed to deal with root cause of their suffering.

Hosea 6:6 – *"For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings."* Israel believed that God delights in sacrifices alone. God looks at the heart not actions as proof of love.

All God desired was not just a mere plea for mercy but a permanent relationship. Mere rituals and sacrifices will not be enough, but must be matched with genuine repentance.

EXPECTED CHRISTIAN'S TRUE RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE TODAY

Expected Christian's true response to God's love today are:

- We must seek to find out the genesis or origin of our sin and how we incurred God's wrath, before we begin to repent or ask for pardon. That is, one should find out the root/foundation of where he/she has missed it.
- Once we find out the root of our sin, we can then confess it unto God.
- We must try to forsake any confessed sin.
- If we discover the root of our sins, repent and forsake them, God will heal our unfaithfulness, love us freely, turn His anger away from us, bless us materially as well as protect us (Hosea 14:4-8)

LESSONS LEARNT FROM HOSEA

1. We are like a wife to God. He wants us to be faithful to Him. He will always be jealous of us as Hosea was jealous of his wife when she ran after her lovers.
2. Many Christians are in church today just for material gains. They forsake God once they get it.
3. Offering sacrifices without love does not impress God.
4. God is a loving father and is willing to forgive us when we repent.
5. Many Christians lack genuine love for God.
6. The God we serve is a merciful God. In spite of our sins today, He is still willing to take us back if we repent.
7. Christians cannot use tithe and offerings to appease God. What He needs from His children is steadfast love and faithfulness.

God promises restoration for those who return to Him in repentance (Hosea 14)

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: DIVINE LOVE

1. Describe Hosea's marital experience and how it demonstrates God's love for Israel. (WASSCE 1997)
2. (a) (i) Mention the names of Hosea's three children.
(ii) Explain the meaning of each of the names.
(b) In what THREE ways are names significant in your society? (WASSCE 2005)
3. (a) Relate the story of Hosea's marriage to Gomer.
(b) Mention three factors that ensure a stable marriage. (WASSCE 2016)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK LESSON 2

TOPIC: THE MESSAGE OF GOD

SUBTOPIC: THE MESSENGER – JONAH AS THE MESSENGER

(Jonah 1 – 2)

Rom. 10:13-14 – *"For, "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?"*

The Experience Of Jonah As He Flew From The Presence Of God To Tarshish. (Jonah 1 & 2)

God called Jonah the son of Amittai and sent him to announce His word (cry against the city of Nineveh) to the Ninevites; that their wickedness had come up before Him.

Jonah fled to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. The rebellious Jonah's flight was cut short by a storm sent by the LORD.

The mariners were afraid and each person on board cried to his god. They threw their wares in the ship into the sea to lighten it. Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had fast asleep.

The captain of the ship challenged him for sleeping and not calling on his god. Lots were cast and the lot fell on Jonah. They questioned him about his identity and he declared it. He was asked what to be done about him, Jonah then requested to be thrown into the sea, then the sea will quiet down for the mariners. And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the Lord from the belly of the fish and the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited him out upon the dry land.

Jonah's Prayer and His Deliverance

Jonah's prayer was a prayer of deliverance from death in the sea. Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice. (The 'belly of sheol' mean region of darkness and death). The LORD spoke the fish and it vomited Jonah upon the dry land and he began to go the city. Jonah typified Jesus Christ by surrendering himself to be swallowed by the fish (See Matt. 12:40).

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The people of Nineveh repented in dust and ashes after hearing the preaching of Jonah.

Moral Lessons That Could Be Learnt From Jonah's Flight And His Deliverance From Death

- Man cannot run away from God or deceive Him.
- God has a way of making man comply with His will.
- God is omnipresent. That is, He is everywhere.
- God can hear us from anywhere if we pray. E.g. He heard Jonah from the belly of the fish.
- God has a way of forcing man to obey Him if He wants.
- Everything created by God has ear and can be spoken to. God spoke to the fish to vomit Jonah.
- Jonah did not care about the lives of the people of Nineveh, but God cared.
- God punishes the disobedient but forgives if repent.
- The will of God must be uppermost in our lives and not our own will.
- It is not good to disobey God, it may lead to severe punishment or eternal death.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Jonah chapters 3 & 4 before the next lesson.

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 1

TOPIC: THE MESSAGE OF GOD (CONTS.)

SUBTOPIC: THE MESSAGE – JONAH'S MESSAGE.

(Jonah 3 and 4)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: II Pet. 3:9 – *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

THE MESSAGE

Narrate Jonah's message to the Ninevites and their response to it. (Jonah 3:1-10)

For the second time, after Jonah was vomited by the fish that swallowed him, God directed Jonah to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's punishment for their wickedness. Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. He went and told them that: *"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"*

The people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he declared a dry fast for men and beasts (animals).

The people cried to God for forgiveness and they turned from their evil ways. When saw the genuineness of their repentance, He forgave them of their sins and did not destroy the city of Nineveh again.

Jonah's Reaction to The Repentance of the Ninevites – Jonah 4:1-11

When Jonah saw that Nineveh was not destroyed by God again, it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.

He recounted the reason why he didn't want to go Nineveh in the first instance. That he knew that God is a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentance of evil.

Therefore he told God to take his life from him, for it is better for him to die than to live. And the LORD said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry?"

Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

The LORD God appointed a plant, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So he was exceedingly glad because of the plant.

His annoyance came the second day when God appointed a worm which attacked the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die.

To this end, God told Jonah that he was angry because of the plant he did not labour for, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night.

God asked Jonah whether He should not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle.

Lessons that could be drawn from this story as recorded in Jonah 3 & 4.

Lessons that could be drawn from this story include:

- God's message to all sinners and all wicked people is to change their evil ways. Because He is watching whatever we are doing.
- The story shows that God is merciful and He has pity over His people.
- God's grace is universal to everybody.
- Fasting and prayer, if done with a humble heart, may make God to forgive.
- God forgives those who repent of their sins.
- Jonah wished the people of Nineveh to have perished, but this is not the way of God. God is ready to forgive and reconcile with us if we repent genuinely.
- As Christians, we should learn to forgive others anytime they offend us.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: THE MESSAGE OF GOD

1(a) How did Jonah react to God's message?

(b) What TWO lessons do we learn about the nature of God from this episode? (WASSCE June, 1988)

2(a) Discuss the experience of Jonah in the belly of fish and in Nineveh.

(b) What TWO lessons did he learn from the experience? (WASSCE 1993)

3(a) Describe the experience of Jonah as he fled from the presence of God to Tarshish.

(b) State TWO lessons that could be learnt from his flight. (WASSCE 1998)

4(a) Narrate Jonah's message to the Ninevites and their response to it.

(b) State TWO lessons that could be drawn from this story. (WASSCE 1999)

5(a) Relate the experience of Jonah as he fled from the presence of God to Tarshish.

(b) Give TWO moral lessons that could be learnt from this flight. (WASSCE 2008)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS 2 – THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: HOLINESS AND DIVINE CALL

SUBTOPIC: THE HOLINESS OF GOD

(Isaiah 1:10-20; 6:1-7.)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

I Pet. 1:14-16 – *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.””*

The Meaning of Holiness

- Holiness means a state of constant purity of thought and action.
- Holiness in the Bible context is ‘spotless’ or ‘blameless’ or ‘setting apart’
- Holiness is God’s original design for man, for God Himself is holy.
- God is holy, He commands us to be holy as well.
- To be holy involves living a godly life, commitment and dedication to God.
- ***“Try to be at peace with everyone, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it”*** – Heb. 12:14 (GNB)
- Living a holy life is NOT optional, it is compulsory for us as Christians.

God’s Message To The People Of Israel Through Isaiah When They Offended Him (Isa. 1:10-20)

Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem in about 742 B.C, the same year he received his prophetic calling. This was in the last year of King Uzziah. His focus was righteousness.

Isaiah called upon the rulers and the people of Jerusalem whom he referred to Sodom (because the leaders of Israel were leading a people as corrupt as Sodom) to listen to the word of God (teaching of the Lord).

He wondered why they should continue to make ‘their multitude sacrifices’ – God has become tired of their burnt offerings and fat of fed beast. He did not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Their pretentious appearances in God’s courts have become an abomination to God and He has no more need for their offerings.

God now hated their new moons and their appointed or religious feasts because they were tainted with all sorts of immorality. When they spread their hands in prayer, God would turn away His eyes (He will not listen) because their hands are full of blood.

Therefore, they should respond positively to God’s invitation to a dialogue with Him. *“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool* – Isa. 1:18. Suggestions Isaiah Gave for Israel’s Return (To turn away God’s anger) include:

- They must wash themselves clean by removing evil of their actions,
- They should cease to do evil and learn to do good.
- They should seek justice, correct oppression.
- They should defend the fatherless and plead for the widow.
- They should come to God and confess their sins so that they can be as white as snow which means that if they are willing to repent, God will forgive them.
- If they are willing and obedient, they would eat the good of the land.
- But if they refuse and rebel, they shall be devoured by the sword.

Ways Christians Can Ensure God's Holiness In Their Country

- By repenting of our sins and asking God for forgiveness.
- By forsaking our sins.
- By correcting / mending our ways.
- By serving God wholeheartedly.
- By fighting the cause of the poor/need.
- By rebuking / correcting sinners.
- By praying and fasting to seek God's face always.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: HOLINESS OF GOD

- 1(a) What God's message to the people of Israel through Isaiah when they offended Him?
(b) In which TWO ways are these still prevalent in your society? (WASSCE 2001)
2. Explain Isaiah's prophecy to the rulers and the people of Israel on the worthiness of empty rituals. (WASSCE 2003)
- 3(a) Highlight the message of Isaiah to the people of Judah.
(b) In what TWO ways can Christians ensure God's holiness in their country? (WASSCE 2013)
- 4(a) State THREE criticisms Isaiah made against Israel's system of worship.
(b) What THREE suggestions did Isaiah give for Israel's return to God?
(c) In what THREE ways can your country return to God? (WASSCE 2012)

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 – THIRD TERM WEEK LESSON 1

TOPIC: DIVINE CALL.

SUBTOPIC: THE DIVINE CALL OF ISAIAH.

(Isaiah 6:1-13)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: Isa. 6:8 – *"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'"*

Meaning of Divine Call

- ✓ A divine call is an invitation by God to perform a particular task.
- ✓ In man's relationship with God, a call is an invitation to serve Him as a believer, a pastor, a prophet, or in any of the professional field.

Who Isaiah was

- ✓ Isaiah was the son of Amoz.
- ✓ Isaiah's vision, call and commission was in 740B.C.
- ✓ Isaiah had vision in the year that King Uzziah died. Uzziah reigned between 792-740B.C.

The Divine Call of Isaiah – Isaiah 6:1-13

Prophet Isaiah had a glimpse of the holiness of God. Isaiah's call took place in the year that King Uzziah died. He saw the LORD sitting upon a throne which was high and lifted up. The Seraphim stood above Him. Each of them had six wings. With the wings they performed different functions in pairs. (With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.)

The seraphim said to another "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

As the seraphims spoke, the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isaiah then exclaimed: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

One of the seraphims then flew to Isaiah carrying a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched Isaiah's mouth, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." The significance of the angel of God touching Isaiah's mouth with burning coal is to cleanse his unholiness.

Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then Isaiah answered, "*Here am I! Send me.*"

Then God sent Isaiah to the people saying, "Go, and say to this people: 'Hear and hear, but do not understand; see and see, but do not perceive.'

He should make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

Isaiah asked how long he would be on this mission. He was told that it would continue until destruction had taken the cities of Judah, the remnants carried away into captivity. When the tree should have been felled and the burnt out stump left, which would be the holy seed that would sprout to become a new Judah.

Lessons from Isaiah's Experiences

- ✓ God demands holiness from man before He can use him.
- ✓ God can use us to work for Him in different ways.
- ✓ We should be sensitive to God's calling.
- ✓ We should respond promptly whenever God call us to do one assignment or the other for Him.
- ✓ Once one is a dedicated believer, he/she can be called by God.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: THE DIVINE CALL OF ISAIAH

1. What does divine call mean?
2. Describe Isaiah's call and his response to it.

CRS LESSON NOTE FOR SS2 –THIRD TERM WEEK , LESSON 2

TOPIC: DIVINE CALL

SUBTOPIC: THE DIVINE CALL OF EZEKIEL

(Ezekiel 1; 2:1-10-20 and 3:1-11.)

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

Ezek. 2:2 – *“And when he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me upon my feet; and I heard him speaking to me.”*

The Background of Ezekiel

- ✓ The name Ezekiel means ‘God is strong’. Ezekiel was one of the exiles in Babylon in 597B.C. Just like Isaiah.
- ✓ Ezekiel received his prophetic call in 593B.C.
- ✓ Ezekiel’s call to prophetic duty came in the form of a vision which manifested the glory of God; while his commission was relayed to him partly in speech and partly by means of symbols.
- ✓ The central message of Ezekiel’s prophecy was renewal and individual responsibility.

Description of How God Called Ezekiel (how Ezekiel was commissioned as prophet)

Ezekiel 2:1-10 and 3:1-11

- Ezekiel saw God in His great glory and fell down upon his face. His immediate response was to fall upon his face in awe.
- The Spirit of God entered into him and set him upon his feet.
- The voice told him that he was being sent to the people of Israel, a nation of rebels they and their fathers had been unfaithful to God.
- They were impudent and stubborn, but he should speak to them.
- With God’s authority he should tell them “thus says the LORD God ...” Whether they hear or not, they would know that a prophet had risen among them.
- God told Ezekiel: be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit upon scorpions (this implies that His situation would be uncomfortable as he prophesied to unwilling people); be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. He was told not to rebel like them.
- He was then ordered to open his mouth and eat what was offered him.
- A scroll was given him to eat. He ate it, and tasted like honey. This was an indication that He must digest what is inside the scroll before communicating it to others.
- God reminded Ezekiel that he was not being sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel.
- God assured Ezekiel that though the people of Israel were a hard forehead and of a stubborn heart; God had made Ezekiel’s face hard against the Israelites’ faces and his forehead against those of the Israelites. This means strengthen and equip Ezekiel with courage.
- Ezekiel should not be dismayed by their looks. He should receive in his heart and hear with his ears all the words that God shall speak to him.

- Ezekiel should then get to the exiles and prophesy to them. 'Thus says the Lord GOD'; whether they hear or refuse to hear."

Lessons from Ezekiel's Experiences

- The prompt obedience of Ezekiel to the call of God indicates that he was convinced about his mission to the exiles.
- We should be ready to serve God and deliver His message even in a foreign land.
- God called Ezekiel 'the son of man' to emphasize the prophet's humanity (that is, human nature).
- There is specific assignment for everyone
- It is God who commissions people for service.
- God equips man for service.
- God can make use of anyone no matter his/her background.
- The message must from God must be delivered no matter the level of opposition or confrontation.
- God's word is delightful. God's word eaten by Ezekiel tasted like honey.
- God's call is for those who are sensitive to his presence and His will for their lives.
- God has the prerogative to call people to different professions. He has control over every profession. No profession is more sacred or more secular or higher than the other.

ASSIGNMENT

Read about the vision of Ezekiel in Ezekiel chapter 1.

REVISION QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC: THE DIVINE CALL OF EZEKIEL

1(a) Explain how Ezekiel was commissioned as prophet.

(b) Identify TWO lessons that can be derived from his experiences. (WASSCE 2004)