

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

THE CALL OF ISAIAH (6:1-13)

Qn:

Comment on Isaiah's call to be a prophet of God.

Isaiah's call came in a year king Uzziah died.

Isaiah's call to be a prophet came to him while he was in the temple ministering to God.

The call came in form of a vision, Isaiah saw the Lord seated on his throne in a high temple surrounded by Seraph angels each having six wings.

These creatures were singing praise to God saying "holy, holy, holy" the Lord alone is powerful and his glory fills the whole earth.

The voices from the creatures made the foundation of the temple to shake and the temple was filled with smoke.

The visions opened Isaiah's eyes and he saw his sinfulness and hopelessness, he came to realize that he was a sinner not worthy being in God's presence.

One of the heavenly creatures flew to Isaiah carrying a burning coal and touched Isaiah's lips.

This showed the purification and forgiveness Isaiah had been offered and his sins had been forgiven.

Isaiah was then commanded to go and speak on behalf of God to the sinful people among whom he lived with.

Isaiah's task was going to be difficult, he was told that the people would listen and listen but they would not understand, they would look but would not understand what is happening.

Isaiah was told to make the minds of the people dull, their ears deaf and eyes blind so that they cannot see, hear and understand.

Isaiah asked God for how long he was to preach to people who would not hear, see, or understand.

He was told that he was to go on preaching until judgment is done in the land, cities and people destroyed.

However God promised Isaiah that those who would respond positively to his message would be left behind and out of them a new beginning of God's people would be made.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISION OF HIS CALL

The experience in the temple helped Isaiah and the Israelites to discover the holiness of God revealed by the heavenly creatures which cried out “holy, holy, holy the Lord almighty is holy”. Therefore it is important to approach him in a holy way.

God’s holiness was also reflected in the angels (heavenly creatures) who guarded him.

His call also revealed the omnipotence of God. He is so powerful that he managed to shake the foundation of the temple.

It also enabled Isaiah to realize that his clients were sinful. Their sinfulness was reflected by their unclean lips.

The event enabled Isaiah to acknowledge the hardness of the task ahead of him as he was to preach to people who would not listen to him.

The call enabled Isaiah to discover his sinfulness in comparison to God’s holiness and the way he was exalted.

The cleansing element was important because it equipped Isaiah with the necessary purity that he needed as a prophet.

The touching of Isaiah’s lips with burning coal showed that God was ready to forgive all sinners.

The event revealed God as a just being as not all people would be destroyed. Only outstanding sinners would be destroyed and sent to exile.

It also revealed God’s love for his people by sending Isaiah to call upon the Israelites to repent so that they are not destroyed.

The call enabled Isaiah to realize that sacrifice alone were not enough to bring people close to God. People need to be faithful to be justified by God and not sacrifice.

The event showed that Isaiah had faith and obedience in God. He responded to God positively like Abraham.

This event bridged the gap between God and the sinful man as Isaiah was commissioned to call back the sinful people back to God.

It was also a warning to the people of Judah to change their ways of life because of the impending punishments that were to befall them. They were to be destroyed and sent to exile due to their wickedness.

LESSONS MODERN CHRISTIANS LEARN/DRAW FROM ISAIAH'S CALL

Christians realize that God loves mankind. God loves mankind that is why he warned the Israelites through Isaiah before punishing them.

Christians should commit themselves to God's service other than trusting in offerings and tithes

Christians should be obedient to God's call and carry on God's mission however hard it may be.

Christians are called upon to prepare for the Day of Judgment so that they keep pure in faith.

They should also be prepared for God's call any time because God calls upon anybody regardless of his or her background.

Christians ought to recognize the omnipotence of God and worship him alone.

Christians are called upon to live holy life that can enable them to relate freely with God.

Christians realize that God punishes sin and destroys the wicked. Therefore they should live sinless life.

Christians should be loyal to Yahweh because he is the king of the entire world.

Qtn;

a) What happened to Isaiah in the year King Uzziah died?

b) Examine the lessons Christians learn from Isaiah's call.

ISAIAH, TEACHING ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD (2:10-21, 3:18-25)

Isaiah prophesied about the day of the Lord saying that this day would come but not as expected.

He said that the day of the Lord was not going to be a day of triumph and glory for those who thought that they were Yahweh's people.

To Isaiah the day of the Lord was going to be a day of terror and destruction.

He said that on this day everyone would be humiliated and disgraced especially those who were sinners.

He said that people would hide in the dirt and behind rocks from the Lord's power and glory.

He said that this would be a day when the Lord would show his anger, power and glory.

On that day human pride and human arrogance would be destroyed and those who are strong would be humbled.

Isaiah said that on this day the Lord alone would be exalted.

The Lord would humble everyone who thinks he is powerful and converted.

On this day, the Lord would destroy the tall cedar trees of Lebanon and the great oak trees from Bashan.

To Isaiah the Lord would level the high mountains and hills, every town and walls.

The Lord would sink even the largest and most beautiful ships.

Isaiah said that human pride would be ended and human arrogance would be destroyed.

He said that the Lord would come to shake the earth and the people would try to hide from him but would not escape.

When this day comes people will throw away the gold and silver idols that they have made and abandon them to bats.

On this day, God was going to destroy the people's political system by removing their leaders.

To Isaiah, it would be the day the Lord would reward the righteous and punish the sinners. The righteous would enjoy what they have worked for.

Evil people would be doomed and what they have done to other people would be done to them.

Isaiah said the men of the city will be killed in war including the strongest of them all.

The Lord would take away from the women of Jerusalem everything they were proud of like their bracelets, chains, scarves, rings, dresses, sweet smelling perfumes, etc.

The day of the Lord would be a day of God's judgment on the people of Israel.

Jerusalem will sit empty like a woman who has lost everything to thieves and robbers.

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE EXILED ISRAELITES IN BABYLON

Isaiah's message to the exiles in Babylonia was full of hope and encouragement.

God asked Isaiah to comfort the people that they had received enough punishment for their sins and as such they had been forgiven. 40:2

God promised to restore the glory of Israel who would have survived during the exile.

He promised to use them as his light after the moment of suffering. 49:6

God promised them blessings that would flow like a stream that never goes dry if they listened to his commands.

God also promised to increase their number after exile and resettling them.

God was to guard and protect his people and make a covenant to all people through them.

He said that God was going to liberate the Israelites from Babylonian captivity and bring them back to their country.

On their way back from exile, God would be with them and lead them as a shepherd leads his flock. Isaiah 40:11

God would be their king when they return to Jerusalem hence the theocratic rule would be restored.

He further said that the great Jerusalem would be restored to its glory as a city of God.

Just like a woman cannot forget her own baby, God will never forget his people of Israel Isaiah 49:15

He said that the beautiful trees will grow where there are thorns and added that this transformation of nature would be a sign of what the Lord had done for his people.

He also said that the exiles would leave Babylon in joy and peace and that the mountains and hills will sing and trees shout with joy Isaiah 55:12

He said that God is the liberator, redeemer and savior. He would liberate them from the Babylonians just like he liberated them from the Egyptians.

God promised to send them his servant to bring them light and lasting Justice to enjoy the new Canaan.

God pledged to keep back his anger that he will not use it to destroy his people any more.

Qtn

a) Examine Isaiah's teaching about the day of the Lord

b) Discuss Isaiah's message of hope to the people of Judah who were exiled in Babylon.

THE SIGN OF BARE FOOTED AND NAKED PROPHET (ISAIAH 20:1-6)

During the reign of King Hezekiah, the Lord told Isaiah to take off his sandals and sack cloth that he was wearing.

Isaiah obeyed and went around naked and bare footed for three years to show doom that would befall Israel.

He wanted to compel the people of Israel to repent.

This was a symbolized the punishment God would bring to Egypt and Ethiopia in which the Philistines and Israelites trusted.

The emperor of Assyria was to capture the inhabitants of Egypt and Ethiopia and take them into exile as war prisoners bare footed and naked.

Both young and old people would be led away wailing on bare foot and naked.

Naked prisoners would be taken away by force with their buttocks exposed bringing shame on Egypt that the Israelites and Philistines trusted.

This sign pointed to the fact that Egypt and Ethiopia were to be humiliated under the hands of the Assyrians.

Those who trusted Egypt and Ethiopia would bring shame to themselves.

This sign was to teach the Philistines and Israelites who trusted the security of Egypt and Sudan that they would be disappointed.

The sign therefore was calling upon people of Judah to put their trust and faith in God instead of political alliances.

It was to expose those who put their trust in Ethiopia and boasted about Egypt.

It was a warning to King Hezekiah that political alliances with pagan nations cannot lead to anything good but destruction and humiliation.

He advised King Hezekiah to have faith in God's protection.

He wanted to draw the attention of people so that they could listen to the message he had for them.

He wanted to prove that he was a true prophet.

He was depicting the situation the exiles would face.

LESSONS CHRISTIANS LEARN FROM THE SIGN

Christians should rely on God instead of depending on military and economic alliances.

Christians should trust in God and not wealth or big armies that can lead to humiliation

Christians bold to pass on God's message without fear or shame. Isaiah moved naked and on bare foot.

Christians should live holy life because sin is punishable and it humiliates.

They ought to be loyal to God to overcome suffering such as exile, death and humiliation

Christians are called upon to be creative while preaching God's message so as to attract the audience.

Christians should repent for their sins in order to overcome humiliation.

Christians should fight for God's blessings to live happy life.

Christians should be ready to receive any message delivered to them by God' servants no matter the circumstance under which it is presented

Christians should respond positively to God' call and follow his instructions like Isaiah.

EFFECTS OF AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY RELYING ON A FOREIGN NATION

This leads to both Positive and negative results explained below;

The positive effects include the following;

It may lead to technological progress

It may lead to positive political reforms like promotion of human rights.

It may lead to increased levels of creation of employment opportunities.

It results into improved international relationships

It promotes international trade

It may lead to increased investments through foreign direct investments

The country may have access to foreign support like foreign aid and grants especially during disaster.

However it also leads to the following negative effects;

Her citizens would have no freedom to carry out their own political ideology independently

It results on total dependence on the foreign country which affects development negatively

It would to erosion of her local cultural heritage and innovations

It results into loss of a country's political, social and economic independence.

It results into imported inflation and suffering of her citizens.

It may result into abuse of human rights as some powers have no respect for humanity.

The country may become a dumping ground for the unwanted goods from a foreign rich nation

It would lead to insecurity where a foreign State has interests.

It may also result into political aggression.

It creates unemployment since the dependent country is kept at the bottom.

It may result into idolatry and adoption of bad practices from a foreign evil country like homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.

It results in setbacks in economic growth and development of the depending country as it kills her innovation and leads to brain drain.

Qtn;

a) Account for Isaiah's walking naked and bare footed for three years

b) What would be the effects of an Independent country relying on a foreign nation?

RELEVANCE OF ISAIAH BOOK (MESSAGE) TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians are called upon to repent their sins unlike the people of Judah who refused and were taken to exile.

Christians should put their trust in God unlike the kings of Judah who put their trust in foreigners and in foreign gods.

Christians should worship only one God unlike the Israelites who worshipped many gods.

Christians should respect God's message especially that from prophets of God.

Christians should practice justice unlike the Israelites who treated others unjustly.

Christians should have good moral behaviors and bear good fruits unlike the Israelites who annoyed God through their bad morals and behavior.

Christians should rely on God for everything since he is the provider.

Christians should pray to God when they need anything just like King Hezekiah prayed.

Christians should have hope in God whenever they are in trouble.

Christians should proclaim the good news to all people in cities and nations.

Christians should have hope in God whenever they are in trouble.

Christians should help those in need; they should help those who are in problems.

Christians should forgive those who sin against them like God did to the Israelites.

Christians should respect agreement that they make in the name of God.

Christians should keep their promises just like God did keep his promises of the Israelites.

Christians should take the warnings from God as serious otherwise they will be punished

Through this servant, God would make a covenant with all people in the world to reflect God's universal nature.

The Lord's servant would bring salvation to those who are in blindness and darkness of sin.

Isaiah said that his things would be revealed through the Lord's servant even before they begin to happen.

He said that the Lord's servant would bring salvation not through popular means of use of arms but through his suffering for the majority.

The Lord's servant would be devoted to his work and God unlike the kings of Israel who defied God's instructions.

The Lord's servant would bring lasting justice to all nations and his mission will be a universal one.

The teaching of the Lord's servant would be eagerly waited for by distant lands.

God would show his love for mankind and it was the task of the servant to establish this.

ISAIAH'S TEACHING ABOUT THE SUFFERING SERVANT (2:3-15, 53)

Isaiah prophesied about the messiah and he referred to him as a suffering servant.

Isaiah said that the suffering servant to God would succeed in his task and he would be highly honoured.

Isaiah said that many people would be shocked when they see him because he would be disfigured that he would hardly look human.

Isaiah said that many nations would marvel at him and kings would be speechless with amazement when they learn that he is the suffering servant.

Isaiah said that it would be the will of God that his servant would come up and suffer like a plant taking its roots in the dry ground (53:2).

He said that, the suffering servant would have no dignity or beauty to attract people to him-self. He will be treated like an ordinary man.

There would be nothing attractive about him to draw people to himself.

He would be despised and rejected but he will endure the pain and suffering.

He would be ignored if he as nothing and few people would look at him.

No one would care for him.

That whoever looks at his suffering would think that it was a punishment sent to him by God.

Isaiah said that because of people's sin, he would be wounded and he would be beaten because of other evil deeds.

Isaiah said that people would be healed by the punishment he would suffer and be made complete before God.

He would be treated harshly but he would ensure humbly, he would never say a word like a lamb about to be slaughtered.

He would be arrested put to death for the sins of others with no one to plead for him.

He would be placed in the grave with evil men even though he had not committed a crime 53:9.

It would be the will of God that he should suffer as his death will be a sacrifice to bring forgiveness.

Through the suffering servant, the Lord's purpose of redeeming mankind from sin will be fulfilled.

Isaiah said that after that life of suffering the servant would again have joy, he would be known that he died not to suffer in vain.

After finishing his mission, God would give him a place of honour because of his willingness to give his life.

Qn: How the prophecy or character of the suffering servant was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus succeeded in his task as Isaiah prophesied would happen to a suffering servant.

As Isaiah predicted, Jesus's preaching shocked many people as he preached with authority and power to perform miracles.

It was the will of God that Jesus came on earth to bring salvation people to mankind.

There was nothing unique or attractive about Jesus to draw people to himself.

Jesus was despised and rejected by the people of his time but he endured the pain and suffering.

Jesus endured the suffering that should have been for others and the pain others should have gone through.

It was because of the people's sins that Jesus was beaten and wounded and killed.

He was harshly beaten but he kept quiet and did not say any word Mark14:61.

Jesus was betrayed by his friends and segregated against for fear of being arrested by the authorities.

Jesus as a shepherd organized his believers who looked like sheep without a shepherd (1Peter2:25)

Jesus remained humble even when they were going to kill him (Acts8:32-33).

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After a life of suffering, Jesus went to heaven to a live a life of joy just as Isaiah said would happen to the suffering servant.

Jesus went to heaven and he is seated on the right hand of God as Isaiah had said that the suffering servant would be given a place of honor.

Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified him. Isaiah had said that a suffering servant would take the place of many sinners and pray that they might be forgiven.

Qtn;

a) Comment on the theme of the suffering servant presented by Isaiah.

b) How was this theme fulfilled in the personality of Jesus?

THE SONGS (PARABLE) OF THE VINEYARD ISAIAH 5:1-7

Qn:

Comment on the parable/song of the vineyard in Isaiah.

Examine the song of the vineyard which Isaiah sang for the people of Judah.

Isaiah sang for the Israelites a parable about famine and his vineyard.

Isaiah said that his friend the farmer had a vine yard on the fertile hill

He dug the soil and cleared of stones for and planted the finest grapevines there.

The farmer took extra effort and put a tower in the vineyard because he aimed at getting a good harvest.

The farmer built a tower to guard his vines and even dug a pit for treating the fruits.

However, when it came to a time of harvesting every grape was sour.

The farmer had done his best to make the vineyard produce good grapes but it produced only sour ones.

The farmer was disappointed and he decided to do something.

The farmer was going to remove the hedge of vineyard and break down the wall that protected it.

He was going to let the garden to over grow with weeds and thorns.

He was not going to take care of plants by pruning them because the plants had produced a poor harvest.

The farmer was going to give up the vineyard and forget all about it.

MEANING OF THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

In the parable, the vineyard was the nation of Israel. Of all the nations in the world, Israel had been chosen to be God's people.

The vines planted implied the nation of Judah; they were also God's people.

The owner of the garden, the farmer represented the Lord almighty (Yahweh).

Israel had received God's deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

Just as the vineyard had been protected, the Israelites had been protected from their enemies all through the Exodus.

God defeated the enemies of the Israelites as the people advanced during the Exodus.

The Israelites had been made a covenant with God.

Just like the farmer had cleared land of stones, so God had cleared the land of Canaan of the pagan nations.

God had expected the Israelites to follow his laws and not break the covenant which he had made with them but unfortunately the Israelites produced sour grapes by doing evil.

Unfortunately just as the vineyard, the Israelites had produced sour fruits, the Israelites had been unfaithful to God by committing all sorts of sins.

The Israelites had been expected to do what was good but they failed to live to God's expectations.

Just like the farmer had broken the wall around the garden, God was going to remove (withdraw) his protection from the Israelites.

God was going to allow foreigners to own the Israelites just as a farmer was going to leave the garden to be eaten over by the wild animals.

The Israelites were going to be exposed to the Assyrians who would come to over-take their land.

The people would be exiled from their country and taken by other nations.

THE SIGNIFICANCY OF PARABLE OF THE VINE YARD AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Qtn: What was Jesus's teaching on the vineyard?

In Mark (2:1-12) Jesus told people about the parable of tenants of vineyard to show people's sin and their disobedience of God.

According to the parable, God was the owner of the vineyard and the vineyard meant the Kingdom of Israel which was elected by God as His special people.

The owner rented the vineyard to the tenants and left for the trip just like God entrusted his people to the kings of Israel to look after them.

When the time for collecting grapes came, the owner sent his servants to tenants for his share of the harvest but they were instead beaten and sent back.

Similarly God had sent his prophets to the people of Israel to prepare them for the day of the Lord but they were denied to speak and some thrown into prison e.g. Jeremiah and Micaiah.

Jesus showed that the Israelites had all along killed and persecuted God's prophets.

He was trying to show how he was also going to be tortured and eventually killed.

Jesus in the gospel of John referred to himself as the true vine and his father as the gardener.

He said that the people were the branches and if they did not bear fruits, they would be cut off.

It showed that Jesus was beginning a new nation of Israel and God is their father.

It showed that Jesus was doing the will of God and so he had to obey God.

It meant that Jesus was the source of eternal life to the believers.

It meant that Jesus' followers would continue to give life to the believers.

It meant that Jesus was the promised messiah, one who came to save people from their sins.

Jesus was trying to show that whoever wanted life could only get it from him; those who did not believe in him would not have ever lasting life.

It showed that Jesus was a son of God, he acknowledged himself as a true vine and God himself as the gardener.

It was a pointing to the new covenant that Jesus was going to make with his people through shedding of his blood.

It showed that true faithfulness in God means following Jesus Christ by obeying God's command.

Jesus as a true vine showed that he was replacing the disobedient Israel as a source of salvation.

ISAIAH'S TEACHING ABOUT THE LORD'S SERVANT (ISAIAH 42:1-9)

Isaiah prophesied about Christ the messiah when he referred to him as the Lord's servant.

He said that the Lord servant is strengthened and guided by the Lord himself.

Isaiah said that the Lord's servant would be chosen and anointed by God himself and he will be pleased with him.

He said that the Lord's servant would bring Justice to every nation and he would be gentle and encouraging in doing this.

The Lord's servant would not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets.

He would be a peaceful and humble servant of God 42:2-3.

The Lord's servant would be called by God and would be given power to see that justice is done.

Isaiah said that through him, God would make a covenant with all people and would bring light to all nations.

He would not lose hope or courage even when he is persecuted or opposed. He would endure suffering during his ministry.

Through this servant, God would make a covenant with all people in the world to reflect God's universal nature.

The Lord's servant would bring salvation to those who are in blindness and darkness of sin.

Isaiah said that his things would be revealed through the Lord's servant even before they begin to happen.

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HOW WERE THIS PROPHECIES OF THE SERVANT OF THE LORD FULFILLED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The prophecies were fulfilled in the New Testament in the life of Christians in the following ways;

Jesus in the New Testament presented himself as a servant of God.

In the gospel of John, Jesus is shown as the light of the people.

Jesus brought salvation to those who were blind in sin.

In his miracles, Jesus opened the eyes of the blind and set free those who had various infirmities.

Jesus was chosen by God and he got his power from his father in heaven who encouraged him.

During Baptism, the spirit of God came upon him like a dove hence he was anointed.

A voice from heaven identified Jesus as God's only son with whom God was pleased.

Jesus encouraged justice among the people and he discouraged revenge.

In the New Testament, people beyond Israel wanted to have a glance at him during his teachings.

Jesus was sent by God and he got his power from God his father.

Through Jesus, God made a covenant with the whole world and he brought light to all nations.

Jesus never went shouting, he was humble during his teaching.

During the Passover day however Jesus cried his father for help he seems to have lost courage.

In the garden of Gethsemane, he wished if possible the cup of suffering would be removed from him.

Jesus cried to his father while on the cross.

Qtn;

a) Comment on the qualities which Isaiah taught about the Lord's servant.

b) How was the teaching on the Lord's servant fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ?

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Jesus was killed with two bandits one on his right and the other on his left (Mark15:27)

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Jesus went to heaven and he is seated on the right hand of God as Isaiah had said that the suffering servant would be given a place of honor.

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Just like the farmer had cleared land of stones, so God had cleared the land of Canaan of the pagan nations.

God had expected the Israelites to follow his laws and not break the covenant which he had made with them but unfortunately the Israelites produced sour grapes by doing evil.

Unfortunately just as the vineyard, the Israelites had produced sour fruits, the Israelites had been unfaithful to God by committing all sorts of sins.

The Israelites had been expected to do what was good but they failed to live to God's expectations.

Just like the farmer had broken the wall around the garden, God was going to remove (withdraw) his protection from the Israelites.

God was going to allow foreigners to own the Israelites just as a farmer was going to leave the garden to be eaten over by the wild animals.

The Israelites were going to be exposed to the Assyrians who would come to over-take their land.

The people would be exiled from their country and taken by other nations.

THE SIGNIFICANCY OF PARABLE OF THE VINE YARD AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Qtn: What was Jesus's teaching on the vineyard?

In Mark (2:1-12) Jesus told people about the parable of tenants of vineyard to show people's sin and their disobedience of God.

According to the parable, God was the owner of the vineyard and the vineyard meant the Kingdom of Israel which was elected by God as His special people.

The owner rented the vineyard to the tenants and left for the trip just like God entrusted his people to the kings of Israel to look after them.

When the time for collecting grapes came, the owner sent his servants to tenants for his share of the harvest but they were instead beaten and sent back.

Similarly God had sent his prophets to the people of Israel to prepare them for the day of the Lord but they were denied to speak and some thrown into prison e.g. Jeremiah and Micaiah.

Jesus showed that the Israelites had all along killed and persecuted God's prophets.

He was trying to show how he was also going to be tortured and eventually killed.

Jesus in the gospel of John referred to himself as the true vine and his father as the gardener.

He said that the people were the branches and if they did not bear fruits, they would be cut off.

It showed that Jesus was beginning a new nation of Israel and God is their father.

It showed that Jesus was doing the will of God and so he had to obey God.

It meant that Jesus was the source of eternal life to the believers.

It meant that Jesus' followers would continue to give life to the believers.

It meant that Jesus was the promised messiah, one who came to save people from their sins.

Jesus was trying to show that whoever wanted life could only get it from him; those who did not believe in him would not have ever lasting life.

It showed that Jesus was a son of God, he acknowledged himself as a true vine and God himself as the gardener.

It was a pointing to the new covenant that Jesus was going to make with his people through shedding of his blood.

It showed that true faithfulness in God means following Jesus Christ by obeying God's command.

Jesus as a true vine showed that he was replacing the disobedient Israel as a source of salvation.

PROPHETIC SIGNS OF ISAIAH (7:8-20)

Qn:

Comment on the prophetic signs of Israel showing their significance at that time.

Analyze the prophetic signs of Israel showing their meaning at the time.

Discuss meaning of Isaiah's prophetic signs.

The first prophetic sign of Isaiah came during the reign of King Ahaz. Ahaz faced the attempts of Syria and Israel trying to attack Judah making her think of making an alliance with Egypt and Ethiopia.

During this Crisis, Isaiah was sent to Ahaz king of Judah with a prophetic message/prophetic sign as follows;

Isaiah went to King with his son Shear Jashub whose name had a prophetic sign to speak to King Ahaz.

The name meant a covenant shall return, it was to show God's purpose for the future.

The name "Shear Jashub" meant that a few Israelites would remain but this would be after receiving punishment.

Isaiah wanted to show that God would intervene and restore the kingdom of Israel.

The name meant hope after judgment on the people of Judah.

Israel and Syria who were attacking Judah were not going to succeed because they were weak.

It implied that God would give protection to his people of Judah hence it was not necessary for Ahaz to join the alliance.

Shear Jashub was also pointing to God's love for his people that even if they were to be attacked, God would come to defend them.

Prophet Isaiah told Ahaz not to be disturbed by the invading army but he was to remain calm and alert.

He encouraged the king of Judah not to fear but to have trust in God that the threat of Syria and Israel would quickly end. He thus said that "the anger of king Pekah and Rezin is no more dangerous than the smoke from two smoldering sticks of wood" (Isaiah7:14).

He also told Ahaz to endure with faith in order to survive the threat to his kingdom. He said "if your faith is not enduring you will not endure" (Isaiah7:9)

As a proof of Isaiah's words, Ahaz was told to ask for any sign from God to serve as evidence that whatever Isaiah had said to him would come to pass.

Ahaz however refused to ask for any sign from God saying that he could not put his God on a test. He seemed determined to ally with Syria against Israel and Syria.

Since Ahaz refused to ask for any sign from God, the Lord gave him another sign of Emmanuel to prove that the threat to his kingdom would disappear soon.

The name Emmanuel meant "God is with us." It showed that God was with the people of Judah so Ahaz needed not to fear.

The name showed that within a short time the two enemies of Judah (Israel and Syria) were going to be over thrown.

The name Emmanuel meant that there was nothing for the people of Judah to fear.

The name Emmanuel also meant that God was a savior of all those in problems.

It meant that God is an ultimate protector of all sorts of people.

It implied that God is omnipresent. He is available whenever he is needed.

Isaiah was told to write the words "there will soon be looting and stealing" in large letters.

When Isaiah's wife gave birth sometime later, Isaiah was told by God to give the child strange name "there will soon be looting and stealing".

The child's name was a sign that Syria and Israel would be looted and plundered by the fast moving armies of Assyria.

The name showed that Judah was going to be safe from her two enemies, Israel and Syria.

The name was therefore a message of hope to the King Ahaz and the people of Judah because her two enemies were going to be defeated.

However, Ahaz refused to accept Isaiah's message and to have trust in God. He went ahead and made a treaty with the king of Assyria and paid tribute to the king of Assyria. Ahaz wrote to the king of Assyria "I am your servant and your son, Come up and save me from the land of the king of Syria and of Israel who are attacking me" (2Kings16:17).

Ahaz was given another sign to prove that the threat to his kingdom would disappear soon and this was the sign of Emmanuel.

The name Emmanuel meant "God is with us." It showed that God was with the people of Judah.

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Isaiah was told to go about naked and bare footed for three years around the streets of Jerusalem.

This was a sign about the approaching defeat of Egypt and Assyria.

Isaiah through this sign was discouraging Hezekiah from allying with Egypt and Ethiopia.

Isaiah's appearance portrayed what would happen to Egypt and Ethiopia.

The Egyptians were going to be defeated and led away naked into exile.

To the people of Judah and her rulers who were relying on Egypt the message was they should not trust in alliances.

Isaiah was calling upon the king of Judah not to rely in foreign alliances but to rely on only God.

The message was that getting peace was by having faith in God and not political alliances.

THE SIGN OF BARE FOOTED AND NAKED PROPHET (ISAIAH 20:1-6)

During the reign of King Hezekiah, the Lord told Isaiah to take off his sandals and sack cloth that he was wearing.

Isaiah obeyed and went around naked and bare footed for three years to show doom that would befall Israel.

He wanted to compel the people of Israel to repent.

This was a symbolized the punishment God would bring to Egypt and Ethiopia in which the Philistines and Israelites trusted.

The emperor of Assyria was to capture the inhabitants of Egypt and Ethiopia and take them into exile as war prisoners bare footed and naked.

Both young and old people would be led away wailing on bare foot and naked.

Naked prisoners would be taken away by force with their buttocks exposed bringing shame on Egypt that the Israelites and Philistines trusted.

This sign pointed to the fact that Egypt and Ethiopia were to be humiliated under the hands of the Assyrians.

Those who trusted Egypt and Ethiopia would bring shame to themselves.

This sign was to teach the Philistines and Israelites who trusted the security of Egypt and Sudan that they would be disappointed.

The sign therefore was calling upon people of Judah to put their trust and faith in God instead of political alliances.

It was to expose those who put their trust in Ethiopia and boasted about Egypt.

It was a warning to King Hezekiah that political alliances with pagan nations cannot lead to anything good but destruction and humiliation.

He advised King Hezekiah to have faith in God's protection.

He wanted to draw the attention of people so that they could listen to the message he had for them.

He wanted to prove that he was a true prophet.

He was depicting the situation the exiles would face.

LESSONS CHRISTIANS LEARN FROM THE SIGN

Christians should rely on God instead of depending on military and economic alliances.

Christians should trust in God and not wealth or big armies that can lead to humiliation

Christians bold to pass on God's message without fear or shame. Isaiah moved naked and on bare foot.

Christians should live holy life because sin is punishable and it humiliates.

They ought to be loyal to God to overcome suffering such as exile, death and humiliation

Christians are called upon to be creative while preaching God's message so as to attract the audience.

Christians should repent for their sins in order to overcome humiliation.

Christians should fight for God's blessings to live happy life.

Christians should be ready to receive any message delivered to them by God' servants no matter the circumstance under which it is presented

Christians should respond positively to God' call and follow his instructions like Isaiah.

EFFECTS OF AN INDEPNDENT COUNTRY RELYING ON A FOREIGN NATION

This leads to both Positive and negative results explained below;

The positive effects include the following;

It may lead to technological progress

It may lead to positive political reforms like promotion of human rights.

It may lead to increased levels of creation of employment opportunities.

It results into improved international relationships

It promotes international trade

It may lead to increased investments through foreign direct investments

The country may have access to foreign support like foreign aid and grants especially during disaster.

However it also leads to the following negative effects;

Her citizens would have no freedom to carry out their own political ideology independently

It results on total dependence on the foreign country which affects development negatively

It would to erosion of her local cultural heritage and innovations

It results into loss of a country's political, social and economic independence.

It results into imported inflation and suffering of her citizens.

It may result into abuse of human rights as some powers have no respect for humanity.

The country may become a dumping ground for the unwanted goods from a foreign rich nation

It would lead to insecurity where a foreign State has interests.

It may also result into political aggression.

It creates unemployment since the dependent country is kept at the bottom.

It may result into idolatry and adoption of bad practices from a foreign evil country like homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.

It results in setbacks in economic growth and development of the depending country as it kills her innovation and leads to brain drain.

Qtn;

a) Account for Isaiah's walking naked and bare footed for three years

b) What would be the effects of an Independent country relying on a foreign nation?

RELEVANCE OF ISAIAH BOOK (MESSAGE) TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Christians are called upon to repent their sins unlike the people of Judah who refused and were taken to exile.

Christians should put their trust in God unlike the kings of Judah who put their trust in foreigners and in foreign gods.

Christians should worship only one God unlike the Israelites who worshipped many gods.

Christians should respect God's message especially that from prophets of God.

Christians should practice justice unlike the Israelites who treated others unjustly.

Christians should have good moral behaviors and bear good fruits unlike the Israelites who annoyed God through their bad morals and behavior.

Christians should rely on God for everything since he is the provider.

Christians should pray to God when they need anything just like King Hezekiah prayed.

Christians should have hope in God whenever they are in trouble.

Christians should proclaim the good news to all people in cities and nations.

Christians should have hope in God whenever they are in trouble.

Christians should help those in need; they should help those who are in problems.

Christians should forgive those who sin against them like God did to the Israelites.

Christians should respect agreement that they make in the name of God.

Christians should keep their promises just like God did keep his promises of the Israelites.

Christians should take the warnings from God as serious otherwise they will be punished.

ISAIAH AND KING AHAZ (ISAIAH7:8ff)

Ahaz was one of the wicked kings of Judah who ruled Israel between 735-725 BCE.

During his reign there was political crisis where Assyria which was powerful planned to colonize all her neighbors to become an Empire.

Due to the above threat of Assyria, the Northern Kingdom Israel and Syria made an alliance against Assyria.

These two also asked Judah to join the alliance but Judah declined something which annoyed Israel and Syria.

The King of Israel Pekah and Rezin of Syria tried to use force to ensure that Judah joins their alliance or they replace Ahaz with another king who would be willing to join the struggle.

The invading army terrified Ahaz and his people and they trembled like trees shaking in wind (Isaiah7:2).

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king of Assyria “I am your servant and your son, Come up and save me from the land of the king of Syria and of Israel who are attacking me” (2Kings16:17).

Ahaz even took the silver gold found in the house of the Lord and sent them to the king of Assyria. This alliance with Assyria annoyed God and he decided to punish Ahaz and the entire kingdom of Israel.

ISAIAH’S MESSAGE OF DESTRUCTION TO KING AHAZ

Isaiah said that God was going to use Assyria to destroy Judah

He said that the forces of Assyria would flood over Judah like the waters of Euphrates (Isaiah8:7)

He said that God was going to use Assyria as his instrument to punish king Ahaz and the people of Judah.

That because of Ahaz’s rebellion, the people of Judah would be humiliated by foreigners and be treated like prisoners in exile (Isaiah7:20)

That Ahaz’s evil would make the land of Judah get deserted because many of its inhabitants would die.

That because of the killings and death, their land would be overgrown by thorny bushes.

He however said that after punishment, good days would also come for a few survivors left in the land.

That the survivors would have enough milk and honey to eat though they would be few indeed.

God also gave Isaiah a second son whose name had a prophetic message for Judah. He was named “**Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz**” meaning “**Quick loot fast plunder**”.

That before the baby boy learns to say Mummy or Daddy, all the wealth of Syria and Israel would have been looted and plundered by Assyria.

The name hence assured king Ahaz and his subjects that there was no need to panic because of Israel and Syria. God was going to use Assyria to humiliate them.

EVILS COMMITTED BY KING AHAZ OF JUDAH

He was unfaithful to Yahweh because he promoted apostasy and sacrificed to idols

He built alters for the pagan gods and spent much of his time worshipping those idols
(2Kings16:10)

He practiced syncretism to the extent that he sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering to idols
(2Kings 16:3)

He practiced divination hence going against God's law.

He was a bad example to his subjects. Instead of correcting them, he promoted evil among them which made God to punish their nation.

He collaborated with the evil priest Uriah and the profaned God's covenant.

He ignored the covenant laws and he made an alliance with the king of Assyria a pagan country.

He always wanted to work independent of Yahweh yet he was a leader of the Israelites.

He doubted God's instructions as he rejected the advice of Isaiah not to enter into an alliance with Assyria.

He defiled the temple of God in Jerusalem when he mixed the Jewish religion with the Assyrian cults. This turned many people away from God.

He gave away God's treasure in the temple like silver, gold and royal palace as tribute to Tiglath Pileser the king of Assyria.

ISAIAH AND HEZEKIAH (20, 29, 30, 2KINGS 8, 19)

During the reign of King Ahaz, Judah remained under the control of Assyria but was also invaded by the same Assyrian army after the fall of Israel.

Hezekiah then succeeded his father Ahaz in 715BCE. He ruled Judah up to 687BCE and carried out a number of religious and political reforms.

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL REFORMS OF KING HEZEKIAH DURING ISAIAH'S CAREER

He centralized worship in Jerusalem to watch over people's religious practices

All the Sabbaths, sacrifices, fasting and religious feasts were to be conducted in Jerusalem.

He destroyed all shrines and centers of the Canaanite worship

He destroyed the pagan altars in Judah

He broke into pieces the bronze snake

He destroyed all the pillars and images of pagan gods e.g. the image of Asherah, Sakuth and Melech.

He invited Yahweh's true prophets and priests to resume their duties

When he fell sick, he prayed to God who healed him and added him more years.

When the Assyrians threatened his nation, he consulted prophet Isaiah.

When the Assyrians wrote to him a threatening letter, he took it to the temple and prayed.

He renovated the Jerusalem temple and removed all the pagan pictures.

He restored good relations with religious leaders like prophets and priests. He worked hand in hand with prophet Isaiah.

He endeavored to keep the Law of Moses and encouraged the Israelites to stick to it.

He condemned the social and religious mischiefs which his predecessors never bothered to condemn.

He was a good role model before his subjects in his early years of administration.

Upon Isaiah's advice, Hezekiah ended his alliance with Egypt.

He revived Israel's theocracy because he took himself as God's servant.

God greatly blessed him and the Israel nation got peace and prosperity.

He was a nationalist who decided to end Assyrian colonialism over Judah

He also cut off all political and diplomatic ties with Assyria.

He expelled all the Assyrian political, military and religious officials

He stopped paying tribute/tax to the Assyrian colonial government.

He defeated the Philistines, Assyrians and other enemies.

EVILS COMMITTED BY HEZEKIAH

During the later days of Hezekiah's reign, he abandoned his zeal for the religious reforms in Judah.

He joined political alliances in order to fight the dominance of Assyria. E.g. He allied with Babylon.

Like his father, he also sent to the King of Assyria all the silver in the temple and in the palace treasury.

He disobeyed God's instructions when he refused to listen to the advice of prophet Isaiah of not to joining any alliance.

This alliance implied that Hezekiah had lost faith and trust in God hence he was looking for protection from Babylon.

The alliance made Isaiah to proclaim to Hezekiah that God would use Assyria to punish Judah.

The people of Judah would be destroyed and taken into exile by Assyria leading to the fall of Judah.

By allying with Babylon, Hezekiah had denied his people chance to be protected by God.

EFFECTS OF HEZEKIAH'S WEAKNESS DURING HIS REIGN

It made Isaiah to prophecy the future destruction of Judah by Babylon.

It led to the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians.

It led to the looting of the Israelite wealth by the Babylonians.

It led to destruction of the Jerusalem temple.

It led to the suffering of the Israelites in Exile.

Hezekiah lost the support he had always enjoyed from Isaiah for a long time.

It made people to turn away from God.

It deprived Hezekiah of long life. He was succeeded by Manasseh.

It laid a foundation for Manasseh's evil behavior.

Qtn;

a)Analyze the religious and political reforms of King Hezekiah during Isaiah's prophetic career.

b)Explain the effects of Hezekiah's weakness during this period.