

# CRE NOTES

FOR FORM 2, 3, 4 NOTES, SMS OR WHATSAPP: 0743505350

## FORM ONE NOTES

### INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING CRE

##### Definition of Christian Religious Education (CRE)

Christian Religious Education is the study of God's revelation to human beings through scriptures, the persons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Why do schools study CRE?

There are many reasons why schools study CRE. Some of the reasons are to:

- a) Enable you to develop a personal relationship with God.
- a) Help you to acquire basic principles of Christian living.
- b) Help you to develop a sense of self-respect and respect for others.
- c) Help you to develop positive attitudes and values, which help you to cope with challenges of life.
- d) Contribute to the moral and spiritual development of students.
- e) Help you to contribute positively to the transformation of an individual and the society as whole.
- f) Help you to identify answers to situations of life, including death and Eternal life.
- g) Help learners to identify answers to life's questions.
- h) Promotes international consciousness.
- i) Help you to understand yourself.
- j) Promote cultural integration.
- k) Enable you to acquire a better understanding of God.
- l) Unite people.

- m) Guide you in choosing a career
- n) Help you to appreciate African religious heritage and other religions.
- o) Promote living values such as honesty concern for others, kindness, love and unity.

## **THE BIBLE**

The Bible is the sacred book containing God's revelation to people. It is the inspired word of God. It is the book through which God communicates with His people.

### **The Bible as the word of God**

The Bible is the word of God because:

- a) The written scripture contain God's word.
- b) Through the Bible God communicates his will to humans.
- c) It contains word written by inspired authors such as the prophets who were sent by God.
- d) God himself took part in the writing of the Bible. E.g. God is believed to have written the Ten Commandments
- e) It contains the history of salvation realized through Jesus Christ.
- f) The Word gives revelation to mysteries.
- g) The Bible contains a message of hope and reconciliation.
- h) It reveals that God controlled what was being written and what He intended the writers to pass to the people.

### **The Bible as a library**

The Bible is referred to as a library since it is a collection of inspired scriptures or books. The Bible contains 66 books. The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains 39 books while the New Testament contains 27 books. However, the Roman Catholic Church accepts 7 additional books referred to as Apocrypha or Deutero or canonical books. The word Apocrypha means hidden or secret. They are Esdras (1, 2), Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Baarch and Maccabees.

### **Why the Bible is a library**

Several studies show that:

- a) The Bible contains (66) book just like a library has many books. The Bible is a collection of books arranged in series.
- b) The Bible is a reference book for Christians. The authors of the Bible had a special spiritual guidance; hence each book was written for a purpose.

- c) The books were written at different times in history.
- d) The Bible has literary works.
- e) The Books written contain different topics.
- f) The Bible has different books written by different authors.
- g) The books of the Bible were written under different situations and circumstances.

## **THE BIBLE: MAJOR DIVISIONS AND ITS BOOKS**

### **Major divisions of the Bible**

The bible is divided into two major divisions. These are the Old Testament with (39 Books) and the New Testament with (27 Books). The word Testament means covenant or agreement with God.

The Old Testament books are divided into:

- a. Books of the law or the Pentateuch or Torah.
- b. Historical books.
- c. Poetic Books
- d. Prophetic books.

### **Law books or the Pentateuch or Torah**

The books of law are (i) Genesis (ii) Exodus (iii) Leviticus (iv) Numbers (v) Deuteronomy.

Moses wrote these books. They contain the law of God as it was given to the people of Israel through Moses. They also contain the history of the Israelites from creation to the time they entered the Promised Land. The author Moses is regarded as a lawgiver, teacher and prophet.

### **Historical books**

There are the 12 consecutive books from (i) Joshua (ii) Judges (iii) Ruth (iv) 1, 2 Samuel (v) 1, 2 Kings (vi) 1, 2 Chronicles (vii) Ezra (viii) Nehemiah (ix) Esther. These 12 books record the history of the Israelites.

They also contain information about the life and achievements of some prophets, for example, the life history of Elisha and Elijah.

**Exercise 1 – Go through the 12 books and check page by page the names of other prophets.**

### **Poetic Books**

The books are poetic in nature. The poetic books contain wise sayings, songs, and prayers. The poetic books are (1) Psalms which was written by David (ii) Proverbs (iii) Ecclesiastes (iv) Song of Solomon written by Solomon and (v) Job.

### **Prophetic books**

These are divided into major and minor prophets. A prophet is a messenger of God, or God's spokesperson. A prophet is a mouthpiece of God. Prophets pass information and messages from God to the people. They are messengers from God. Their messages from God concern the future.

### **Five Major Prophetic Books**

- I. The major prophetic books are by (i) Isaiah (ii) Jeremiah (iii) Lamentations (iv) Ezekiel and (v) Daniel. The books are named after the prophets who prophesied and probably wrote them. Jeremiah wrote laments. These prophets are called Major Prophets because they cover a longer period of time. Their prophecies are long, and they prophesied over a long period of time.
- II. Minor Prophets. There are 12 books of (1) Hosea (2) Joel (3) Amos (4) Obadiah (5) Jonah (6) Micah (7) Nahum (8) Habakkuk (9) Zephaniah (10) Haggai (11) Zechariah and (12) Malachi. These books are by Minor Prophets who are said to have prophesied over a shorter period of time if you compare them with the Major Prophets.

### **New Testament books are:**

- a. Biographical books or Gospels.
- b. Historical books (Acts of the Apostles).
- c. The Epistles.
- d. Apocalyptic or Prophetic book

#### **a) Biographical book or Gospels**

**Gospel** means **Good News**. The disciples of Jesus wrote the biographical books. They contain information about the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The biographical books are four. (i) Mathew – Written by Mathew (ii) Mark – Written by Mark (iii) Luke – Written by Luke, the doctor and (iv) John – written by John (the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ)

#### **b) Historical books**

There is one historical book, which is the Acts of the Apostles. Luke, the writer of the St. Luke's Gospel, wrote it. The book of Acts tells us the history of the early church.

#### **c) The Epistles**

There are two Epistles: Pauline Epistles and General Epistles. Pauline Epistles are letters written by Paul. They are 13 letters that Paul wrote to (1) Romans (2,3) 1, 2 Corinthians (4) Galatians (5) Ephesians (6) Philip-pines (7) Colossians (8, 9) 1, 2 Thessalonians (10, 11) 1, 2 Timothy (12) Titus and (13) Philemon.

General Epistles are letters written to the church by other people. The letters are 8 in number. They (1) Hebrews (2) James (3,4) 1, 2 Peter (5,6,7) 1, 2, 3, John and (8) Jude

#### **d) Apocalyptic or Prophetic book**

This is the book of Revelation. It is the last book in the New Testament. It is different from other books. This is because it is prophetic of things to come. It is about the future. It was written by John the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ.

### **MAJOR BIBLE TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES TO LOCAL LANGUAGES**

These books of the Bible are accepted as the Canon of the Bible. The term Canon means Standard or guidance or rule. Translation means expression of books by words and pictures, poems and songs from one language to another. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, the language of the Israelites. Then between 250 – 100 BC, it was translated to the Greek language. The Greek translation of the Bible was known as Septua-gint. This term refers to 70 translators. The Jews in dispersion or Diaspora used this translation. These were the Jews living outside Palestine.

Between 386 – 420 A.D. Jerome, a great Christian Scholar, translated the entire bible from Greek into Latin, the language of the Romans. This translation was called Vulgate. Christians used the Latin translation of the Bible up to the 16th century. During the reformation in the 16th Century, Christians were encouraged to use their own native languages in worship. From that time, the Bible was translated into English and German. As Christianity spread to different parts of the world, there was the need for

translations of the Holy Bible into various languages. In 1804, the British formed the Foreign Bible Society, which translated the Bible into many languages.

Johann Ludwig Krapf translated the New Testament into Kiswahili. This was the first Bible translation in East Africa. Since that time, the Bible Society of Kenya has translated the Bible into other languages such

as Kikuyu in 1951, Kikamba in 1956, Kimeru in 1964, Kalenjin in 1968, and Luhya in 1974. By 1980 the Bible had been translated into 29 Kenyan languages. To date (2010) the Bible has been translated into 42 languages of Kenya.

### **Translation and versions used in Kenya today**

Besides bible translation into several languages, there are many English translation versions, which are commonly used in Kenya. These are (i) King James Version (ii) Jerusalem Bible (iii) New International version (iv) English Bible (v) The Authorized Version (vi) Good News (vii) Revised Standard Version (viii) New King James Version (ix) Amplified Bible (x) The living Bible (xi) The African Bible (xii) Common Bible (xiii) Today's English Bible (xiv) American version among others.

### **Writing of the Bible**

By 2010, the Bible Society of Kenya had translated the Bible into 42 Kenyan languages. The need to read the Bible led to writing of Bible reading materials to teach literacy in local languages. Those who wrote the Bible used different styles, and figures of speech to make their message vivid and clear. Several literary forms were used in the writing of the Bible.

These are:

#### **a. Poetry in Psalms**

##### **Activity**

- a) Read Psalms and notice the poetry used by David when he wrote psalms**
- b) Read Job. Notice the rhythm of the words**
- c) Turn to your English textbook – the Integrated English. Read topic 4 on sound and pattern in poetry.**
- d) Read any Psalm and any verse from Job. What do you notice?**

##### **Other literary forms that are used in the Bible are:**

- i) Prose in Leviticus, which is a Legislative text
- ii) Wise sayings in Proverbs
- iii) Prophetic speeches by Jeremiah
- iv) Prayers by Nehemiah
- v) Love Songs, for example, the Songs of Solomon
- vi) Letters. Here see Pauline Epistles (Romans)
- vii) Gospels, for example, Mark's Gospel
- viii) Religious events, for example, Exodus
- ix) Narratives, for example, Genesis
- x) Philosophical essays, for example, the book of Job. Here note the use of metaphors and similes in philosophical essays.

## **The effects of Bible translations on African languages**

### **Bible translations:**

- i) Increased and deepened African faith in God.
- ii) Led to increased literacy. After Africans acquired literacy skills, they read the Bible and improved their literacy skills. Christian missionaries established schools in order to teach literacy that helped African to read the Bible.
- iii) Made it easy for missionaries to spread the gospel to the African communities.
- iiii) Increased the demand for the Bible. This led to writing of Books and setting up of printing presses in African countries.
- iv) Made it easy for the expansion of the church i.e. more people became Christians.
- v) Led to the emergence of independent churches and schools.
- vi) The missionaries and colonialists learnt the African languages.
- vii) The African converts realized that the missionaries were unfair to them. There was for example a different treatment of African by White missionaries. This was inequality of races, which was and is even now against Christian teachings.
- viii) Helped Africans to re-discover their cultural identity. For example the use of African instruments, dressings, and practice of polygamy, which David and other kings in the Old Testament did.
- ix) Led to the writings and spread of African languages. The missionaries learnt local languages.
- x) Improved communications between missionaries and the local people because they could understand each other.
- xi) Increased printing of reading materials

### **The effects of Bible translations on Africans communities**

After the first Bible translations, there were immediate effects or influences on some communities. For example, some community leaders did not agree with the Christian teachings. Some wanted to retain aspects of their African religion. As a result, some communities who disagreed with Bible translations established their own Christian denominations in order to preach the Bible, as they understood it. This was the emergence of independent churches. Some African communities built independent schools where their children could learn how to read and write without being forced to practice all the Christian teachings.

### **Review questions**

- 1) What is the importance of reading the Bible?
- 2) How is the Bible used in society today?
- 3) How does the Kenya Government use the Bible today?

- 4) Name the major divisions of the Bible in both the New Testament and the Old Testament
- 5) What are the effects of Bible translation on African languages?
- 6) Why is the Bible referred to as (a) a Library and (b) the Word of God
- 7) What is the meaning of the term inspiration?

### **Study activities**

1. Read the Bible quotations given above.
2. Carry out role plays e.g. the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.
3. Visit old people in your community and ask them about African religious traditional practices.

## **CREATION AND THE FALL OF MAN (GENESIS 1-3, 6-9, 11)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this topic, you shall learn about creation and the fall of man. This information is in Genesis.

### **BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF CREATION AND THEIR MEANINGS**

The book of Genesis begins with two creation stories. The first creation story is in Genesis chapter one. The second creation story is in Genesis chapter two.

#### **The two creation stories**

The first creation story is in Genesis chapter one. The second creation story is in Genesis chapter two. This story is like a song or poem. It's written, "Let there be..." and "God saw that it was good ... to separate," and "there was evening and morning on ...". Each creation is taken as a day. The creation took place in the following order. It is orderly:

1st day – God created day and night (Light and darkness)

2nd day – The Heavens (sky)

3rd day – The Earth, Water / Sea, Vegetation (Plants, trees, grass)

4th day – Sun, Moon and Stars

5th day – Birds, Sea Creatures

6th day – Animals, Livestock, Man was the last creation (human beings)

7th day – God rested and blessed the 7th day and made it holy.

In this creation story, we see God creating things in an orderly manner, day after day until the 6th day. It was last in the first account.

God created man from dust and breathed into his nostrils before anything else is mentioned. God then put man in the Garden of Eden, which He had made for him



so that man could till and keep it. The garden was planted eastward in Eden. Out of the ground, God made every tree to grow. In the middle of the garden, there was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man was given the responsibility of tilling and conserving the garden. Man was commanded to eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed from the garden and then it separated into four tributaries. God saw that man should not be alone hence He made him a helper/mate; a woman from one of the man's ribs. Man was also given the responsibility of naming all the animals in the garden. There is mention of God resting after work

### **Differences between the two creation stories**

FIRST ACCOUNT	SECOND ACCOUNT

<p>Mentions what was created on which day. Each creation takes a day.</p> <p>-This story is like a song or a poem. It's written, "Let there be..." and "God saw that it was good ... to separate", and "there was evening and morning..."</p> <p>-It is orderly.</p> <p>-Mentions what was created on which day.</p> <p>-Rivers and garden are not mentioned.</p> <p>-Man and woman were created together.</p> <p>-No mention of the knowledge.</p> <p>-Marriage is for procreation.</p> <p>-Sun, moon, stars, sky are mentioned</p> <p>-God rested on the seventh day hence the Sabbath day</p>	<p>-doesn't mention the daily activities of GOD</p> <p>-The story is in prose. For example "... and God said ... and it was evening..."</p> <p>-Not orderly was last in the first account</p> <p>-Doesn't mention what was created on which day</p> <p>-Mentions rivers, and garden for tilling</p> <p>-Woman was created from ribs of man</p> <p>-Mention of the knowledge</p> <p>-Marriage is for companionship</p> <p>-Sun, moon, stars, sky are not mentioned</p> <p>-Mention of resting after work but Sabbath day is not mentioned</p>
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### **Similarities between the two accounts of creation**

In both creation accounts:

- a) Men and women are created by God and are given special references. Man and woman are special to God.
- b) God rested after creation.
- c) God provided the source of food.
- d) God is portrayed as the sole creator of the universe and everything in it.
- e) Man is given the responsibility of controlling animals, birds and plants that God created

### **Activity**

Find out the differences between the two creation stories and write them down. Now compare them with my answer.

# **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD FROM THE BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS**

The creation stories tell us that God is:

- (i) The sole creator and the only source of life
- (ii) Immortal and Eternal
- (iii) He is self-existent
- (iv) God of order
- (v) Source of goodness and true happiness
- (vi) Holy, merciful and just
- (vii) Provider and sustainer of the universe and all that is in it
- (viii) All-knowing (Omniscient)
- (ix) All-powerful (Omnipotent)
- (x) Everywhere (Omnipresent)
- (xi) A personal God.
- (xii) He has a mind and a will
- (xiii) Moral God. He is interested in the behaviour of man and woman. He commands her/him to do the right things.

## **TRADITIONAL AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF CREATION**

Traditional African view of creation is brought out through traditional stories of creation (Myths). The Agikuyu, Akamba, Gusii and other Kenyan communities have stories explaining their origin. These stories give each community a sense of belonging, and identity. The stories explain the mysteries of life. These stories have common characteristics or teachings.

Thus all African communities believe that God: -

- (i) Is the chief architect of the world
- (ii) Existed from the very beginning of time.
- (iii) Created everything out of nothing.
- (iv) Provides for the needs of human beings.
- (v) Was disobeyed by human beings who had lived in eternal bliss. This bliss came to an end when human beings disobeyed God.
- (vi) The African communities had different names to describe God. God was not known as God but as the Creator of everything that existed on earth and skies. He was Mumbi and “Mungai” to Gikuyu. He was master of the universe. The Kamba called Him ...Ngai wa Matu. They believed that God continues to create through human beings.

## **Examples of African creation stories**

1. The Kamba believed that God created man and woman then tossed them to the earth.
2. The Bukusu say that God the creator (Were Khakaba) created the world alone.
  - a. First God created heaven then created two assistants, Mukhaba and Murumwa. Were the God made the sun, moon, stars, a big red cock which crows whenever it thunders, the rains, the rainbow, mountains, rivers, lakes, streams and all the other things on earth.
  - b. Created a woman for the man.
  - c. Created plants, animals, birds and other creatures.
  - d. Creation work took six days. On the seventh day Were rested.

### **Activity**

Ask your parents about your community creation story.

## **THE TEACHINGS FROM THE BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS**

- I. God is responsible for all creation. He is the sole creator. God's creation was good. Everything He created God said it was good. It was without flaws and mistakes. God is the provider. God created everything that man needs. He also created food for all animals and other creatures. God is orderly.
- II. Man has a special place in God's creation. Man was made as the keeper of God creation. Man is a co-creator and keeper of God's creation since he was made in the image and likeness of God. Man was comma-nded to work.
- III. A woman was made from the man's flesh. She joins man in marriage and they become one flesh. God ordains marriage. Human beings were created to socialize.
- IV. Sin is a result of man and woman disobedience of God.

### **Responsibilities given to human beings by God in the Genesis stories of creation**

After creating man and then woman, God asked man to:

- a. Reproduce and multiply.
- b. Rule over the rest of His creations.
- c. Be in charge of the fish, birds, and all the animals.
- d. Cultivate the garden and guard it.
- e. Eat from the fruits of the garden except from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- f. Name the animals.
- g. Subdue the earth
- h. Transform the creation that God has provided human beings with

- i. Use creation – forests, rivers, mountains with responsibility and respect.
- j. Be a steward of God’s creation
- k. Engineer God’s creation by creating things from the creation
- l. Dominate the earth

### **Group work**

Work in twos or threes and answer these questions.

- i. How does man fulfill the command to subdue and fill the earth?
- ii. How is man a co – creator with God?

## **BIBLICAL TEACHING: THE FALL OF MAN, ORIGIN OF SIN AND THE CONSEQUENCES**

### **Introduction**

Man and woman fell from the Garden of Eden. This experience is explained in Genesis chapter 3 verse 4; chapter 6 verse 9 and chapter 11. In these verses, the Bible is teaching about sin, which made Adam and Eve fall.

Sin is defined as iniquity, and guilt. It is to miss a mark, to transgress. Sin is a rebellion or an offence against God. Sin originated with the disobedience of Adam and Eve. They had been commanded not to eat of the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil – the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden. But Adam and Eve ate the fruit after being deceived by the serpent.

Man had the power to resist temptation but instead he yielded. Genesis Chapter 3 verse 6 states that man wanted to be wise and thought how wonderful it would be to become wise...” hence sin arises from the lack of knowledge of God, from the denial of trust of God.

### **The consequences of sin**

After sinning, we the human race and sinners:

- 1) Replaced friendship with God with fear of God.
- 2) Lost innocence. What had been innocent and good became shameful. Adam and Eve became ashamed of their nakedness, something they had never felt before they sinned against God.
- 3) Lost good relationship with God. The good relationship between God and man was betrayed. Human beings – were alienated from God. “The Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden...”
- 4) Damaged the perfect relationship between man and woman. The Lord said to the woman “You will have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him”.

5) Pain became part of human experience. “I will greatly multiply your pain in child bearing”.

6) Man began toiling and struggling to meet his needs... “You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything”

7) The home of man, and the earth itself was placed under a curse. “Cursed is the ground because of you.”

Enmity between man and wild animals emerged.

9) Man began to die. Death sentence is passed upon all men. “You will return to the ground... you are dust”

10) Man began to hate. Man developed murderous feelings in his heart, for example Cain killed Abel, his younger brother.

11) Man changed and became prone to sin.

12) Life span of man was reduced (see Gen. 6:3) “I will not allow people to live forever, they will live no longer than 120 years”

13) Man’s language was confused by God after the flood (read Gen.11: 7)

14) Sin led to embarrassment, mistrust, suffering, pain, pride, arrogance and death.

### **Summary**

Disobedience of God by Adam and Eve brought serious sin consequences to human beings. Sin brings sadness and suffering to man even today.

### **Activity**

In groups of two or three, discuss the origin and consequences of sin.

## **CONCEPT OF EVIL**

### **Introduction**

In this lesson, we shall discuss the concept of evil as told by the traditional African religion and the biblical writings. We shall study similarities and differences of evil from the two religions.

### **What is evil?**

In the traditional African society, evil was an offence against God, spirits and ancestors. It was also viewed as an offence against another person or community. Evil was also a misfortune that can befall an individual or a community.

### **What are the causes of evil?**

Many of the traditional African societies do not associate God with evil. God is not the creator of evil. Some communities believe that evil is an external power

that exists on its own. Thus in the traditional African society, evil was understood or explained as something mysterious that was caused by several people and things. These were:

a) Evil spirits

b) Ancestral spirits – due to disobedience to them

c) Some animals like the chameleon are sources of evil. The Akamba believed that chameleons brought evil. Other communities believed that if an owl cries near one's homestead, it is a sign of evil.

d) People with mystical powers for example magic, sorcery, and witchcraft are evils

e) If a member of a community breaks a taboo by disobedience, this action may bring evil spirits.

f) The spirits of the dead; cause evil; if they are not remembered or respected. Evil spirits cause harm and violence.

### **Consequences of evil in traditional African society**

These were many and ranged from (a) Barrenness (b) Drought (c) Epidemics (d) Madness (e) Sickness (f) Death (g) Drowning (h) Burning in a house (i) War (j) Physically and mentally handicapped children (l) Rebellious children

## **GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

After the fall of man, God took steps to heal the damaged situation and relationship between Him and Adam and Eve.

**GOD:**

1. Provided clothing of skin to Adam and Eve.

2. Looked for Adam and Eve since they were hiding from His presence.

3. Provided Adam and Eve with the knowledge to find different foods.

4. Declared enmity between man and the snake.

5. Hinted at the ultimate victory of man when He said that the seed of the woman would crush the snake or serpent's head. The serpent would attack the heel of man and woman.

All through the Old Testament, and the New Testament, we see God's plan of salvation being manifested. For instance, GOD chose and separated Abraham from other communities. The children of

Israel led by Moses (were delivered) from Egypt,. God sent prophets to teach and warn the Israelites of the dangers of sin. Finally God sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to save human kind.

# **SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN VIEW OF EVIL AND BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF SIN**

## **Similarities**

Both the Biblical and traditional African view or agree that

- 1) God is supreme. God is neither the creator nor author of evil
- 2) Sin comes from the disobedience of God by human beings
- 3) Evil and misfortune are God's curse to man (Biblical) while the traditional African society sees evil as curses by ancestors, and elders. Both curses lead to misfortunes.
- 4) The result of sin and evil is human sufferings
- 5) Sin and evil lead to man being separated from God
- 6) God is the guardian of law and order
- 7) Human beings have the ability to overcome evil

## **Differences**

- 1) Biblical account emphasizes personal nature of sin while in the African concept; sin is more social and communal
- 2) Biblical account attributes evil to disobedience while African concept attributes evil not only to disobediences but other external forces.
- 3) Biblical accounts offer a message of hope to overcome evil while African concept doesn't offer a solution to sin and evil.
- 4) Traditional African concept all forms of suffering as a result of sin while in the Bible suffering is not always a result of sin.

## **Review questions**

- 1) Explain the differences between the two creation stories
- 2) State the traditional African view of creation
- 3) Explain how human beings continue with the work of creation
- 4) What is the origin of sin and evil according to traditional African society?
- 5) Give three consequences of sin as stated in Genesis
- 6) State the consequences of evil according to African traditional societies
- 7) Trace God's plan of salvation of human kind

Compare biblical and traditional African understanding of evil and sin.

- 9) What does the command "Subdue the earth" in Genesis 1 verse 28 mean?

# **FAITH AND GOD PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**



# **BACKGROUND TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 11:24-32, 12)**

## **Introduction**

The background to the call of Abraham is found in the first book of the bible. This is Genesis which is a Greek word meaning “Beginning”. The relationship between Adam and God was good but after Adam disobeyed GOD, their relationship changed because of sin by Eve and Adam. After sometime, God repaired this relationship by calling Abraham and offering salvation.

## **Background**

-Abraham lived with his father Terah at a place called Ur. Abraham’s father lived among people who worshiped many gods. One of the god’s whom people of Ur worshipped was the moon. This worship of many gods is referred to as polytheism.

-The family of Terah moved from Ur to Haran. While at Haran, God called Abraham at 75 years old. He was told to.... “Leave your country, your relatives and your father’s home and go to a land that I am going to show you”. Abraham obeyed God’s call. He left Haran for a land that was unknown to him. He took his property his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot. At the time of the call of Abraham, he was known as Abram and his wife Sarai. God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah. Abraham means Father of many nations while Sarah means mother of nations.

-On arrival in Canaan, he travelled and came to a place called Schechem. God appeared to him once more. Abraham built an altar for the lord at this place. Altars are places of worship. They were regarded as holy and were manifestations of God’s presence. An altar was made of stones.

-After sometime, he separated with his nephew Lot due to their servants having strife over water for their livestock. Abraham left Canaan due to feminine. He went to Egypt.

## **Activity**

1. Where did Lot settle?
2. Read GENESIS, chapter 11 (24 – 32) and chapter 12 (1 – 9)

# **FAITH AND GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (HEBREWS 11: 1 – 6)**

## **a. THE MEANING OF FAITH**

-Faith is a strong belief, a complete trust or confidence in someone or something. It is also a firm belief, which is not based on any scientific or logical proof. Faith in God is an attitude of complete trust in God.

It is not based on concrete or tangible objects. Faith is manifested in the ways of life of a believer.

-Abraham is an example of someone who had faith in God. He showed his faith in action in several ways.

### **b. HOW ABRAHAM DEMONSTRATED HIS FAITH IN GOD**

1. Although Abraham was old, he left Haran to go to a strange unknown land of Canaan.

2. After he settled in Canaan, Abraham was assured by God of his protection and was given other promises such as he will get a son, and Abraham believed God. Sarah gave birth to a son when she was

90 years old and Abraham was around 120 years old. This was as the lord had promised Abraham.

3. The son was named Isaac that means “laughter” – because Sarah had laughed when she was told that she would have a child in her old age. The child Isaac was circumcised when he was eight (8) days old.

4. Abraham was told by God to circumcise all males in his household including himself. He obeyed.

5. When Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac to God, he was ready to do so.

6. Abraham believed that God would fulfill all the promises he had given to him

7. Abraham demonstrated his faith by building altars

### **c. GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12:2-3, 15:1-21, 21, 17:1-8, 17:15-18)**

A promise is giving an assurance of something to someone. The promises God gave to Abraham were that:

1. God told him he would give him a land. His descendants would be given the land of Canaan to dwell in

2. His name would be made famous

3. His descendants will be many. Abraham would be made a great nation.

4. God would protect him

5. He was promised a son of their own

6. God would bless him

7. God would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him

8. Abraham was promised that he would die in peace and in an old age

9. His descendants would be strangers in a foreign land but afterwards would come out with great possessions.

**d. THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROMISES MADE BY GOD TO ABRAHAM TO CHRISTIANS TODAY (Gen. 12: 2 – 3, 15: 1 – 21, 21:1 – 7, 17: 15 – 18)**

God called Abraham from idol worship in the same way God continues to call people to serve him.

1) Through Abraham, God had a plan to restore the relationship between man and God

2) Christians receive the promises of blessings from God through Abraham (God's promises to Abraham fulfilled through Christians)

3) As Abraham left his own people, Christians should leave their sinful lives and put their whole trust in God.

4) Abraham is seen as the descendant not only of the Israelites but also of Christians

5) Christians have faith that God fulfills promises to them as he did to Abraham

6) Christians are assured of God's protection

7) Through God's dealing with Abraham, God shows that he values a personal relationship with human kind.

Through Jesus Christ Christians enter into an everlasting covenant with God. Just like Abraham entered into a covenant with God.

9) The promise to Abraham of Canaan Promised Land is to Christians the hope for new land – heaven

10) God continues to make promises to those who believe him

11) Abraham is the ancestor (Father) of all believers)

**e. DEFINE THE TERM COVENANT**

**i. Definition.**

A covenant is a solemn agreement between two persons or two groups of people. An agreement is between two separated parties. It's a pact, a treaty. When it is a covenant, it conveys a union or partnership.

**ii. Characteristics / components of a covenant**

There are components or features that must be in a covenant. A covenant must have a ceremony, sign, witnesses, promises/vows/oaths, obligations / consequences, and participants. A covenant establishes a sacrificial bond between the parties involved. There are obligations or rules by which the parties must abide by, adhere to and observe in order to keep the covenant. A covenant is an

agreement and if it is broken, there are consequences for breaking it. In the Bible, there are many covenants.

### **iii. Examples of covenants in the Bible**

1. Adamic covenant – Agreement between God and Adam

2. Noahic Covenant – God’s covenant with Noah where God promised to preserve life of man and not to destroy it with water. The sign of the covenant is the rainbow. In Gen 9 verse 3, GOD told Noah, “Everything that lives and moves will be food for you...Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. Verse 4 says, “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it”

3. Abrahamic covenant – Gods covenant with Abraham. He promised to fulfill promises He gave to Abraham. These promises were: (1) Increase numbers of descendant of Abraham. He will be father of many nations, (2) Be GOD of his descendants (3) Abraham will have a son an heir, (4) Given land of Canaan and other lands from the river of Egypt to River Euphrates, and all for heirs of Abraham (Gen. 15: 17 – 18) (5) Circum-cision of all males at 8 days after birth even none Israelites living in their land (6) Covenant with Isaac

4. Mosaic Covenant – is a covenant between the Israelites and GOD. Moses led Israel to Mt. Sinai. God promised to be their God. Israelites were given the law written by GOD in “tablets of stone, with law and commands I have written for.... instruction”. (Read exodus 23).

5. Davidic Covenant – covenant between David and God – God promised him that his dynasty would rule forever.

6. Messianic Covenant – new covenant between Christians and God through Jesus Christ.

### **iv. God’s covenant with Abraham and its importance (Genesis 15:1-19)**

The covenant was established after God appeared to Abraham in a vision. During the visitation of God, Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah 90 years. He was promised a son. Abraham wanted assurance from God. God told him to bring him the following items for sacrifice.

#### **v. Items for sacrifice**

Three (3) years olds: heifer, goat, ram and a dove and a pigeon.

Abraham then cut these animals into two halves and placed them opposite each other.

The birds were not split.

After it was dark, smoking fire and a flaming torch suddenly appeared and passed between the pieces of animals.

□ Towards evening, Abraham fell into a deep sleep. While he slept the Lord appeared to him and told him that:

□ His descendants will be strangers in a foreign land and be slaves for 400 years. But they will come out of this land with a lot of wealth and God will punish the nation that will enslave Israelites.

□ He, Abraham will live up to a ripe age, and die in peace. Then the Lord made a covenant with Abraham and promised to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. God himself passed through the sacrifices and bound himself to keep the promises.

#### **f) IMPORTANCE OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND ABRAHAM (GEN. 15: 1- 19)**

□ God bound himself in a personal relationship with a human being

□ As God passed through the meat, he showed Abraham he would always protect him. This passed on to the descendants of Abraham

□ This covenant between God and Abraham begins a lasting relationship between God and all the nations of the earth.

□ Throughout this covenant God was initiating his plan of salvation for human kind

□ The promises made to Abraham were fulfilled in New Testament blood of the lamb – death of Jesus Christ

□ It emphasized the importance of faith followed by obedience that Abraham shared.

#### **g) COVENANTS IN MODERN LIFE AND THEIR IMPORTANCE**

Modern covenants are (a) Marriage (b) Baptism (c) Oath of loyalty and (d) Ordination of clergy

**Marriage ceremony:** In marriage, the bride, bridegroom and their families come together. When the two families come together a relationship is developed. They make an agreement and both sides are seriously involved in the ceremony, whether the marriage is civil or religious. During the marriage ceremony the couple makes vows/promises to each other, before a priest/ pastor and the congregation. Two officials witness these agreements. Rings are exchanged as a sign of a lasting relationship. A certificate is given in some cases as a testimony (sign) of this agreement. There is eating and drinking.

**Baptism:** In a Christian baptism, a covenant is entered into between the believer and God. The believer makes vows before God. The priest and the whole congregation witness this agreement. In some churches, a card is issued to the person who has been baptized as a sign of Christian membership. The baptized

can now take the Holy Communion, which is a Christian Ceremony. But when an infant is baptized, parents take the vows on behalf of the child.

**Loyalty /oath:** Leaders in public service for example the president, ministers, Members of Parliament, and chief officers are sworn in before they take over their new responsibilities. They swear (take an oath) and promise to carry out their duties firmly and without fear or favour.

**Ordination of the clergy:** Church leaders, nuns and priests take oaths and make vows to God and to the congregation in a ceremony attended by worshippers.

### **The importance of modern day covenants**

- They bind different groups
- They act as a security
- They strengthen relationships
- They unite people together
- They create loyalty
- They create peace, harmony and bring a sense of permanence

### **h) THE TESTING OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH (GEN. 22: 1 – 18)**

God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to go and sacrifice his only son Isaac. This was the son he loved so much. He was to travel to Mount Moriah. On reaching Mt. Moriah, he built an altar, and arranged wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. He lifted a knife to kill him. "But the Angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven. Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay a hand on the boy...Do not do anything to him. Now I know you that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (v 11-12). Abraham had obedient reverence for God because he did not keep back his only son from God. God provided a ram for sacrifice. He named the mountain "the Lord provided" God was pleased with Abraham and promised him blessings, many descendants' victory, and protection.

### **Activity**

Read Genesis 12:1 – 9, 15:1 – 6, 17:23 – 24, 21:1 – 7, 22:1-19

## **IMPORTANCE OF FAITH IN CHRISTIAN LIFE TODAY**

1. A Christian today is acceptable to God through his faith in God through Jesus Christ. Without faith it is impossible to please God.
2. A Christian can only serve God if he has faith in him. Faith enables a Christian to serve God
3. Faith enables a Christian to accomplish what appears to be impossible
4. Through faith, Christians are able to trust God to fulfill his promises to them

5. Faith is the foundation of the Christians salvation
6. Faith in God gives a Christian the power to overcome all temptations.
8. Christians should expect to have their faith tested just like Abraham was.
9. Faith enables Christians to patiently wait on God's promises
10. Christians through faith in God help the poor, make right decisions and are able to understand and know God better.

## **JEWISH AND AFRICAN PRACTICES OF CIRCUMCISION**

### **a. IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMCISION TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS (GEN. 17: 1 – 16)**

The rite of circumcision was started by Abraham and has been practiced by the Jews up to the present times.

**In the Old Testament**, it was important because:

- (i) Through circumcision: God assured Abraham that he would fulfill His promises to him.
- (ii) Circumcision was a sign that Abraham and his descendants had entered into a covenant with God. It was an outward sign of inner faith.
- (iii) Circumcision was a mark of identity for the Jews
- (iv) It was a sign of obedience to God
- (v) It was an acceptance of God as the only true God and their willingness to remain faithful to him

#### **In the New Testament**

- (vi) Circumcision doesn't qualify one to be a child of God. One is accepted as a Christian without circumcision as long as they have faith in God.
- (vii) A true descendant of Abraham is the Christian who truly believes in God and lives according to His will regardless of colour, race or creed.

### **b. CIRCUMCISION IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES**

Circumcision is one of the rites of passage among the African people. It marks the transition from one stage to another. Many ethnic communities in Kenya still practice the rite of circumcision. During circumcision ceremonies, prayers are offered to God for the well being of the initiates (those who are being circumcised) and the prosperity of the whole community. Initiates learn secrets of their community and society. They are taught myths, origin, religious beliefs, and sex education. In some communities, initiates are given new names or ornaments to signify their new status.

### **c. JEWISH AND AFRICAN PRACTICES OF CIRCUMCISION**

## **Similarities**

In both Jewish and African communities, circumcision: (a) is a mark of identity (b) provided a sense of belonging (c) was observed as a religious experience (d) was compulsory (e) was a tradition passed from one generation to another (f) is a time for shedding blood (g) was a time for offering prayers to God for the well being of the initiates (h) was a time for giving gifts (i) was a ceremony for initiation (j) was a time for giving the initiates names (k) took place in sacred places.

## **Differences**

In Jewish community,

- i. Circumcision was a rite for boys while in African society it was for both boys and girls. But it was for boys in a few communities.
- ii. Boys were circumcised when aged 8 days while in the African society; it was between 15 to 25 years old.
- iii. Circumcision was for boy's organ while in African societies several forms of initiation were done, for example, removal of teeth, and body piercing among others.
- iv. Circumcision was a command from God while for the African communities it was in obedience to customary law where ancestors were invoked to protect the initiates.

## **Among the African societies**

- v. Circumcision was a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood while for the Jews it was not.
- vi. The initiates were given specialized education while the Jews were not.
- vii. The initiates were grouped into age groups, and were secluded from the community while among the Jews it was not so.
- viii. The rite of circumcision according to seasons while the Jews once a child is born, they are circumcised on the 8th day.
- ix. After circumcision, the initiates were allowed to marry, enter a warrior group, own property but for the Jews the initiate was still a child.

## **Revision questions**

1. Explain why Abraham is referred to as the father of faith
2. Give five actions from the life of Abraham that shows his faith to God
3. List some of the promises God gave to Abraham
4. Compare and contrast the Jewish and traditional African practice of circumcision
5. What is the importance of faith to Christians?



6. State the elements of a covenant

7. Give examples of covenants in the bible and the modern society

8. Discuss the circumstances that led God to enter into a covenant relationship with Abraham.

## **SINAI COVENANT**

### **THE CALL OF MOSES**

One day, Moses was looking after or tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law. Jethro was a priest of Midian. When Moses came to mount Horeb, the mountain of God, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that although the bush was on fire, it was not burning.

Moses went over to the burning bush to look. God called him out within the bush... "Moses! Moses!" He replied, "Here I am". God then told Moses not to come closer and to take off his sandals for the place where he was standing was a holy ground.

God introduced himself as the God of his father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God then said he had seen the misery and sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt. He had heard their cry. God had come down to rescue Israelites from the hand of Egyptians. God was to take them to their home, the land of the Canaanites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

God told Moses that He was sending him to go to Pharaoh and bring out the Israelites, the people of God, from Egypt. Moses resisted the call. He asked God "Who am I, that is should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israe-lites out of Egypt?" God promised to be with him. God said to Moses... Say to the Israelites... the Lord. The God of their fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob has sent me to you.

Moses was told to assemble the elders of Israel and inform them that God was going to deliver them from Egypt. Moses was then to go to the king of Egypt with the elders. He was to tell the king "the Lord, the God of the Hebrews has met with us. (EXODUS 3:1 – 22)

#### **God's sign to Moses**

Moses was given several signs by God In case the people of Israel did not believe in him.

a) First sign was his staff turning into a snake when he threw it down. When he touched the snake's tail it turned into his staff

b) Second sign was God asked Moses to put his hand inside his cloak and it was as white as a snow – leprous. He was asked to put it back into his cloak and it was restored.

c) Moses further complained that he was a stammerer. God then appointed Aaron, his brother, as his spokesman.

### **Reasons Moses gave against the call**

1. He felt unworthy of the call.
2. He wondered who he was to tell the Israelites that God had sent him
3. Moses said that he was a stammerer so he let God choose a spokesperson.

Moses however heeded to the call and went back to Egypt together with his family. God promised to be with him and perform signs before Pharaoh.

### **What does the name Moses mean?**

It means drawn out of water.

### **What did Moses learn about God from his Calling?**

Moses learnt that:

1. God is caring, merciful and concerned about the welfare of his people – Israelites.
2. God is transcendent – he is beyond human understanding. He cannot be limited to time and space.
3. God chooses whomever he wills to carry out his plans. He chose Abraham an old man, a moon worshipper and now Moses, a murderer, a fugitive and a stammerer.
4. God expects total obedience and faith from those that He chooses
5. God is powerful, eternal and omnipresent
6. God is holy.
7. God is a God of history, which means He is concerned with His people's welfare.
8. God is mysterious – He manifested Himself in the burning bush that was not being consumed.

### **How did God prepare Moses to be the future leader of Israelites?**

1. His life was spared when he was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter
2. He was nursed by his own mother who taught him about Yahweh and his own true identity
3. Life in the wilderness hardened him to be bold and to persevere hardships
4. He learnt to be patient, keen, and responsible as a shepherd
5. He acquired leadership skills while living at pharaoh's palace
6. He learnt literacy and numeracy skills (Educational skills) at the palace.

7. He was not a stranger to Pharaoh hence he could approach him freely.

## **THE TEN PLAGUES EXODUS 7:14-11:10**

During the call of Moses at Mount Sinai, God gave Moses a rod with which he could perform mighty signs before the Israelites and before Pharaoh. Aaron was to be his spokesman. Moses and Aaron gathered the Israelite elders and leaders to tell them what God had said to them. After Moses had performed the miracles that God had showed him; the Israelite leaders believed him.

They then approached Pharaoh so that he may release the Israelites. However instead of releasing the Israelites, Pharaoh became crueler. He gave Israelites harder work.

When Pharaoh refused to release Israelites, God instructed Moses to bring ten plagues upon Egypt.

These plagues brought; great trouble and suffering to Israelites.

### **Ten plagues**

#### **1) The plague of blood (Exodus 7: 14 – 25)**

Moses and Aaron used the rod. They struck the waters of the river as God instructed them. All the water in the rivers, canals, and pools in Egypt turned into blood. All the fish died and there was no water to drink. This situation lasted for seven days. However Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He did not release the Israelites.

#### **2) The plague of frogs (Exodus 8:1 – 15)**

God then sent Moses to tell Pharaoh that if he refused to release the Israelites the whole land would be covered with frogs. At the command of Moses, Aaron held out the rod of Moses and frogs covered the whole land. On seeing this, Pharaoh pleaded with Moses and Aaron to pray to the Lord to get rid of the frogs and he would release them. They prayed and all the frogs died. Pharaoh, however, changed his mind and refused to release the Israelites.

#### **3) Plague of gnats (Exodus 8:16 – 19)**

The lord instructed Moses to tell Aaron to strike the ground and Aaron did so and all the dust in Egypt turned into gnats or small flies that bites. The magicians of Egypt could perform the first two plagues.

They could not bring the plague of gnats. Egyptians acknowledged that the presence of gnats or small flies that bites was God's work. But even with this information, Pharaoh still refused to release the Israelites.

#### **4) Plague of flies (Exodus 8:20 – 32)**

The Lord warned Pharaoh through Moses once more. He was told that God would send swarms of flies to the Egyptian houses. The Israelites houses would be spared. Even after bringing the plague of flies, Pharaoh's heart hardened even more

#### **5) Death of cattle (Exodus 8:1 – 7)**

A plague of disease befell the Egyptian cattle. Not a single Israelites' animal died. Pharaoh was not moved; and he refused to let Jews go home.

#### **6) Plague of boils (Exodus 9:8 – 12)**

Moses threw ashes into the air as God had instructed. This produced boils, which became open sores on the skin of the Egyptians. Unmoved by the suffering of his people, Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites leave.

#### **7) Plague of hail (Exodus 9:13 – 35)**

Moses raised his rod and there was a hailstorm with lightning and thunder. The people, animals and plants that were struck by the lightning died. Pharaoh then promised to let the Israelites go but as soon as Moses prayed for the hailstorm to stop, pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the Israelites leave.

#### **8) Plague of Locusts (Exodus 10:1 – 20)**

Locusts covered the whole land and ate all the crops in the fields. The locusts ate all that had not been destroyed by the hailstorm. When Moses prayed to God, for locusts to leave; Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the Israelites leave.

#### **9) Plague of darkness (Exodus 10: 21 – 29)**

God then instructed Moses to stretch out his hand to heaven. There was total darkness in Egypt for three days. But there was light where the Israelites they were living. Pharaoh remained unmoved and would not release the Israelites out of Egypt.

#### **10) Death of Egyptian first-born males (Exodus 11: 1 – 31).**

After the plague of darkness, God sent Moses once more to Pharaoh. He was told that this time even his family would be affected. The Lord would kill all the first-born Egyptian sons and first-born male animals at mid-night. This plague occurred during the night of Passover. Pharaoh was moved and allowed Israelites to leave Egypt.

#### **What do the plagues tell us about God's attributes?**

GOD:

1. Empowers His people to perform miracles and to do His work
2. Is Almighty and more powerful than the Egyptian gods.
3. Is determined to fulfil His plans.

4. Is a God of justice. He protects the oppressed.
5. Gives everyone a chance to repent. Notice that each time Pharaoh promised to release the Israelites; God relieved the Egyptians from the plagues.
6. Fulfills His promises – He had promised Abraham to deliver his descendants from foreign lands.
7. Expects total obedience and faith.
8. Communicates His will through natural events.
9. Is caring and loving.

## **PASSOVER (EXODUS 12:1-30, 19, 20, 34)**

The tenth plague is called the Passover. It happened on the fourteenth day of the month. The Israelites were to offer one-year-old lamb per family. If a family was too small, they were to share the lamb with their neighbours. If a lamb was not available, a one-year-old goat could also be used. They were told to:

1. Slaughter the lamb/goat; smear some of the blood on the sides and tops of the door- frames of their houses.
2. Roast the meat and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (bread without yeast). If there were any leftovers they were to burn them with fire.
3. Eat in a hurry while fully dressed and having packed their belongings. They were told to borrow silver, clothings, jewellery, and gold from the Egyptians.
4. That on the same night, the ‘angel of death’ would kill every first born both males and animals in the houses without blood.
5. The angel of death would pass over the houses with blood sparing them. The blood was a sign to indicate this is a house of Israelites. When the Lord sees the blood, He will pass over that house (V.13)
6. The Israelites were told to celebrate / commemorate from generation to generation the Passover as a festival to the Lord.
7. The Israelites were not allowed to come out of their houses on the night of Passover.
8. At midnight, the Lord struck down all firstborn in Egypt from Pharaoh’s household to the firstborn of the prisoners and firstborn of livestock.
9. There was loud wailing over Egypt. Every house had someone dead.

### **Significance of items used during the Passover**

- 1) Roasted Meat – this is the easiest method of preparing food since the Israelites were to leave in a short time.
- 2) Bitter herbs – was a reminder of the suffering and hardships and slavery experienced in Egypt.
- 3) Eating while standing. Deliverance was near, hence the need to leave in a hurry.

- 4) Eating while fully dressed with their stuff at hand. This signified a quick deliverance; hence Israelites should be ready to leave Egypt at once.
- 5) Eating unleavened bread – the bread was to be eaten and none left over hence there was no need to add yeast for preservation.
- 6) Collecting Jewellery – God had promised Abraham that after slavery for four hundred and thirty years, his descendants shall be freed with great possessions.
- 7) Remaining indoors – for security from death. Anyone outside was killed. Blood on doorposts – a sign for deliverance. The angel of death would pass over doors with blood.

## **THE EXODUS**

### **Introduction**

Exodus means movement of a large number of people.

### **Crossing the Red Sea**

During the night of the Passover, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to leave, to go and worship their Lord. All the Israelites, their flocks and herds were urged to leave in a hurry. Pharaoh took his chariot army and followed the Israelites and found them camped by the Red Sea.

God led the Israelites over the desert towards the Red Sea. Moses took the body (bones) of Joseph, as Joseph had requested the Israelites to do. “When God rescues you, you must carry my body with you from this place” (Ex 13 vs. 19)

During the day the Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud (angel of God) to show them the way, and during the night the lord went in front in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel night and day. This pillar of cloud led the Israelites by day and night.

The Egyptian army followed Israelites and caught up with them by the Red Sea where they had camped.

Moses asked the scared Israelites to move near the sea.

God told Moses to lift up his stick, and hold it over the sea. The waters of the Red Sea divided and the Israelites crossed the sea on dry ground with walls of water on both sides. The angel of God, and the pillar of cloud (who had been in front of the army of Israel) moved behind the Israelites and provided light to them as they cross.

The Egyptians army pursued Israelites. The pillar of cloud made it dark for Egyptians who could not see where they were going. Just before daylight, the Lord looked at the Egyptians from the pillar of cloud and fire and God threw the army

of the Egyptians into confusion. Moses was asked by the Lord to stretch out his hand. He did so and waters returned to its normal level drowning Egyptian army and their horses.

### **God protected the Israelites during the Exodus by:**

- 1) Making them cross the red sea on dry ground.
- 2) Providing water in the wilderness.
- 3) Providing manna and quails.
- 4) Defeating Amalekites – their enemies.
- 5) Protecting them from snakes and diseases in the wilderness.

### **Provision of water in the wilderness**

Israelites travelled in the desert for three days without water. The water, which they found at Marah was bitter and could not be drunk. They called the place ‘Marah’ meaning ‘bitter’. This made them complain. Moses prayed to the Lord.

The Lord showed Moses a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water and it became fit to drink. God continued providing Israelites with water.

Again the Israelites lacked water and complained bitterly (Ex.17:1 – 9). God instructed Moses to strike a rock and water came out of it. Moses called that place ‘Massah’ – which means ‘testing’ and ‘Meribah’ – meaning ‘rebellion’. This was because the Israelites quarreled and tested God.

### **Provision of manna and quails (EX 16:1 – 35)**

As the Israelites were travelling through the desert, they ran out of food. They were hungry and complained to Moses. Their complaints displeased the Lord for they often told Moses they wished he had let them die in Egypt instead of dying in the wilderness. This showed that the Israelites did not trust God to provide for them.

In the morning, they were given Manna, which is a Hebrew word for the type of bread given to Israelites by God. The bread looked like wafers or flakes and tasted like coriander seed.

In the evening, GOD provided Israelites with quail’s meat. The provision of manna and quails (meat) lasted for 40 years.

On the 6th day of each week, God gave them food for two days one for the 6th day and the other for the 7th day (Sabbath).

## **DEFEAT OF THE AMALEKITES (Exodus 17: 8 – 16)**

### **Challenges faced by the Israelites during the Exodus**

During the Exodus, the Israelites faced the challenge of the Amalekites. These were desert Nomads who attacked the Israelites in the wilderness. When the

Amalekite army came against Israelites, Moses ordered Joshua to gather men and fight.

God promised to destroy the Amalekites forever. During the battle, Moses held up his rod. And each time he raised his hands with the rod, the Amalekites were defeated. When he brought his hands down, the Israelites were defeated. Because of this, Aaron and Hur supported Moses' hands until the Amalekites were defeated.

In the wilderness God protected the Israelites from snakebites. He also used a cloud to protect the Israelites from the scorching heat during the day. At night, the pillar of fire provided warmth to protect them from the harsh cold of the wilderness.

### **The importance of the exodus in the history of the Israelites**

The exodus showed Israelites that:

- 1) God loves and tolerates His people.
- 2) God did not abandon the Israelites despite their lack of faith.
- 3) God gave the Israelites encouragement through his servant Moses.
- 4) It was the end of the oppression of Israelites in Egypt.
- 5) Moses was God's chosen leader.

## **MAKING THE SINAI COVENANT (EXODUS 19: 24 1**

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### **The Sinai covenant**

**God and Israelites.** God had specific instructions on how the Israelites were to prepare to make the new covenant. Before making the covenant, God brought Israelites to the foot of Mt. Sinai and asked Moses to ask them if they were willing to make the covenant with HIM. GOD asked them to enter into a personal relationship as a community with HIM. The Israelites agreed to make a covenant. They agreed to obey all God's commands. God then promised to make them;

- i His people
- ii. A kingdom of priests
- iii. A holy nation

**God and Moses.** God wanted to confirm that Moses was His true prophet. He therefore told Moses that He would come in a thick cloud to meet Israelites. In preparation for God's coming on Mt. Sinai the Israelites were to:

- I. Make themselves holy by washing their clothes (garments)
- II. Mark the boundaries on the foot of the mountain to prevent any person or animal from climbing the mountain.



### III. To abstain from sexual relations

At Mt Sinai, God manifested His presence in the form of thunder, lightening, earthquake and a thick cloud of smoke that covered the whole mountain. In addition, there was a loud trumpet blast that made the people tremble. Moses climbed the mountain. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments after sealing the covenant.

**Sealing of the covenant.** The Lord told Moses “Come up the mountain to me, you and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 of Israel leaders. At a distance bow down in worship, and come alone to me.”

A ceremony was then prepared to seal the covenant. This is how it was sealed:

- a. Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain.
- b. He set up twelve stones, which represented the twelve tribes of Israel.
- c. He then sent young men to burn sacrifices to the Lord and sacrificed some cattle as fellowship offering and peace offerings to God (EX 24 vs. 5).
- d. Moses took half the blood of animals and poured it in bowls; and the other half he threw against the altar (vs. 6). He then took the book of the covenant, and read it aloud to the Israelites who responded by saying “all that the Lord has spoken we will do; and we shall be obedient”
- e. Moses then took the blood in the bowls and sprinkled it over the people; saying “This is the blood that seals the covenant which the Lord made with you when he gave all these commands.”

**Theophany.** God’s presence manifested itself in several ways such as:

- The burning bush (during the call of Moses)
- Pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud – Exodus story
- The mighty wind, earthquake, still small voice – story of Elijah
- Thunder, lighting, smoking mountain – Exodus of Israelites from the wilderness

These were physical manifestations of God’s presence.

### **BREAKING THE SINAI COVENANT (Exodus 32:1 – 35; 34:6 –8)**

Israelites dishonored their pledge to obey God upon sealing the covenant; Moses went back to talk to God in the mountain. He left Aaron in charge of Israelites’ affairs. He stayed in the mountain for forty days. The lord revealed His glory to Moses at Mt. Sinai and declared His character. ”The Lord the compassionate and glorious God, slow to anger and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin (Ex 34:6

–  
The Israelites urged Aaron to make them gods that they could see. Aaron agreed. He melted the rings of gold and moulded a bull calf god. Israelites were happy and said “this is our god who took us out of Egypt”. They offered burnt offerings and

peace offerings to it and indulged themselves in eating, drinking and sex. By accepting a bull calf as their god, the Israelites expected bull calf of gold to give them the same strength and fertility like the Egyptian gods. Through this act, they broke their covenant with God.

When Moses came down from the mountain, he found Israelites worshipping the gold bull calf. He got annoyed. He threw down the stone tablets he was holding; on which the 10 commandments were written. Moses then took the golden calf, and burnt it into powder and mixed it with water. He then made those worshipping the calf to drink the mixture. Moses ordered those who had sinned to be killed.

## **RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT (Exodus 34:1 – 14)**

The renewal of the covenant came after Moses pleaded with God not to destroy the Israelites after they broke the covenant. God spared the Israelites. God agreed to renew the covenant with the Israelites. He gave them several conditions for its renewal.

### **Conditions for the renewal of the covenant**

The Israelites were:

- a) To obey God's commandments
- b) Not to make any treaty with those who lived in the land where they were going.
- c) To break down their altar, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah (Idols). Not to worship any other god and not to make idols for worship.
- d) To keep the feast of unleavened bread (Passover).
- e) Not to marry people from other tribes.
- f) To rest on the Sabbath day.
- g) To sacrifice and offer their best produce and animals to God.

### **God in turn promised to:**

- a) Bless them. Protect and preserve the Israelites.
- b) Make them prosper so much that the surrounding nations would enquire about their source of wealth and success.

With these conditions, the covenant between God and the Israelites was renewed.

From the making and renewal of the covenant, it is clear that:

- (i) God expected the Israelites to obey and have faith in Him
- (ii) God wanted a personal relationship with Israelites.
- (iii) God is the only one to be worshipped.
- (iv) God is powerful.

## **WORSHIPING GOD IN THE WILDERNESS**

a. God's purpose in delivering the Israelites from Egypt was to worship and offer sacrifices to Him in the wilderness. He also intended to fulfil his promises to Abraham.

b. Features of worshipping God in the wilderness.

(i) The Israelites: Worshipped God through intermediaries. These were the priests who came from the tribe of Levi.

(ii) The Israelites: Were guided in their worship and in daily living by the Ten Commandments and other ordinances

(iii) The Ark of the Covenant was made in the wilderness. It was God's dwelling place. It was a special box put into the tabernacle. A tabernacle was a portable tent. The ark symbolized the presence of God and the Israelites carried it wherever they went.

(iv) Offerings of farm products or agricultural produce were given to God. These included among other farm products; vegetables, flour, oil and fruits.

(v) Other offerings to God were drinks, and incense. The offerings could be burnt, baked, boiled or roasted.

(vi) There were several Sacrifices. They included:

Burnt offerings (Holocaust) – burning a whole animal completely

Sin offering /atonement – sacrifice offered when one had sinned and wanted to have his sins forgiven.

Peace offering – part of an animal was offered, while the people ate part of the meat.

Gift offering – the best animal was given to God. It was offered as a thanksgiving

Animals such as sheep, goats, bulls and birds were sacrificed to God.

(vii) Festivals and feasts. Israelites observed several festivals and feasts. These included:

Feast of Passover and unleavened bread

Harvest festival – feast of weeks or Pentecost. It marked the celebration of the harvest of wheat.

Feast of gathering / shelters. It was celebrated during the season when the Israelites gathered the fruits from the Orchards.

Feast of tabernacles that was celebrated to remember when the Israelites dwelt in tents.

The Israelites kept the Sabbath day. They worshipped God through singing, worship and dancing.

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (Exodus. 20: 1 – 17)**

## **a. The Ten Commandments**

While on Mount Sinai, God gave Moses Ten Commandments written on a stone tablet. The first four commandments deal with relationship between man and God. God said:

1. You shall have no other gods but me.
2. You shall not make yourself a graven image.
3. You shall not mention Gods' name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

The last six commandments give man's relationship with fellow human beings. God said:

5. Honor you father and mother that your days may be long on earth.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's property.

These are my thoughts. (1) Worshipping God (2) Being faithful to God (3) Resting (4) respecting parental authority (5) love humanity (6) Be faithful to your wife or husband (7) respect other people's property (8) Be truthful always (9) be satisfied with what God has given you.

## **b. Israelites understand the nature of god**

The Israelites had a new and wider revelation about God. Besides GOD being a caring, loving, and a provider, they learnt that:

- a. God is a jealous God. He does not allow the worship of others gods. He alone should be worshipped.
- b. God does not condone evil. He punishes those who cause/engage in it.
- c. God values a personal relationship with his people.
- d. God wants people to live in harmony among them.
- e. God forgives those who repent. He is loving, merciful and compassionate
- f. God is a healer – he healed Israelites in the wilderness when a snake attacked them
- g. God is a God of victory. He defeated the Amalekites, perizzites, and Hittites etc.
- h. God is faithful and can be depended upon.
- i. God is holy, slow to anger, powerful and just.
- j. God demands obedience to His commands.

## **Revision questions**

- a. What are the qualities of Moses as a leader?

- b (i). Describe the call of Moses (exodus 3:1-22)
- (ii). Why was Moses hesitant to God's call?
- c (i). What is the significance of the items used for the Passover feast (similar to what is the meaning of the Passover meal)
- (ii). Compare the Lord's Supper to the Passover feast
- d. Describe how the Sinai covenant was made
- e. Describe the circumstances that lead to the breaking of the Sinai covenant
- f. How was the broken covenant renewed?
- g. Describe how the Israelites worshipped God in the wilderness
- h. What is the relevance of the Ten Commandments?
- i. What did the Israelites learn about god in the wilderness?

## **LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL: DAVID AND SOLOMON REASONS FOR AND AGAINST KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL**

### **Introduction**

Yahweh remained the God of Israel and the sovereign ruler of his people. Leadership refers to the manner in which a community's way of life is ruled or controlled. When Israelites settled in Canaan, Judges ruled them for the first 200 years. Some of the judges were (i) Othniel (ii) Ehud (iii) Samson (iv) Deborah (v) Gideon (vi) Shamgar (vii) Samuel (viii). Barak

### **Duties of judges**

- a. Leading Israelites to war against their enemies
- b. Settling disputes among the people
- c. Acting as religious leaders and leading Israelites in worship –
- d. Offering sacrifices on behalf of the people.
- e. Some of the judges acted as God's prophets
- f. They anointed kings, for example Samuel anointed King David.

### **Demands for a King in Israel**

After Israelites settled in Canaan, the Promised Land, they started demanding for an earthly king to rule over them. These demands for a king rulers were brought about by:

- i. Samuel's sons Joel and Abijah were corrupt and took bribes. The sons of Samuel, who were judges, lacked his good leadership qualities.
- ii. The Israelites wanted a warrior king who could lead them to war against their enemies.
- iii. The Israelites wanted to be like the other nations around them who had kings.

- iv. The Israelites wanted a human leader whom they could see, approach, and talk to him face to face.
- v. The Israelites wanted security, which could be provided by a stable political government ruled by law and order.
- vi. They wanted a government that had a regular army,
- vii. They also wanted an established law court system.

### **Reasons against Kingship in Israel (Samuel 8:10 – 20)**

By demanding for a king, the Israelites were seen as rejecting Yahweh – their unseen ruler. Two, there would be danger of hereditary kingship which would lead to oppression / dictatorship. God told Samuel to give Israelites strict warnings against Kingship by explaining how the king would treat them. A king would: -

- (a) Recruit Israelites sons forcefully into the army.
- (b) Grab peoples land.
- (c) Force people to pay taxes to the government
- (d) Turn people into slaves.
- (e) Introduce forced labour.
- (f) Force their daughters to work for his wives, sons, and for the royal house in general.

The people of Israel were distinct from other nations. Asking for a king meant rejecting God as their unseen king. Further to this, Israel could become like other nations, which did not worship Yahweh.

Then the covenant with God and the people of Israel would cease.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES OF KING SAUL (Israel 13:8 – 14; 15:7 – 25)**

Samuel was directed by God to choose and anoint Saul as the king of Israel. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He became the first human king of the nation of Israel. He accomplished several things.

#### **Successes of King Saul**

- 1) He was anointed by God; as king to rule the Israelites
- 2) He was chosen even though it was not God's idea for a king over his people.
- 3) He was a great warrior. He led the Israelites to war and defeated their enemies

#### **Failures of King Saul**

- 1) God told Saul through Samuel to destroy the Amalekites completely. Saul however disobeyed God. He spared the king and the fat livestock. He claimed to have spared the fat animals for sacrifice to God. Because of this disobedience, God rejected Saul as king.

2) The Israelites were faced with many enemies. The worst were the Philistines. It was a custom for the king of Israel to enquire from God whether to go to the battle or not. The priest/prophet gave permission to the king to go to war. When Saul was faced with the dilemma whether to fight or not, Samuel enquired from God. Saul did not wait for permission to go to war from Samuel the priest. He decided to bypass Samuel by offering a sacrifice to God before going to war. This action displeased God because it was not his work to offer sacrifice to God. It was the work of priests.

3) After God rejected Saul as the king of Israel, Samuel was guided by God to go to Bethlehem. He was asked to go to the home of Jesse who had eight (8) sons. In that home, God was to show Samuel the next king of Israel. Samuel would then anoint the chosen son of Jesse. Seven of Jesse's sons were brought before Samuel one by one. God told Samuel that he had not chosen any of them. When David, a shepherd, was brought before Samuel God said to him 'this is the one – anoint him!' (1 Samuel 16:12).

David was anointed (poured oil on) as the next king of Israel. However he had to wait until Saul died before he could take over kingship.

4) After Samuel anointed David to become the next king of Israel, Saul was jealous and plotted many times to kill him. David was employed to serve Saul. He played the harp, lyre wherever an evil spirit possessed Saul.

5) When Samuel died; the Philistines gathered to fight Israel. Saul was filled with terror. Saul enquired from God whether he should go to war, but did not get an answer. Saul disobeyed God by asking a medium (witch) to consult the dead for him. This act led to the death of Saul together with his son Jonathan in battle.

6) Saul was concerned with what people thought of him than pleasing God. He wanted to please people and not God. He was disobedient with God (1 Samuel 15:24)

### **Lessons which Christians can learn from King Saul's failures**

1) Value of being patient.

2) Christian should obey God, follow His commands and not be afraid of people.

3) Christian should obey religious leaders placed over them by God.

4) Christian leaders should be humble

5) It is against the teachings of God, against the will of God to consult the spirits of the dead through mediums.

7) Without faith, it is impossible to please God. God desires sincere worship.

9) Political leaders should consult and listen to religious leaders.

10) Christians should not turn against their enemies or rivals. They should not plot to have them destroyed and killed.

## **IMPORTANCE OF DAVID (1 Samuel 16: 1 – 23, 2 Samuel 6:1 – 15)**

David took over kingship of Israel though some people resisted his rule. At first he ruled the house of Judah. Later on the other tribes rallied behind him.

### **Importance of King David**

David became king after the death of Saul. He ruled for over 40 years as king of Judah and Israel.

### **Achievements of David**

- 1) He was a brilliant military commander
- 2) He captured the old fortress of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his capital city.
- 3) He removed the ark of covenant from the house of Abinadab in Shiloh and brought it to Jerusalem.
- 4) He expressed great faith in God. Through his faith in God, he was able to kill Goliath, the great Philistine warrior.
- 5) He was a skilled musician and composed many psalms that were used and are still being used in temple and church worship.
- 6) David respected the prophets of God and always consulted them whenever he wanted to do anything.
- 7) He expanded the geographical boundaries of Israel through conquests. He was a great diplomat and established good political relations with the neighboring kings.
- 9) He was a shrewd administrator who chose wise elders and counselors to advise him.
- 10) God promised to establish an everlasting kingdom for David
- 11) David ruled over Israel, administering law and justice to all people.
- 12) He took a census of the Israelites and used the information to (a) recruit young men into military service and (2) decide on the policy of taxation.
- 13) David had remarkable leadership qualities. He was kind. He spared Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson.
- 14) David was humble. He was ready to accept sins he had committed and repent e.g. he repented after committing adultery with Bathsheba. David as an ancestor of Jesus Christ (2 Samuel 1 – 29, LK 1:26 – 33) David intended to build a splendid



temple for God in Jerusalem. He felt it was not fair for the Ark of the Covenant to continue dwelling in a tent while he himself lived in a magnificent palace. To achieve this goal, David consulted Nathan, the prophet on whether to build the temple. The prophet approved the idea. But that night, Nathan received a revelation from God that stated that David was not to build a house (temple) for God. David's son would build the temple of God (2 Samuel 7:5 – 6). Prophet Nathan gave David God's message to David. The message was that:

- a) His son will build the temple
- b) God would give David's descendants a place to settle
- c) God promised to raise up an heir from the house of David to sit on the throne
- d) God promised to make David's name great or famous among all other leaders of the earth.

### **Reasons why God rejected David's offer to build him a temple**

- a. David had been involved in a lot of wars with the Israelites' enemies and had thus shed a lot of blood.
- b. God was a God of the people and could not be confined to a house.
- c. It was the will of God to establish the house of David (build David a house) rather than David builds a house for him (God). The human body is the temple of God. God dwells in the hearts of people.
- d. David had grown old. God wanted him to rest.
- e. God had planned that David's son would build a house for him – a place to house the Ark of the Covenant. King Solomon, David's son built the temple and fulfilled God's promises to David. Solomon's rule was peaceful and prosperous.

The New Testament is a fulfillment of God's promises to David

- 1) The gospel writers tell us that Jesus was born in the family of David (Luke 1:26 – 27)
- 2) The angel of God during the annunciation of the birth of Jesus said that He will be like his ancestor David (Luke 1:32 – 33)
- 3) Jesus was born in Bethlehem which was also the birthplace of David (Luke 2:4)
- 4) Bartimaeus the blind man of Jericho hailed Jesus as the son of David
- 5) During his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, Jesus was hailed by the crowd as the messiah descended from David.
- 6) In his genealogy, Saint Mathew says that Jesus was a descendant of David (Matt.1: 1)

### **Failures of King David**

Although David had many virtues:

- 1) He ordered Uriah to be placed at the battle forefront so that he can be killed.
- 2) Uriah was the husband of Bathsheba. David had committed adultery with her.
- 3) He took Bathsheba as his wife

## **LEADERSHIP OF KING DAVID**

David showed:

- 1) Courage and bravery. David was courageous and brave. Modern leaders should be ready to die with and for their subjects.
- 2) Gratitude – thankful and grateful. David always thanked God for any success or favors he received. Good leaders should be thankful and grateful to God as well as to their fellow human beings.
- 3) Loyalty. David was loyal to God and to the Israelites. A good leader should be loyal, and never betray his people.
- 4) Justice. David administered justice to all his subjects without favoring anyone. No tribalism or nepotism. A leader should be fair to all (2 Samuel 8:15).
- 5) God – fearing, having faith. David was God fearing. He expressed his total trust in God. Modern leaders need to emulate this quality.
- 6) Humility. A leader should be a humble person. Though David had been appointed as the king, he continued to serve Saul until Saul died. He accepted his failures and asked for forgiveness
- 7) Kind. David was a kind leader. Leaders should be kind. David spared the life of Saul twice yet Saul wanted to kill him.
- 8) Wisdom. David was careful when choosing legal advisors to assist him in his rule. He was also wise. He reduced tribal jealousies by choosing Jerusalem; a neutral spot for administrative purposes.

- 9) Delegation – a shrewd administrator. A good leader should be able to delegate duties. David delegated duties. He involved others in advising, and administering

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES OF KING SOLOMON (1 KING 3 – 12)**

After David died, his son Solomon became the next king. Kingship in Israel was hereditary. Solomon was chosen by David to be his successor. He took over from David at a time of peace and security established by David.

### **Achievements**

- 1) He made Israel rich by establishing trade with other countries
- 2) He was a good trader and a successful merchant. He traded in copper, horses, timber, silver and gold. He established international trade with the neighboring countries. For example, he traded with Tyre in cedar and pine logs.

- 3) He established a well equipped large army for Israel
- 4) He was a builder. He built a magnificent temple for God in line with God's promise to David. He also constructed other cities (Megiddo) and a palace for himself.
- 5) He is remembered for his amazing administrative skills. He had 550 officials in charge of labour force.
- 6) He was a diplomatic ruler. He established friendly ties with his neighbours. This ensured continued peace. For instance he married the daughters of the kings of Egypt, Moab, Edom and Sidon so as to establish strong ties with those nations.
- 7) He had great wisdom. He judged a difficult case between two women who were claiming ownership of the same child. He composed many wise sayings known as the proverbs of Solomon. He also composed songs like Song of Solomon and Song of Songs and poems in Ecclesiastes.
- 9) He dedicated the temple of God with great rejoicing.
- 10) He brought the Ark of the Covenant to the temple of Jerusalem.

### **Failures of King Solomon**

- 1) He married women from many foreign countries. These actions made Solomon break the Torah as Israelites were not supposed to marry foreigners. Through these marriages, idol worship started in Israel. This was because he allowed his wives to worship their gods, build temples and altars for them. This led to introduction of idolatry in Israel.
- 2) Solomon constructed his palace for 13 years. He then built God's temple for 7 years. This showed that he probably loved himself more than God.
- 3) He killed his own half brother Adonija on suspicion that he could be a rival to the throne.
- 4) Solomon lived lavishly, and expensively. He thus burdened the Israelites with high taxes.
- 5) He used forced labour. This was the same as enslaving the Israelites.
- 6) He worshipped idols. Solomon's heart was turned to such other gods as Ashtoreth / ashitarte – goddess of Sidon and Molech – the god of the Ammonites. This was breaking God's commandments
- 7) He sold part of Israelite territory to the king of Tyre  
He used pagan skills when designing, decorating, and furnishing the temple.
- 9) He made treaties with other nations in spite of the fact that God had forbidden Israel from making treaties
- 10) He was extravagant. He used a lot of state wealth to entertain and please his many wives and concubines.

## **Activity**

Many husbands in Kenya practice polygamy. I want you to find out from your neighbours what are the advantages and disadvantages of polygamy. Then write a paper arguing either for polygamy or monogamy.

# **IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN ISRAEL**

## **Definition of a temple**

This is a building dedicated to the worship of God. Solomon built the temple as a fulfillment of the promises that God gave to David, that his son would build a house for him.

## **Importance and uses of a temple**

- 1) It was a centre of worship. Prayers and sacrifices were offered to God from the temple.
- 2) It symbolized the presence of God among the Israelites.
- 3) The Ark of the Covenant was kept in the temple as a symbol of God's presence among his people.
- 4) The temple acted as a symbol of unity in Israel. Every year all the Israelites had to go to Jerusalem to celebrate such feasts as the Passover, feast of tabernacles' Day of Atonement. This led to the unity of the Israelites.
- 5) Dedication of children and purification were done in the temple.
- 6) It was a residence for the priest.
- 7) It was a business centre where people bought and sold animals needed for sacrifice.
- 8) The temple acted as a school to the scribes, rabbis and others who studied and interpreted the Mosaic Law.
- 9) The temple also acted as the judicial court of Israel. Judges worked from the temple
- 10) It is where religious ceremonies like naming and circumcision of baby boys took place.
- 11) It was a house of prayer.

## **Revision questions**

- a. Explain the reasons against kingship in Israel 1 Sam 8: 10-20
- b. Explain the importance of David as king of Israel
- c. How did Jesus fulfill the prophecies of Prophet Nathan as a descendant of David? (I.e. areas where Jesus is mentioned as coming from David)
- d. What are the failures of King Solomon?
- e. Which leadership qualities can modern leaders learn from David?

# **LOYALTY TO GOD – ELIJAH**

# **EFFECTS OF IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL**

## **Introduction**

After the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel split into two countries. The southern kingdom called Judah ruled by King Rehoboam and the Northern kingdom called Israel led by King Jeroboam. Other kings who ruled these two nations were King Abijah, King Asa of Judah, and king Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab of Israel. During the time of Elijah King Ahab ruled – Israel.

### **a. Factors that led to spread of idolatry in Israel**

When Israelites intermarried with other communities, they worshipped their gods. The Bible makes it clear that:

- i. There was a lot of influence by Canaanite religion
- ii. There was division /schism of Israel into 2 kingdoms
- iii. Ahab's married the Phoenician princess
- iv. Israelites did not destroy all gods after settling in Canaan.

### **Influence of the local Canaanite religion**

Idolatry is the worship of idols. An idol is an image representing a god made using precious materials such as gold, bronze, stone, and hardwood images kept in the places of worship. God had forbidden Israelites from bowing down to images and worshipping idols, intermarrying with non-Israelites, and making treaties. When Israelites settled in Canaan, they forgot God's commandments. They intermarried and were greatly influenced by the local religion.

Israelites changed from being pastoralist to farmers. They therefore worshipped Baal the god of rain, agricultural fertility, and storms. Israelites worshipped Baal, for rain for their crops. The Israelites were also attracted to the visible gods of Canaan as opposed to the invisible Yahweh. This is how idolatry spread in Israel. However some Israelites maintained worship of Yahweh only (monotheistic) while others worshipped Yahweh and Baal (syncretism).

### **Characteristics of the Canaanite religion**

Canaanite religion was:

1. Polytheistic. They worshipped many gods. The Israelites religion was monotheistic. They worshipped Yahweh and no other God. They abandoned their religion and worshipped many gods like Canaanite.

This influenced the Israelites.

2. A nature religion. The gods were related with the forces of nature such as rain, sun, storms, drought, famine, wind, water and death.
3. Ensured continued fertility of land, people, animals

4. Based on many families of gods. There was
  - a. EL – Chief god – who was their father, king, creator
  - b. Asherah – wife of El – the goddess of motherhood and fertility
  - c. Baal – also referred to as Baal Hadad, son of El and Asherah – the god of rain, agricultural fertility, storms
  - d. Astarte – wife of Baal -the goddess of war
  - e. Anat – sister of Baal – the goddess of war and love
  - f. Maat – the goddess of love
  - g. Mot – most feared. The god of drought, famine and death
5. Free and temple of prostitution. Israelites turned to temple prostitution. Women who wanted to increase vitality of their husbands had sexual relations with the male priests in the Baal temples.
6. Had many places of worship. One could pray in the temple, under sacred trees, and on top of the hills among others.
7. Based on offerings and sacrifices of human beings.

### **Exercise**

State differences between Israel and Canaanite religion

### **b. Religious schism between Judah and Israel**

Schism occurred among the Israelites because there were sharp differences within them. These differences were religious, political and social. After the death of Solomon, the nation of Israel was split. Rehoboam ruled one group while the other was ruled by Jeroboam. Because of this split, Jeroboam could not go to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. He thus set up other places of worship one at Bethel, and another at Dan. Jeroboam also set up images to represent Yahweh. Though he had no intention of Idol worship, it turned out to be so because he made his sub-jects to offer sacrifices to these golden calves, which he had designed as images representing Yahweh. He also built places of worship on hilltops like the Canaanites. He chose priests from other families in addition to the Levite Family. Furthermore, he organized religious festivals and feasts in the month of his choice. As it were, they coincided with the Canaanites calendars. He then burnt incense at the altar of idols. Jeroboam therefore started idol worship and gave room for idolatry. Kings who succeeded him followed this idol worship.

### **c. King Ahab's marriage to the Phoenician/Tyre princess**

Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the King Ethbaal of Sidon (Tyre) to strengthen ties with Tyre/Phoenicia. Queen Jezebel was ambitious, and a strong

follower of Baal religion. Ahab allowed her to bring her gods to Israel. She forced Israelites to worship Baal and not Yahweh. She imported 450 prophets of Baal and supported them using public treasury. Ahab built a temple to Baal in Samaria. He also put up an image of goddess – Asherah.

d. When Israelites settled in Canaan, they did not destroy temples, places of worship, idols, images that they found there. As a result Canaanite's religious practices influenced Israelites' worship of Yahweh leading to idolatry.

### **The effects of idolatry harmed Israelites as:**

1) Syncretism developed. This was a process of mixing beliefs and practices from different religions. Israelites worshipped Yahweh and the gods of Canaan.

2) Former places of worship for the Canaanite gods were used as places of worship for Yahweh

3) The Canaanite agricultural calendar was adopted by Israelites

4) Names of the Canaanite gods were used for Yahweh. For example, EL was referred to as Yahweh

5) Parents began naming their children after Baal.

6) Feasts and celebrations were changed to correspond with those of Canaanites when they celebrated their feasts.

7) King Ahab declared worship of Baal as the state religion

Queen Jezebel ordered the destruction of the altars of Yahweh

9) Prophets of Yahweh were killed. Elijah went into hiding.

10) The 450 prophets of Baal were made the officials of the royal court in order to promote and protect Baal religion

11) Israel started to experience long droughts because Yahweh withdrew his blessings. This made Israel worshippers of El

## **ELIJAH'S FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND FALSE RELIGION IN ISRAEL**

a) The contest at Mount Carmel (1 King 18:17 – 46). Carmel refers to the vineyard of the Lord. King Ahab brought trouble to Israel because of worshipping the idols of Baal. Elijah told Ahab that the problems

Israel was facing were due to worship of Baal. Elijah requested King Ahab to call a meeting at Mt Carmel. In attendance would be all Israelites, 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah who were supported by Queen Jezebel and Elijah. Elijah told Israelites it was decision time. They had to choose their God. Would it be Yahweh, the God of Israel or Baal the god of Jezebel of Phoenician/Tyre. If it was to be Baal, then they were told to follow him, if they select Yahweh as their God then they were to follow him (1 kings 18 vs. 21).

**The choice.** Elijah proposed a contest between him and Baal prophets. He asked for two bulls one for him, the other for 450 prophets of Baal. The contest was who can light fire? Yahweh or Baal? He proposed that Baal prophets and himself be given each a bullock. Both shall cut the bull into pieces and put them on wood without lighting fire. The Baal prophets shall pray to their god and Elijah shall pray to the Lord. The one who sends fire to consume the sacrifices... He is God. The people of Israel accepted

### **Elijah's proposal**

**Actions.** The prophets of Baal prayed first because they were many. They took the bull, prepared it and prayed to Baal until noon (vs. 26). They prayed louder, and cut themselves with knives and daggers; but there were no answer. The prophets of Baal kept on ranting and raving until evening but there was no answer (vs. 29). Elijah asked people to gather near him. He prepared the altar of the Lord to repair work. He took 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel (who were named after the 12 sons of Jacob or Israel) and used them to rebuild the altar. He then dug a trench around the altar. This trench could hold 14 litres of water. He placed the wood on the altar; cut the bull into pieces and laid them on the wood. He asked for four barrels of water and poured it on the offering and wood. He poured water on the altar three times until the water overflowed, run around the altar and filled the trenches. Elijah then called on the Lord, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, ...prove now that you are the God of Israel and that am your servant and have done all this at your command" (vs. 29).

The Lord sent fire down and it burnt up the sacrifice, wood, stones, and dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. When people saw this, they proclaimed "The Lord, is God; the Lord alone is God".

Elijah asked people to arrest the prophets of Baal, led them down to the river Kishon and killed them. And after this there was rain in Israel (vs.40).

### **Lessons learnt from Mt. Carmel**

Israelites acknowledged that Yahweh is:

- i. Is their only God and that Baal was not God
- ii. Is powerful
- iii. Is a merciful God
- iv. Is a jealous God as He will have no other gods but him
- v. Is a God of justice who punishes idolaters and sinners
- vi. Answers prayer
- vii. Is a forgiving true God
- viii. Protects his servants



## **b) Elijah's fight against corruption (1 Kings 21: 1 – 29)**

Corruption is defined as dishonesty. It's a form of injustice when dealing with either an individual or the community for selfish gain and benefit. In a corrupt society people in leadership or with wealth take advantage of the weak, and the poor. The powerful exploit the poor and the powerless by denying them their rights. An example of corruption in Israel is the story of the Naboth's Vineyard.

### **Naboth's vineyard**

Ahab wanted Naboth to either sell to him his vineyard or exchange it with another vineyard. Naboth refused to sell his inheritance. Jezebel, on seeing that Ahab was sorrowful told him that she will get him Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel sent out letters in Ahab's name to the elders of the city.

She found two witnesses who could bear witness that Naboth had blasphemed God and King Ahab.

Witnesses testified that Naboth had blasphemed God. He was stoned to death. God then sent Elijah to meet with Ahab as he went to possess the vineyard of Naboth.

### **God's sentence to Ahab**

God pronounced to Ahab through Elijah that (1) dogs shall lick his own blood from the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth (2) His sons shall be killed (3) Dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel (4) Evil shall be brought upon Ahab's house.

This was because Ahab had broken these commandments:

- The 6th commandment – which forbids murder
- The 9th commandment which forbids bearing of false witness. Ahab allowed his wife to bear false witness against Naboth
- 10th Commandments – you shall not covet your neighbor's property.

Elijah's encounter with Yahweh at Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai) 1 Kings 19

After killing the prophets of Baal, Elijah was threatened by Jezebel. She vowed to kill him. Elijah ran away to the wilderness. The angel of God fed him with a loaf of bread and a jar of water. After eating and drinking Elijah walked to Mt. Sinai – the holy mountain of God. He stayed there for 40 days and 40 nights. In the mountain God appeared to him.

There was a strong wind, an earthquake, a fire but the Lord was not in them. Then the lord spoke to Elijah in a still small voice. God told Elijah, "Return and anoint Hazael as king of Syria, Jehu as king of Israel, and anoint Elisha as a prophet and your successor."

### **Self-assessment question**

How can Christians help reduce corruption in Kenya?

## **Answer**

First is to recognize the various forms of corruption like: tribalism, bribery, cheating in business, stealing, misuse of public funds, grabbing public land, robbery with violence and dishonesty

### **Self-assessment question**

How can Christians fight corruption? Christians can fight corruption by:

a). Employing life skills

a) Applying their critical thinking. This is the ability to make appropriate decisions; by weighing in the consequences of actions before taking decisions.

b) Creative thinking and being imaginative. This is the ability to explore new ways of handling issues

c) Decision making which is the ability to make the right choices

d) Assertiveness. This is the ability to express ones opinion with confidence

e) Praying for the corrupt to change their behaviour

f) Setting a good example by acting as a good role model

g) Educating people on the evils of corruption

h) Reporting those who are engaged in corrupt dealings / practices to the relevant authorities.

i) Obeying the laws of the society /country

j) Voting for morally upright leaders.

## **REASONS WHY ELIJAH FACED DANGER AND HOSTILITY AS A PROPHET OF GOD**

It's not easy for a person to oppose the government and its policies. The person normally faces danger and hatred. Elijah faced hostility from King Ahab, his wife Jezebel and the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah faced hostility because:

a. He pronounced a three years drought in Israel, which brought suffering.

b. He put to death 450 prophets of Baal

c. He boldly condemned King Ahab for taking away Naboth's vineyard

d. He preached at a time when there was idolatry, and Baal was the official religion in Israel

e. He identified himself with Yahweh in the midst of prosecution of God's prophets by Jezebel.

### **Relevance of Elijah's prophetic mission to Christians today**

#### **Lessons Christians learnt from the life of Elijah**

1) Elijah was courageous. Church leaders should remain courageous and condemn any form of social injustice

- 2) Modern Christians learn to remain faithful to God through word and deed even if it would cost them their lives
- 3) As God helped Elijah in difficult times he will also help the Christians hence they should not despair.
- 4) Elijah was a man of prayer Christians should pray to God always.
- 5) Christians should advocate for the rights of the poor and speak out against any form of oppression.
- 6) Christians should not give false evidence against their neighbours
- 7) Christians should be persistent like Elijah was in their struggle against injustice God communicated with Elijah in a still small voice indicating his intimacy with the prophet. This means that God is able to establish an intimate relationship with his faithful.

### **Review questions**

- a) Describe the qualities of Elijah that led to his achievements
- b) What is schism and syncretism?
- c) What are some of the characteristics of Elijah that a modern Christian should strive to emulate?
- d) What are the effects of idolatry in Israel today?
- e) Describe Elijah's fight against false religion in Israel
- f) Describe Elijah's fight against corruption 1 kings 21
- g) What can Christians learn from the teachings of Elijah?

## **SELECTED ASPECTS OF AFRICAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE**

### **Introduction**

All Traditional African Communities believe in a Supreme Being who is the origin and sustainer of all things: He is the creator of the universe and all that it contains. All Africans agree that nobody has ever seen God. Therefore, nobody can really describe Him, yet through their religious insights, Africans have formulated ideal about the nature of God. These ideas concern His real being and His activities.

“Traditional religion” refers to African culture that existed in the sub – Saharan Africa. African traditional culture had no scriptures or texts because most of it was oral. It was preserved and handed down from generation to generation-through oral traditions; ceremonies; rituals, and leading personalities.

## **AFRICAN CONCEPT OF GOD, SPIRITS AND ANCESTORS**

Africans believed in existence of a supreme being who lived in mountains, clouds and the sky. God was the creator of the universe. In African traditions, religion was integrated in every aspect of life and daily activities. For example, farming activities involved God, spirits and ancestors. People would pray to God, spirits ancestors so as to ask for blessings in order to have a good harvest. Livestock keepers believed that fertility of their animals is a result of the blessings of God. If God was appeased, animals would increase.

Natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning, rain; good harvest, and birth were linked to the Supreme Being and the invisible world. If there were calamities such as drought, disease, famine, and death, it was an indication that God, spirits and ancestors were displeased with humankind. Many communities have invocations uttered throughout the day

### **Nature or Attributes of god**

God is described with many names, which are God's attributes. These are among others:

**a) God is Good** – Nearly all-African communities describe God as being good to all people and things. He gives rain, sunshine and life among many other gifts.

**b) God is merciful**- The Akamba refer to God as “God of pity”, the ‘merciful one’. God shows mercy in times of danger, illness, difficulty or anxiety.

**c) God is holy.** He is pure, holy and does not make mistakes. Yoruba call him God who is pure, without blemish. The Kikuyu say God is “Possessor of whiteness” and the Bukusu – ‘master whitewash’. African traditions all approach God with reverence, fear, respect and honor. For example when offering sacrifices, they would offer a one-colour animal either white, black, or brown and not a spotted animal.

**d) God is powerful** i.e. Omnipotent. God is described as almighty. His power is expressed in natural occurrences like thunder, lightning, earthquakes, rains, and floods.

**e) God is all-knowing** (Omniscient). God knew all things; nothing can be hidden from him. He discerns hearts.

**f) God is all present** (Omnipresent). He is present everywhere in the universe

**g) God is limitless.** God has no limit. He is both very far and very near, beyond and within.

**h) God is transcendent** .God cannot be exhausted by human imagination. He is unexplainable, beyond human experience and understanding.

**i) God is all understanding**

**j) God is self – existent .**He made all things but he himself is not made. He exists on his own. Zulu explain that God is ‘he who is of himself.

**k) God is a spirit.** He is invisible, and everlasting. Shilluk of Sudan refers to him as ‘great spirit’ ‘the formless spirit.

**l) God is everlasting.** God is eternal, never changes, and never dies. The Yoruba call him “the mighty immovable rock that never dies.

**m) God is God created the creator .**The world Kikuyu call him “Mumbi”

**n) God is just.** Kikuyu refer to God as “Mugai” meaning “divider”. ‘One who shares out.’ God judges fairly, punishes those who do wrong and rewards the good with blessings.

**o) God is the provider.** All communities acknowledge that God provides them with everything they have. Africans built representation of the power of God. They identified sites, places and things that represented the presence and power of God. For example things like big trees, thick forest, high mountains, unique rock formations and large rivers and animals. In these places they built sites, and shrines. Shrines were regarded as holy and people approached them with reverence. Spirits. They were believed to exist between God and human beings in the universe. Spirits were diverse and created by God. Some spirits were dead human beings. Spirits were divided into nature, sky, earth and human spirits that were either long dead (ghosts) or recently dead (ancestors).

**There were different types of spirits.**

These were:

**a. Divinities.** These are spirits created by God. They are close to God and act as his agents. They are in charge of natural phenomena like the sun, moon and stars. They are intermediaries between God and ancestral spirits, human beings and other creatures. They reveal God’s plans through diviners and mediums

**b. Human spirits / common spirits.** These are inferior to divinities but higher than human kind. They are remains of human beings after their death. These spirits monitor human activities. Human spirits have lost their names and are not longer remembered by the living. They are believed to live in the underworld, undergrounds, in thick bushes, forests, rivers, mountains, lakes, skies, and caves among other places. These spirits can bring harm to the living if disrespected. They appear to people in dreams or in form of shadows. They can also enter or possess a person and cause abnormalities.

### **3. Ancestors / living dead**

These are spirits of the recently dead. They are remembered by the living when children are named after them. They are actively involved in the lives and activities of the living. Their offerings (food or drink) are poured on the ground for them to receive.

Ancestors are in a period of transition between the living and the higher categories. They are believed to know the problems of the living and therefore consulted constantly. They are also associated with evil such as revenge for burying them without honor, or not following the instructions they gave before they died or failing to pour them libations. When they are happy with the living, they are a source of blessings. Ancestors who did evil things or committed suicide are forgotten and ignored.

#### **Hierarchy of beings**

Hierarchy means the order or ranking from the highest to the lowest of created beings. At the top is

Divinities

Ancestors

Human Beings

Animals and Plants

Non-living Things

## **THE ROLE OF GOD, SPIRITS AND ANCESTORS**

God is the creator. The Akamba community believed that God whom they called Mulungu created man and woman. He then tossed them to the earth. The Luhya claim God created them from the black topsoil hence their skin complexion.

God is the source of life and giver of life. Barren women pray to God to ask for children. Human beings depend on God for life, rain, air, and sunshine.

God is the provider. He gave domestic animals to human beings for their use. Domestic animals have many uses such as repayment of dowry, food, and sacrifices to God, payment of a fine by an offender.

Many wild animals are used in folk songs and tales to discourage coward-ice, and laziness

God is a protector of human beings from evil.

God is the giver of moral laws and a judge of people

God offers solutions to man's problems through mediums, and prophets

God gives power to the specialists such as medicine men, women and priests.

God punishes people for wrongdoing

Wild animals such as hyena are used in folk stories to discourage cowardice. Stories of tortoise illustrate the importance of being slow but sure. Snakes in some communities such as the Luhya were not killed.

The community believed snakes were immortal ancestors coming to visit the living.

Plants were used as food for people and animals. Trees were used for fuel and building materials. Some trees were used as sacred places of worship.

Non-living things such as the rain, rocks, and rivers had a religious importance. Rain is seen as a blessing from God. When rain fails, diviner/rain maker was consulted. Rocks, and mountains were believed to be dwelling places for the living, the dead and the spirits.

The spirits were viewed as neither good nor evil. Human beings feared them. Their roles were many.

They:

i) appeared in dreams especially to diviners, priests, medicine men and women, and rain makers to relay information

ii) Were consulted by religious specialists to find the cause of a problem in a given situation.

iii) Were bad (naughty) spirits, which disturbed people. African communities believed that bad spirits could call out one's name but on turning there's no one.

iv) Were manipulated by some human beings to cause harm to others

v) Relayed God's messages to human beings.

vi) Sometimes possessed a person causing the person to be sent away from the village to the forest, or away from home.

vi) acted as intermediaries between humans, divinities and God

**Role of ancestors is to: -**

1) Appear to families in dreams and visions.

2) Give family instructions .i.e. what should be done.

3) Rebuke those who fail to honor them and warn them of impending punishment

4) Act as mediators between the living and God.

5) Enquire about family affairs as they considered as members of the family

6) Request for sacrifice of an animal which is slaughtered for them

7) Cause illness or mental disturbance to members of a family if they are disregarded or disobeyed.

8) Preserve the culture of a community

9) Welcome those who die to the spirit world.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LIVING TOWARDS GOD, SPIRITS, AND ANCESTORS

Responsibilities of living include

Human beings are expected to worship God, spirits and ancestors and show reverence and respect or veneration to God. They are also expected to (i) pray (ii) sing and (iii) dance.

Worship. This is our major responsibility as God expects us to meet and communicate with the spiritual world and God. There are several ways of worshipping God. These include among others:

## **(a) Sacrifices and offerings.**

Sacrifices include shedding of blood of animals and birds. Offerings are in the form of foodstuffs, milk, water and honey. God was worshipped because He is recognized as the absolute owner of life and property. We also worship God in order to (i) invoke Him for special blessings

(ii) Thank Him (iii) express our personal fellowship and communion with God (iv) avert or prevent evil. Evils bring about epidemics, famine, floods, and drought.

## **(b) Singing and dancing.**

Africans worshipped God through singing, dancing, clapping of hands, drumming, and use of musical instruments.

## **(c) Prayers, invocations and blessings.**

Prayers were accompanied with sacrifices or offerings. Community leaders prayed to God, spirits and ancestors.

**(d) Invocations are shortened form of prayers** e.g. “Help me oh God” “Oh great God”. These are prayers at the spur of the moment. They are few words full of meaning and calling for help from God.

(e) Formal blessings. An elder or older person gave blessings. It is believed that the person blessing the other one is doing so on behalf of God.

## **(f) Venerations.**

Africans treated their ancestors with great respect and honor. They for example worshiped ancestors daily. Worshipping included placing food or pouring libation of beer, milk, water and honey for the spirits. As this act was done, they uttered words to accompany the offerings. Libations were done daily by some communities.

## **(g). Ancestors were honored by:**

- Mentioning their names at prayers was offered to God.
- Naming children after them.



-Inviting them to participate in family ceremonies and rituals. For example during birth, and initiation.

- Maintaining their graves well.

- Giving the dead a decent burial

### **Communication with spirits**

Diviners and mediums talk with ‘spirits’. To do so, they sit quietly in a place; singing, dancing and clapping their hands. As they dance, sit and sing, diviners lose their senses and get possessed by the spirit. The spirits speak give them messages for individuals and communities. Spirits communicate on issues such as:

- (i) Lost property
- (ii) Revealing by name the enemy in the society
- (iii) Making demands on the living
- (iv) Giving advice
- (v) Giving warnings on impending danger and
- (vi) Making promises to bless a family or clan. Spirits that possess mediums are not harmful.

There are bad evil spirits harmful to people whom they possess. Some evil spirits cut themselves; others throw themselves into a fire, river, and lake.

### **Revision questions**

- a) Explain African beliefs about god (or qualities)
- b) Describe the African understanding of the hierarchy of being
- c) Describe the role of the ancestors to the living
- d) What was the responsibility of the living towards God?
- e) Describe the T.A. ways of worshipping God.

## **AFRICAN MORAL AND CULTURAL VALUES**

### **MEANING OF LIFE AND ITS WHOLENESS IN THE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY**

Life originates from God and it progress from one stage to another with a certain rhythm each person has to follow. Each stage of life is marked by rites of passage. Life is continuous and unending. Each person is expected to value life and to be responsible. Life involves sharing. It is immoral to be greedy and self centered. People are to be hospitable, warm and caring toward other people. Unity and harmony are to be upheld. Life is viewed as whole only if a person went through all the stages or rites of passage

Life was propagated through bearing children. Life cannot be divided into religious and secular. Every element of life has a religious meaning. Life is

communal. Life was celebrated at every stage. Everyone depends on others. Labor was divided. There were duties for men, children and women.

In African traditional society, human life is precious. Murder was condemned harshly. Suicide was considered the worst thing anyone could do. It was seen as a curse on the family. If one died at childhood, it was regarded as abortion. Death did not mark the end of life. Death is referred to as ‘saying goodbye to food’, ‘sleeping,’ ‘going home’, ‘being called by the ancestors’.

### **African concept of a community**

A community is a group of people who share a common language, religion, and culture and may live in the same geographical location. This group of people or an ethnic group shares common interests and characteristics. For example, African communities:

- Share common features and interests
- Have the same origin and are likely to be related by blood
- Share a common language
- Live together and inhabit the same geographical location.
- Are divided into smaller units called clans

A clan is made up of people who have the same forefather. A clan is composed of families. A family is made up of members (living or dead) who are related by blood and marriage. Family members therefore include the ancestors and the unborn.

## **KINSHIP SYSTEM IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES**

Kinship refers to the relationships between people. These can be by blood, marriage or adoption. People that belong to the same kinship system are referred to as kin.

### **Importance of kinship system and ties**

Kinship relationships were and still are important among African communities. This is because these ties:

- I. Provided company. This ensured that people were not lonely.
- II. Provided a sense of belonging which one of the human needs. We all want to belong
- III. Controlled social relationships between people related by blood or marriage.
- IV. Promoted mutual responsibility and help
- V. Enhanced a sense of security which is a human need
- VI. Regulated marital customs, rules and regulations.
- VII. Enabled people to live peacefully and in harmony.

- VIII. Bind the community together enhancing social cohesion and loyalty to each other
- IX. Facilitated care for the disadvantaged members of community.
- X. Ensured that all members of the community are have knowledge of community beliefs and practices
- XI. Provided a peaceful way of settling disputes.
- XII. Provided mechanisms for proper inheritance of property for example land.

### **Factors contributing to harmony and mutual responsibility in African communities**

Some of them are (1) rites of passage (2) good morals (3) participation in communal activities such as ceremonies, work, leisure activities and worship (4) sharing of property and ideas (5) division of labor.

Tasks were distributed according to one's age, gender and status. (6) rules/social norms regulated how people grew up; knowing what is wrong and right. Good morals help people to live in peace and harmony

## **rites of passage**

In traditional African society, there were four main stages of life. These were (i) birth and naming (ii) initiation (iii) marriage and (iv) old age and death

### **Birth and naming**

When a woman conceived, and pregnancy was visible, she was treated specially. She wore charms to keep away evil eyes. She ate special food and avoided sexual relations. The family and husband did not expect her to perform heavy task. When she was ready to deliver, midwives helped in delivery. After delivery, the placenta was seen as a sign of fertility hence it was buried in the fertile land such as a banana plantation. Some communities preserved placenta while others threw it into a running stream.

### **Birth**

The arrival of a baby and its sex was announced through ululations or shouts. The placenta was disposed off ceremoniously. The mother was purified and baby protection rites were conducted. Once purified, a mother could wear charms to protect herself and the baby from malicious spirits, sorcery, witchcraft, and evil eyes.

Thanksgiving ceremonies were performed to show gratitude to God. The hair of the mother and child was shaved as a sign of purification and newness of life.

### **Naming**

Naming of babies was carefully chosen. A baby could be named after either a season, weather, ancestors, place or time of delivery, occasion, experience of mother during delivery, significance events such as war, and drought, personality of the child, and names of heroes and gods. A good example is the name 'Were' amongst the Luhya. Twins had special names.

**Initiation** – the second rite of passage.

There were different types of initiations such as circumcision for boys and clitorisectomy for girls, excision of teeth and body marks. Initiation rites were important and every individual was expected to go through them or be rendered an outcast. Initiation practices were seen as tests for courage and bravery. They helped the communities when identifying future leaders and warriors.

Initiation was very important in communities where it was practiced. Initiation marked a transition from childhood to adulthood. In this transition, the initiate acquired new rights, new status in life, and privileges. For example the new initiates were allowed to marry, own property, and inherit the father's property. In addition the initiates received specialized education. They were taught how to behave as adults, warriors, future husbands and parents.

The education brought families, relatives and friends together. This act strengthened kinship ties. It also prepared the initiates to face the difficulties and challenges of adult life. In addition, initiation helped to structure the community. Initiation was programmed to fit an age set; and it marked passage of specific time. Thus each initiation ceremony was held regularly, normally between 16 – 21 years of age. If you calculate, you can see that 16 to 21 years introduced a new age set or group of young people. The age set held power for 16 to 21 years and handed over to the new generation. Initiation was therefore a mark of identity. It gave the initiate a sense of belonging. It bonded the initiates together with the ancestors.

Initiation rituals are not popular today as they were in the past. This is because many communities have undergone social and cultural changes because of modern education. As a result some families take their sons to hospitals to be circumcised to prevent HIV/AIDs and to avoid infections because of unhygienic traditional initiation practices.

Other reasons are (i) urbanization and migration, (ii) individualization (iii) Christians religious values.

These have made some communities abandon some rites e.g. clitoris-dectomy and (iv) some countries have made girl's circumcision illegal and an issue of human and health rights.

### **Attitude to birth and naming**

There has been a change in attitude to birth and naming. This is because initiation is no longer a community but a family affair. In addition, pregnant women attend antenatal clinics. Majority of pregnant women give birth in hospitals and health centers. Thus a doctor and not a midwife announce the sex of the baby. In modern society, the mother and child are no longer secluded. Lastly most parents prefer western names for their babies.

Marriage was a requirement for all members of the community. It was a source of status in the community. Since a leader had to be married.

Young men and women married after initiation. Marriage was a happy occasion and a source of wealth.

The father gave young initiates some animals for dowry. Fathers of girls received dowry payments, as bride price was mandatory. It was given to the parents of the girl in form of (a) Cows (b) Goats (c) Camels (d) Jewellery (e) Poultry. The young men inherited the father's property.

### **Importance of dowry**

Dowry unified the community. When young women were married, their parents lost their labor. Dowry payments compensated for this loss. Men paid dowry as a sign of commitment to their wife and parents.

### **Importance of marriage**

Marriage was sacred. It was an ordained by God. Marriage created new social relationships and expanded web of kinships. During the marriage ceremonies the whole community rejoiced, and feasted together. The newly married couple learnt new knowledge and skills. The community and society respected the newly married couple. Children born from this union propagated and ensured continuity of family, and the community

### **Modern community and marriage**

There has been a change in attitude towards marriage. As a result: marriage is no longer seen as sacred and divorce is common. In addition, dowry has been commercialized, as it is no longer seen as important. Some young men do not pay dowry. In fact marriage is no longer seen as a sign of status Children were important in marriage. Barren women were frowned upon. Polygamy solved

issues of childlessness. Couples without children can now adopt them from the Child Welfare society.

### **Divorce**

This was very rare. It happened only if the girl (i) was not a virgin (ii) practiced witchcraft (iii) and did not show respect towards her husband.

### **Old age and death**

This is the age of wisdom. Old people were respected. Grey hair was a sign of respect and wisdom. In all culture, the elders were the custodians of the law, norms and regulations. Social and religious specialists were seers, rainmakers, priests, diviners, and medicine men among others

### **Death**

Old age is followed by death. It was seen as a transition into the spiritual life. Besides old age, many cultures believed that death was due to either breaking of the traditional customs and taboos, curses, evil spirits, witchcraft, war, diseases and epidemics. Burial rites were performed in many African communities.

### **Disposing of the dead body**

Several methods were used to dispose the body. These were burials, leaving bodies in the forest, and throwing body to animals or placing the body in an abandoned house. African communities believed that animals carried the spirit of the dead person to the next life. Burial rites were performed by the bereaved. They buried the body with ones person belongings and tools. Thus if a person was a great warrior, he was buried with a war coat. Celebrations accompanied funeral rites.

### **Funeral songs (dirges) were performed**

There was drinking and eating.

### **Importance of funeral and burial rites**

Burial rites created a good relationship between the dead and the living. They were therefore given to appease the world of spirits, express unity in the society, cleanse the remaining relatives and obey the customs of the community. Rituals that were performed depended on the community. **Some of the rituals for the dead included.**

- a) Shaving of heads. Some mourners shaved their hair completely, while others shaved in a specific pattern.
- b) Dancing and singing, and giving gifts to the bereaved family
- c) Mourning (d) Drum beating (e) Horn blowing 9f) Grave side fires

### **Here are some questions to make you think about marriages**

1. In your opinion, what has brought changes in modern marriages?

2. Explain why divorce is rising in Kenya and Africa.
3. What changes do we see in contemporary marriages?
4. What has brought about these changes?
5. What are the major causes of death in Kenya today?

## **RELIGIOUS SPECIALISTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE IN MODERN SOCIETY**

Religious specialists include Medicine men / healers, Herbalists, Diviners, Mediums, Prophets / Seers, Rainmakers, Priests and Elders. Religious specialists were given power by their parents who taught them religious duties. Others received divine call through dreams and visions. A few learnt from experts via apprenticeship. This is learning by observing and practicing what one sees the master teacher doing.

-Roles of the medicine women/men in the Community. Medicine women/men are healers who were and are respected by the community. **This is because they were and are able to:**

- 1) Treat and heal the sick
- 2) Solve serious and complicated chronic illnesses
- 3) Give medicine in form of powder, herbs, minerals or liquid form and observed patients swallowing, drinking, sniffing, and applying on the skin.
- 4) Offer prayers and sacrifices to God
- 5) Give charms to protect individual persons from evil spirits.
- 6) Perform specialized medical roles in some communities in spite of the fact that we have modern hospitals, counselors and psychologists.

Elders were and still are community leaders. They were not religious specialists but the community gave elders duties, which made them close to religious leaders.

### **Herbalists and their relevance**

Herbalists were synonymous with witch doctors. They cured people through herbs just like the medicine women/men. Communities' belief: Those herbalists are witchdoctors and possess magical powers. Herbalists continue to be consulted as 'witch doctors' or "waganga". Today herbalists do religious tasks that were traditionally done by diviners.

Diviners were able to find hidden secrets and knowledge; reveal witches and thieves. They communicated with spirits and enhanced the work of healers and medicine people. They worked as medicine people and were healers of people. They used magic powers and predicted future occurrences. They used items such as pebbles, water, bones or gourds in divination. They also warned of future calamities. They were mediators between God, ancestors and the people. To be a

diviner, one had to be trained. There was a specialized curriculum prepared by diviners.

-Relevance of diviners in modern society. Diviners ('witchdoctor' "mganga") are not popular today and are hardly consulted. But the unfortunate Kenyans consult them who: need a job, promotion, and children. This consultation is secret. Mediums were channels of communication between the living and the spirits of people's ancestors. The ancestor spirits possessed mediums and through them ancestors gave information and messages to their relatives.

Priests were religious leaders and functionaries. They were intermediaries between people, ancestors, spirits and God. Their work was to make sacrifices and give offerings on behalf of the people. They officiated during planting and harvesting rituals. They offered prayers and blessed the needy.

They cared for the shrines and poured libations to the ancestors. They led the community in public worship. They were political heads and judges. Today, traditional priests are not relevant since most Kenyans follow several religious practices like Christianity, Hindus, Islam and many others. But there are however, a few traditional priests who take care of community shrines.

Prophets / Seers predicted the future. They foretold events such as invasions, wars, drought, and epidemics. They gave advice. They also performed religious duties. They could bless and curse. Religious prophets are common today but traditional prophets are not common.

Rainmakers were responsible for bringing or withholding rain to a community. They interpreted weather conditions. They performed certain rituals like asking God for rains. They were highly respected in the society. Modern science has replaced rainmakers

Meteorological departments have made the rainmakers redundant.

Elders were custodians of community values and secrets. They acted as educators. They gave punishment to offenders of social norms/rules. They acted as counselors and guided the youth on matters of sex and marriage. They helped in maintaining roles for important religious functions, such as rites of passage. They were political leaders in the community. They were negotiators and solved conflicts since they settled family disputes especially agreements concerning land. They were custodians of the traditional values, customs and history of the people.

### **Relevance**

Elders are relevant in modern society. They are referred to as village elders and are recognized by the government of Kenya.

## **AFRICAN MORAL VALUES**



## **Introduction**

African communities were regulated by a strict code of laws and moral values. In this lesson we shall study moral values, which regulated individual members of society as well as the community itself.

### **What is a cultural value?**

These are community practices and beliefs. Each community has cultural values that it accepts and upholds. These cultural values are laws, customs, and forms of behavior, regulations, rules, observances and taboos. The cultural values form a moral code, which regulates the community. For example, if the culture, values private property, it will have laws that forbid theft of property. These laws are cultural values. Cultural values influence the social order and peace. God gives peace and harmony. God is seen as the giver and guardian of the law. Disobedience was and still is regarded as evil, wrong and was and still is punishable by law.

### **What is a moral value?**

Moral values are standards of behavior towards others. They are based on what is valued by the community. Moral values are also positive attitudes. Each community decided what is important to it and what is desirable for its members to practice and uphold.

The moral values that communities observed were many. They included amongst others:

1. Hospitality and Love for self and others. This is the habit of welcoming all people, treating oneself and others well. Members of the community were taught how to be hospitable to visitors, strangers and how to assist the needy.
2. Honesty. This is developing good habits like telling the truth, Loyalty, Respect, Co – operation with all.
3. Obedience to parents, elders, community leaders and elders. Cultural regulations were followed and adhered to leading
4. Caring for others. This is being responsible to members of the community
5. Developing social moral behavior like Humility, Sharing, Responsibility, Chastity, Integrity, Tolerance, Perseverance, and Courtesy
6. Working Hard. Do chores. These were according to sex, age and social-economic status.
7. Cooperation. Members cooperated and worked together with others.

Moral values were learnt in the process of socialization. Leisure activities helped in acquisition of moral values. Learning moral values was a lifelong process. The most valued behavior was obedience.

Children were to obey their parents; wives obey their husbands; community obeys their leaders, and elders.

Learning to obey was a lifelong process. An obedient person was respected and rewarded.

-Misconducts. There were taboos that the community observed. Failure to obey community laws resulted in punishments. The community did not allow stealing of livestock. Domestic animals were the most valued private property. Individuals owned livestock while land ownership was communal. There were many forms of punishment for stealing livestock and committing other crimes. For example

- a. Payment of heavy fines to replace stolen livestock
- b. Being beaten in a sack
- c. Thrown down a hill
- d. Cast out of community. Thieves and murders built their homes at the outskirts of the community.

They were not allowed to interact anymore with the members of the community.

- e. Being covered with dry banana leaves and then set on fire.

## **CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

Formal education introduced the western way of life. Employment and trade forced Africans to leave their villages to look for employment and markets in towns. These actions led to urbanization and pluralism. As a result different communities came to towns and lived together.

### **1. Paid employment.**

Workers were paid by money. The concept of money changed community life. Individualism ownership of money replaced communalism

### **2. Land used to be communal.**

There was plenty of land for everyone. But changes were brought by modern life. For example, health improved and people lived longer. There were fewer deaths and population increased. With money, there was an expansion of trade. Individuals started buying land with money instead of clearing forests.

Modern life changed the concept of land. Individual started owning land.

The colonial governments introduced policies about land ownership in different African countries. In communities where education was accepted and money economy took over from livestock economy, communal land disappeared.

Parents did not have land for inheritance. As a result, people moved and bought land away from their ancestral birthplaces. This resulted in both migrations and immigrations.

### **3. Property.**

Traditionally property included land, cattle (Livestock), women/ wives, and children. In African traditional culture, this property belonged to men or the first-born son in paternal societies. In maternal communities, it belonged to wives and daughters.

Today property or wealth is in different forms such as money, buildings, vehicles, land, shares, stock, jewels, insurance, and others. Women, men and children own property. Because of this, the status of a person is measured by property.

#### **Dowry – Bride price / bride wealth**

In African societies, bride price was very important. It was given in various forms. For example cows, animals skin, and camels. Today dowry is commercialized. It's mainly in form of cash money. This has made marriage costly for the poor. Some young people are staying together without a formal wedding in church or in the community. Others do not want to pay dowry. Young couples are living together in what is called – come – we – stay arrangements.

#### **4. Health Medicine**

In traditional society, illness was caused by witchcraft, sorcery, bad omen, or curses. Diviners, herbalists, and healers treated the sick people.

Today bacteria, viruses, or environmental factors, cause illnesses. These are treated by nurses, and doctors; in hospitals and health centers. There is however a craze for herbalists. The communities are consulting herbalists and are taking herbal tea, and medicine

#### **5. Dress**

Mode of dressing varied between countries. It was dependent on the type of climate. African communities were clothes made from skins or hides, leaves of bananas and trees. Women wore beads, and necklaces for decoration.

Modern mode of dressing is a mixture of African, Asian and European wear. There are clothes for men, women, and unisex. African and western ornaments are worn for beauty and style.

#### **6. Worship.**

Worship is an important activity in African communities. There are different forms of worship, which are done in various places. Those who were converted to Islam worship in Mosques. Those converted to Hinduism worship in temples. Christians worship in churches. The few traditional African communities continue to worship their ancestors in shrines. These are very few. But a few groups are turning back to traditional worship and reviving worship of ancestors and spirits, and their traditional God. For example “Mungiki” a cult in Kenya, made up of young people, worship the traditional Ngai and practice traditional culture.

Traditional religions have many offerings such as foodstuffs and sacrifices such as goats, cows, and sheep and chicken. Human sacrifice has been discarded.

It is illegal, and it is murder. In the news, we have heard of cases of body parts being stolen from a dead body in mortuary probably for religious rituals. This is illegal and a criminal offence.

Modern offerings in most religious institutions consist of money.

### **7. Death changes immediately the status of families.**

Mothers and fathers become widows and widowers. Children become orphans. Many parents, wives and husbands have died because of HIV / AIDS, road accidents, diseases and other modern calamities. They have left orphans, widows and widowers.

Orphans used to be looked after by grandmothers, brothers and uncles. Today government, churches, charities, NGOs, well-wishers, and guardians, the elder sibling looks after orphans. Some orphan sisters and brothers drop out of school to look after the rest. Some orphans have ended up in the streets because there is no one to look after them. Widows. Traditionally brothers inherited widows. However, widow inheritance is being discouraged to prevent HIV / AIDS. But on the other hand, a widow is encouraged to remarry as society has become individualistic and no longer assists community members as an obligation.

Widowers are not inherited and many of them remarry soon after the death of their wives.

### **8. Old age.**

In traditional African communities, old people were respected. But now old age is not respected. The aged are seen as a burden to their children. This is because the need medical care, food, and other forms of care to meet their needs. Most of them are neglected and mistreated. In traditional communities, children took care of their aged parents. Today some children care for their parents.

Fortunately, churches have set up homes for the aged. An example is “Nyumba za wazee”. A few old people can look after themselves since they have pension schemes, life insurance policies, and income generating projects, investments and bank deposits. They can care for themselves.

### **Revision questions**

- a) What is the significance of the kingship system?
- b) Outline and explain factors contributing to harmony and mutual responsibility in the traditional African society
- c) What was the purpose of the bride wealth in the traditional African society?

d) Explain the role of medicine men in the African communities and their relevance today.

## **STUDY ACTIVITIES**

Read the Bible quotations given

Carry out role-plays e.g. the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham

Consult the aged to assist in the understanding of African traditional practices

Form one answers

## **TOPIC ONE**

1. What is the importance of reading the Bible?

- Strengthens people's faith.
- Helps in spreading the gospel.
- Helps in composition of songs and hymns.
- Acts as a reference when we write its translations and other books.
- Promotes good relationship between God and man.

2. In society, people in schools, crusades, churches, lodgings, homes, and hospitals read the Bible.

3. In the government, the Bible is used for swearing in the Courts, Parliament and Cabinet when members of parliament are nominated to become ministers of the government.

4. The major divisions of the Bible are the old and the new testaments. Read 1.3.4.

Above for more information

2. What are the effects of Bible translation on African languages?

The Effects of Bible translation into African languages

The translations increased and deepened people's faith in God. They also led to the establishment of schools. The Gospel spread to local communities and many of them became Christians. The missionaries and colonialists learnt African Languages. This led to the promotion of African languages. This helped the African converts to judge when the missionaries were unfair or when they practiced inequality of races.

8. Why is the Bible referred to as (a) a Library and (b) the Word of God?

(a) The Bible is referred to as a Library because its:

1. Books are arranged in a series and in order.
2. A reference book
3. Is a book of literary works?
4. Books were written under different situations and circumstances
5. Books are many

1. Inspiration is a process through which God took the initiative to prompt and enlighten the writers of the Bible its Godly influence

## **TOPIC TWO: CREATION AND THE FALL OF MAN**

1. Find answers on the differences between the two creation stories in lesson four

2. Traditional African view of creation is in lesson four. Africans' view was that:

- God is the architect of the world
- God existed from the very beginning of time
- God created everything from nothing
- God provides for the needs of human beings, animals, and all creation
- God continues to create through human beings

3. Human beings continue with the work of creation in lesson four

4. The origin of sin and evil read again lesson five

5. Consequences of sin in lesson five When Adam and Eve sinned

- Man's friendship with God changed to fear of GOD
- What had been innocent and good became shameful
- Relationship between GOD and man was damaged and became spoilt
- Man began to toil for food, safety and other basic needs
- Pain became part of human experience
- Death sentence was passed

6. Consequences of evil are in lesson six Africans understand evil as barrenness, war, drought, epidemics, madness, sickness, death, burning in a house and others

7. God's plan of salvation is lesson seven. The lesson tells us that GOD saved human kind by providing:

- Clothing for Adam and Eve
- Means to find food
- A decree to defeat serpent through the seed of the woman
- A solution in which he chooses Abraham and separated him from others
- A delivery of Israelites from Egypt
- Prophets with messages for Israelites
- The Messiah to die on the Cross to save humankind

8. Compare the biblical concept of sin and the African concept of evil.

### **Similarities:**

- Both agree that God is good and did not create evil.
- In both, sin is a result of disobedience, greed and selfishness of humankind.
- In both cases, sin lead to human suffering.
- Both hold the view that sin/evil befalls humankind in the form of a curse.
- Sin brings separation between God and man.

In both, there is reconciliation and forgiveness between God and man. Thus sin does not end a relationship.

### **Differences**

In the bible, the serpent is seen as the cause of sin whereas in many Traditional African communities, the spirits of the dead causes evil.

In the bible, there is external punishment (hell) for sinners while the African communities believe that punishment is here on earth.

Biblically, human beings are born sinners because they are descendants of Adam (1st parents' sin). In Traditional African Community, a child is born free of evil.

Biblically had taken the initiative to end sin but in Traditional African Community, man does through sacrifice to the ancestral spirits.

9. Subdue the earth in genesis 1 verse 28

### **TOPIC THREE: FAITH AND GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM.**

#### **Explain why Abraham is referred to as the Father of Faith**

Faith is complete trust in somebody or something. This is because he demonstrated faith in his life's actions.

Accepting to move from his homeland to an unknown land

By accepting circumcision at an old age and change of name

Being ready to sacrifice his only son – Isaac

He made altars for the worship of God at Bethel etc.

He believed in a God he did not know/see.

By accepting to enter into a covenant relationship with God where he gave his best animals as a sacrifice

#### **Give five (5) actions from the life of Abraham that shows his faith in God**

Abraham obeyed God's call and left his homeland Haran to go to an unknown land.

He believed in the promises God gave him.

Build altars for the worship of God, one at Schechter and the other at Bethel

Covenant – accepted to make a covenant with God where he sacrificed the best of his animals

Circumcision – accepting the command to circumcise himself and all male children in his household

Sacrifice of son – willing to offer his only son Isaac as a burnt offering to God

#### **List some of the promises God gave to Abraham.**

Abraham and his wife Sarah would have a son.

Abraham would be famous.

He would become the father of a great nation.

- God would curse those who cursed him and bless those who blessed him.
- God assured Abraham of a personal protection.
- Many descendants – like stars on the sky.
- The descendants would be slaves in a foreign land but God would deliver them.
- He would live to a ripe old age and die in peace.
- God would establish an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.
- Some of his descendants would be kings.
- God would give him and his descendants land.

## **Compare and contrast Jewish and Traditional African practice of circumcision**

### **A. Similarities**

- In both communities, circumcision is taken as a physical sign of membership to the community.
- It involves the cutting of the foreskin.
- Members who refuse to be circumcised are treated as outcasts in the community.
- The shedding of blood is symbolic as it binds the people with God and ancestors.
- It has a religious significance.
- Special people in both do circumcision.
- The occasions are accompanied by a ceremony which bring kinsmen together.
- The rite is compulsory for males.
- The practice is handed down from one generation to the next.
- Names are given during the occasion.
- In both cases, it is done in special or religious places e.g. temple/under mugumo tree/ shrine etc.
- It is a command from God/ancestors.

### **Differences**

- For African, initiation leads to adult responsibilities such as marriage, becoming a warrior, decision- making and property ownership. In Jewish community, the boys are too young to take up responsibility.
- In the Jewish community, only males are circumcised while in the Traditional African Community, both boys and girls are.
- For Jews, one remains a child while in the Traditional African Community, they move from childhood to adulthood.
- Jewish community circumcise at the age of eight days while in the Traditional African Community, it is at puberty.



- Among the Jews, it is a sign that they have become God's people, but in Traditional African Community, one is bound to the ancestors.
- The Jewish circumcision is a command from God as a sign of their covenant with him while Traditional African Communities do it in obedience to the customs and traditions of their duty.
- The rite, taken place on the 8th day of both in Jewish community while in the Traditional African Communities, it occurs after every four – six years
- Done to individuals in Jewish community while it is done to a group of age mates in the Traditional African Communities.
- No seclusion period among Jews as is the case in most African communities.
- In African communities, the ceremony enables them to choose future leaders, which is not the case with the Jews.
- Helps one endure suffering (pain) in future in the African communities unlike in the Jewish communities.
- Only one form of initiation (cutting of foreskin) is done. Various forms are practiced in the Traditional African communities. These include:
  - Cutting of foreskin
  - Lib/ear piercing
  - Removal of lower teeth
  - Scarification (putting marks on face/body)

### **What is the importance of faith to Christians?**

- Faith is the foundation of Christian life today. It makes Christians part of the great nation of God.
- Through faith in Jesus, Christians became the chosen people of God.
- Faith enables Christians make correct choices in life e.g. When choosing a career, marriage partners etc.
- Faiths help them to face temptations and challenges in their lives and are able to overcome them.
- It gives them perseverance in prayer as they wait for God's answer.
- It gives them the courage to commit their lives to God totally.
- It is through faith that Christians obey God.
- They are able to achieve impossible things through faith.
- They are able to believe what they have not seen through faith.
- They are able to serve the world, help the needy because of their faith in Christ.

### **. State the elements of a covenant**

- Partners two or more partners are involved.
- A physical reminder – a certificate/sign

- Promises: – given by both partners.
- Ceremony – whose blood seals it or an oath taken
- Witnesses – must be present
- It requires faithfulness, obedience and loyalty to the regulations
- It spells out serious consequences for those who break it.

On 7. Give examples of covenant in the bible and the modern society

#### The Bible

- God's covenant with Noah: where he promised never to destroy the earth with flood – rainbow is the sign of the covenant (Gen 9).
- God's covenant with Abraham: God promised to fulfill the promises he made to Abraham. The sign was circumcision (Gen 15 & 17).
- The covenant between God and the Israelites on Mt Sinai – sign was the Law – 10 commandments (Exodus 24).
- The covenant between God and King David – promise to David's kingdom would last forever (2 Sam: 7).
- Jeremiah's covenant: The new covenant with God's people (Jr 31: 31 – 34).

#### Modern Society

- Baptism
- Marriage
- Oath of allegiance/loyalty
- Ordination
- The National Anthem binds all
- The loyalty pledge
- Employment contract

#### **Discuss the circumstances that led God to enter into a covenant relationship with Abraham**

- To seal the promises given unto Abraham e.g. a great nation, son, many descendants.
- It was an assurance of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham.
- It was to unite God and the Israelites.
- It was to be a source of blessings to all.
- A starting point for the salvation of mankind, whereby he would renew the relationship between himself and man after the separation by the 1st parents

#### **TOPIC FOUR: SINAI COVENANT.**

What are the qualities of Moses as a leader?

- Education: he received education while in the pharaoh's palace where he grew up.

- Jewish religion knowledge: his own mother who was his maid taught him the history of Israel.
- He learned leadership skills from the King as he grew up.
- Shepherd: herding the father-in-law's herds made him gain experience of shepherding people.
- Life in the wilderness where he lived after killing an Egyptian gave him experience in desert life through where he would lead the Israelites.
- Father/parent: his marriage to Zipporah helped him learn family leadership. Later he applied this to his work.
- Prophet: Enabled him to foresee the future and inform the community.
- Miracle-maker: helped him solve problem facing his people in the wilderness e.g. lack of food, water.
- Lawgiver: gave laws that were used to govern the community of Israel i.e. the Ten Commandments.
- Hard work: worked for his father-in-law serving the family e.g. fetching water. Later he was able to serve the Jews.

**(i) Describe the call of Moses: Exodus 3: 1 – 22**

- God called Moses as he herded his father-in-law's flock at Mt Sinai.
- Moses saw a burning bush, which was not consumed. He drew nearer to get a better look.
- God called Moses by name from the middle of the burning bush and told him to remove his shoes because he was standing on holy ground.
- God told Moses that he had seen the suffering of his people in Egypt and heard their cry.
- He told Moses that he had chosen him to go to Pharaoh and release them from bondage.
- Moses objected to the task because he felt inadequate.
- God promised to be with Moses and to protect him.
- Moses asked for the name of God so that he would have a point of reference when asked who sent him.
- God revealed himself to Moses saying, "I AM WHO I AM"
- God gave Moses power to perform miracles that he would use as proof of his work.
- Moses protested further saying he was a stammerer.
- God commissioned Aaron, Moses' brother as his spokesman.
- Moses then told God he was afraid to go to Egypt.
- God assured him that the man he was afraid of was already dead.

On b (ii) Why was Moses hesitant to God's call?

It is because he was already a criminal and wanted in Egypt after having killed an Egyptian and ran away.

He was not a good speaker (stammerer).

He did not know the name of God who was sending him.

**(i) What is the significance of the items used for the Passover feast (similar to what is the meaning of the Passover meal)?**

The Lamb: reminded the Israelite of the sacrificial lamb whose blood saved their 1st born from the angel of death.

The unleavened bread signified purity.

It too signified the hurry they had to leave Egypt, as unleavened bread is easy to bake.

Roasting the meat was the easiest method of cooking.

Not breaking bones and spilt blood signified forgiveness.

Bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

Other Meanings:

Eating while standing symbolized the haste with which the Israelites were to leave Egypt.

They were not to leave any meal to avoid profanation in the form of flies. Burning was the simplest way of disposal & sacred.

**(ii) Compare the Lord's Supper to the Passover feast**

**Similarities:**

Both are acts of salvation from suffering. Passover saved Israelites from slavery while the Lord's

Supper saved people from bondage of sin.

Both are celebrated in memory of a past event – suffering.

Lambs offered in both Hebrews – the Passover lamb in the Lord's Supper Jesus is the paschal lamb.

In both a symbolic meal was taken.

In both cases each group is saved through a mediator – Moses and Jesus respectfully.

God's covenant is remembered in both cases i.e. Old testament and new covenant respectfully.

In both the religious significance of the feasts is taught and emphasized.

**Differences:**

□ In the Passover feast, animal sacrifice is offered while in the Lord's Supper, Jesus was the last sacrifice and instead bread and wine are offered to represent his blood and body.

□ Whereas the Jewish Passover was compulsory for every Jew, the Lord's Supper is not compulsory in all Christian churches.

□ The bloodshed in the Jewish Passover is for the salvation of the Jews only while the blood of Jesus shed on the cross is for the salvation of the whole human race.

□ Passover lamb offered in Hebrew while Jesus was the lamb offered in the Lord's Supper.

### **Describe how the Sinai covenant was made**

□ The Israelites arrived at Mt Sinai through God's saving power.

□ Moses was instructed by God to tell the elders to do the following in preparation for the making of the covenant.

□ All Israelites were to cleanse themselves and wash their garments.

□ Mark the boundaries of the mountain and avoid going near or crossing the border.

□ Avoid sexual relations between married couple

Note: All these happened after Moses had gone up the mountain and God had promised to make the Israelites the following if they obeyed him.

i. His people

ii. A kingdom of priests

iii. A holy nation

□ On the third day after cleansing, Moses took the Israelites to meet their God. God manifested himself in the following forms: thunder, lightening, earthquake and a thick cloud that filled the mountain and a loud trumpet blast.

□ Moses came down and told people about the laws which was to guide them as a covenant people.

□ The people agreed to obey all the words the Lord had spoken (Ex 24: 3 – 4)

□ Thus the covenant was made.

### **Describe the circumstances that led to the breaking of the Sinai covenant**

□ Moses went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. He delayed (40 days) thus forgetting God.

□ The Israelites became impatient. They forgot the saving power of God that had delivered them from Egypt.

□ Aaron was a weak leader who failed to lead the people to uphold the covenant. He yielded to their demands to make and worship idols.

- Availability of gold jewellery: used to make the calf image.
- Idolatry was a practice done while in Egypt so they copied/continued with it.
- They were used to God's (idols). They could see while in Egypt unlike the Yahweh who was invisible.

### **How was the broken covenant renewed?**

- Moses pleaded to God not to destroy the Israelites.
- God spared them.
- God commanded the Israelites to cut two stone tablets where he would rewrite the commandments.
- God gave conditions to be fulfilled by the Israelites in the renewal of the covenant.

These were:

- a) To obey God's command.
- b) Not to make treaties with other nations.
- c) To tear down the altars of the gods of other nations and temples.
- d) Not to worship idols.
- e) Not to make images to represent God.
- f) Not to marry foreign wives.
- g) To keep and celebrate the three festivals namely, Passover, feast of weeks and the feast of in gathering.
- h) To keep the Sabbath day holy.
- i) Dedicate to God 1st born male children and animals.

God promised that if they obeyed Him, He would:

- a) Protect and preserve them
- b) Bless them
- c) Make them prosper

### **Describe how the Israelites worshipped God in the wilderness**

- Worship is the practice of showing respect and love for God.
- The Israelites showed their respect and love for God in the wilderness in the following ways: -

1) The Ark and the Tabernacle: The Ark was a wooden box where the Ten Commandments were kept.

They signified the presence of God. The tabernacle was a portable tent for meeting between God and the Israelites.

2) The Sabbath: They observed the Sabbath as a sacred day for resting and worshipping God.

3 Festivals: Celebrated many festivals as one way of worshipping God. E.g. Passover

4) Altars – built them when there was need to worship God – meeting place between God and the people and sacrifice to God.

5) Observance of the Ten Commandments. These guided them on how to live with God and man.

6) Religious leaders: God chose priest from the tribe of Levi to organize worship.

### **What is the relevance of the Ten Commandments to Christian today?**

Christians learn that God is a jealous God. They avoid holding other things in their lives strong in the place of God.

Christians learn that God is unique and cannot be represented by visible man-made objects or described in human terms.

They are reminded to observe the Sabbath by worshipping God.

They strive to have a good relationship with God.

They are taught to respect other people and their property.

They learn that long life is a result of honoring and respecting their parents.

They strive to live upright and moral lives.

They learn that lust for money and other property is sinful.

### **What did the Israelites learn about God in the wilderness?**

They learned that God is faithful. He keeps promises.

A provider – provided manna, water etc.

God is the controller of natural forces e.g. Red sea, a pillar of cloud & fire, earthquakes etc.

A jealous God – no worship of other gods

Just – forgave those who broke the covenant and punished those who refused to repent.

Merciful and compassionate

Give them a 2nd chance after breaking the covenant.

A God of victory – helped them defeat Amalekites.

God valued a personal relationship – commandments given.

## **TOPIC FIVE: LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL**

### **a. Explain the reasons against Kingship in Israel (1 Sam 8:10 – 20)**

The King would force the sons of the Israelites to serve him as soldiers in the army.

- The King would create forced labor and enslavement by making the young men work in his farms and in making weapons. Daughters would work in his house.
- He would also grab their land and give it to his loyal servants.
- He would overtax them in order to maintain his administration.
- It would be seen as a rejection of Yahweh as their King.
- Israel would be like other nations who did not know Yahweh.
- Yahweh would reject them when they cried to him.

**b. Explain the importance of David as King of Israel**

- David was important because he was chosen by God and publicly anointed by elders in a religion ceremony. He too became ancestor of many communities.
- David was a great musician and wrote many songs for promising God.
- He killed Goliath the philistine soldier.
- He conquered the enemies of Israel such as Amalekites, Ammonites etc.
- He expanded Israel through his military conquests and marked the boundaries of the nation.
- He captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it a capital city.
- He too made it a religious centre by placing the Ark of the Covenant there, which had been housed – Abidjab’s.
- He had good diplomatic relationship with other nations.
- He encouraged trade with other nations thus making Israel prosperous.
- He was a shrewd administrator who chose wise elders to advise him.
- He was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- He established the largest and most enduring dynasty that lasted 400 years.
- He composed the books of Psalms used to praise God.
- Whenever he wronged God, he genuinely repented and humbled himself before God.
- He was a just ruler.
- He respected the prophets of God and consulted them before making decisions.
- He was prayerful and consulted God in his undertakings.
- He united the twelve (12) tribes of Israel.
- He set a good example of faithfulness to Yahweh that he wanted all the Israelites to emulate.

**c. How did Jesus fulfill the prophecies of Prophet Nathan as a descendant of David? (i.e. Areas where Jesus is mentioned as coming from David)**

- Angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary who was engaged to Joseph, a descendant of



David. The Angel referred to Jesus as the King whose wisdom would last forever (Lk 1:26-33).

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem – the birth place of David (Lk 2: 4 – 5)
- Abraham and David are mentioned as the ancestors of Jesus.
- During the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the crowds who met him sang with joy and shouted ‘Hosanna to the son of David.’
- On the days of Pentecost when Peter addressed the crowd, he referred to Jesus as a descendant of David (Acts: 2 29-35).
- Zechariah in his Benedictus, says that God has promised a savior descended from the house of David (Lk 1:69)
- The blind man at Jericho referred to Jesus as the son of David (Lk 18:38).

#### **d) What was the failure of King Solomon?**

- Solomon was the 2nd King of Israel, succeeding his father King David. He failed to live according to the covenant way of life in the following ways.
- He married foreign wives thus breaking the Total that clearly stated that the Israelites should not marry foreigners because they can come with their gods – idols.
- He allowed the wives to worship their gods (idols) thus leading to spread of idolatry in Israel.
- He not only worshipped the gods of his wives but also built temple for their worship.
- He, by worshipping the gods became a bad example to Israel, as King. They copied him.
- Although he built God’s temple, he erred in many ways:
  - i. He built his palace for 13 years but took only 7 years to build God’s temple. Shows he loved himself more the God.
  - ii. He used foreign designs and materials in the construction of the temple, ignoring God’s specifications on how to build it.
  - iii. He liaised pagan craftsmen from Tyre to design, decorate and furnish the temple.
- He broke the sixth commandment by killing his half brother, Adonijah. He suspected that Adonijah would become his rival to the throne.
- He spent a lot of Israel’s money on his lavish lifestyle. He had a large army and servants.
- He overtaxed the people to meet the amount.
- He used forced labor in his development projects.

- He enslaved young men and women who went to work in the palace as servants for the wives.
- He practiced nepotism. He exempted them from forced labor.
- He sold part of Israel – sold 20 towns of Galilee to King of Tyre as payment of a debt he could not pay contrary to God’s command.
- He made treaties with other nations that were against the condition set during the renewal of the Sinai covenant.
- In the above ways, he oppressed the people of God.

**e. Which leadership qualities can modern leaders learn from David?**

- Justice: A good leader is one who does not favor some people like David (I Sam 24: 1 – 12).
- Courage: David showed this while fighting Goliath. Leaders need to be brave and courageous in their work (I Sam 17:41 – 54).
- Fear of God and Faith: David consulted God before any undertaking. Leaders should do the same.
- Gratitude: David was thankful to blessings he received. Leaders should be happy and grateful to God.
- Loyalty: Modern leaders should remain loyal to their office. David was loyal to God and his people (2 Sam 2:7)
- Kindness: Good leaders should show mercy to their people like David did e.g. he forgave Saul twice (2 Sam 19: 9 – 39).
- Humility: Leaders should not hesitate to ask for forgiveness from God and people. David was humble and asked for forgiveness any time he went wrong.
- Willingness to delegate: Learn to delegate future as David did (2 Sam 20: 23 – 26)
- Wisdom: Be wise in choosing legal advisers as David did.
- Respect: Leaders should show respect to God and preaches those they serve as David did to the prophets and his people.

**TOPIC SIX: LOYALTY TO GOD- ELIJAH.**

**a. Qualities of Elijah that led to his achievements**

- Elijah was fearless and courageous. His courage helped him to face King Ahab and Queen Jezebel and condemn them for their wickedness such as corruption and idolatry
- He was faithful to God. Yahweh guided him in his dealings with Baal prophets and King Ahab.

- He lived a simple life. For example, he wore simple clothing made of camel's skin.
- He stood for the covenant at a time when the religion of Yahweh was in danger
- He had the power of God in him and was able to control rain.
- He confirmed that Yahweh had authority over land and over the people.

b) Schism is sharp religious, social, political differences within a group or organization

Syncretism is the process of mixing religious beliefs and practices

c) Some characteristics of Elijah that a modern Christian should strive to emulate

- 1) Courage
- 2) Faithfulness
- 3) Zealousness for God
- 4) Concern for the needy / poor
- 5) Provision of social justice
- 6) Patience

#### **d. What were the effects of idolatry in Israel?**

- Syncretism developed where the Israelites worshipped Yahweh alongside the gods of Canaan.
- The Israelites started calling Yahweh by the names used for Canaanite gods e.g. El.
- The Israelites started naming their children after Canaanite gods like Baal.
- They changed their religion calendar and celebration to correspond with their Canaanite celebrations and feasts.
- They converted the high places used for worshipping Baal to Yahweh's shrines without removing the graven images of idols.
- The unity that existed between the two tribes of Israel was destroyed. They no longer treated one another as brothers.
- The Kings of Israel behaved like the Canaanite leaders by oppressing the weak and grabbing other people's property.
- The people neglected Yahweh's holy places.
- God's prophets were mistreated, persecuted and even killed.
- God withdrew his blessings from the Israelites because they angered Him by worshipping other gods.
- They broke God's commandments, which forbade worship of other god a part from Yahweh.
- The Israelites practiced temple prostitution and other Canaanite rituals and sacrifices.

### **e. Describe Elijah's fight against false religion in Israel**

- Elijah rose to challenge false religion at a time when Baalism had become the official religion.
- He prophesied a three and a half years drought because the people had turned away from Yahweh.
- After the drought God appeared to Elijah and told him to go to King Ahab and tell him that the drought was as a result of idolatry in Israel.
- Elijah requested the King to order all the people to meet at Mt Carmel to hold a contest.
- Elijah asked the King to invite the 400 prophets of Asherah and Baal's 450, saw that they could prove who the true God is.
- Elijah would sacrifice a bull and the false prophets would too sacrifice their own to call on their Gods to send fire. The one who could send is the true God.
- The prophets of Baal were the 1st to pray to their god but he never sent fire.
- The prophets cut themselves with knives to please their god but he never sent it.
- Elijah then prepared the altar with 12 pillars representing the 12 tribes of Israel.
- He dug a trench around the altar, placed wood and put the cut bull on top of the wood.
- He ordered for water to be poured around the trenches until it flooded.
- Then in the evening Elijah prayed and called upon the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to send fire.
- Fire came and consumed the whole sacrifice, including the water in the trenches.
- As a result, the Israelites bowed down and declared that Yahweh was the true God.
- Then Elijah ordered the killing of all the prophets of Baal and the prophetesses of Asherah.
- Elijah went to the top of the Mt Carmel and prayed for rain. Yahweh sent His servant to watch for the sign of rain from the sea.
- The servant looked towards the sea seven times after, which he saw a small cloud forming.
- Then heavy rain fell, signaling end of drought.

### **f. Describe Elijah's fight against corruption – 1 Kings 21**

- Corruption: Can be defined as dishonesty or misuse of power for personal gain.
- In a corrupt society, the rich and powerful people tend to take advantage of the weak/poor by exploiting them and denying them their rights.
- King Ahab of Israel desired a fruitful vineyard owned by a man named Naboth.

- King Ahab approached Naboth to sell him the vineyard or exchange with another one.
- Naboth declined the offer because in Israel, selling ancestral land was against the covenant law. The land belonged to God.
- Jezebel, Ahab's wife, soon learned, Naboth's refusal and she arranged Naboth's murder through false accusations.
- After Naboth was killed, Ahab possessed the vineyard.
- God commanded Elijah to go and declare His judgment on Ahab for committing such an evil act in Israel.
- Elijah declared the following judgment on Ahab:
  - i. Dogs would lick Ahab's blood at the same place where they had licked Naboth's.
  - ii. Ahab's dynasty would fall like those of the Kings before him who had disobeyed God.
  - iii. All family members of Ahab would face violent deaths.
- On hearing this, Ahab humbled himself before God and repented. God postponed Ahab's punishment to the days of his son.

**g. what can Christian learn from the teachings of Elijah?**

- From the Mt Carmel incident, they learn that Yahweh controls the forces of nature – can bring rain or stop it.
- Yahweh is the only true and living God – Mt Carmel.
- Yahweh is forgiving – pardoned those who repented on Mt Carmel.
- Yahweh is a jealous God. He will not share honor with any God – killed the 450 prophets worshipping Baal.
- A prosecutor – protected Elijah.
- A provider – provided Elijah with food.
- Yahweh answers prayers. He is faithful.
- They also learn that church leaders should condemn evil like Elijah did in the case of Ahab and Naboth.
- Christians should work to protect the poor from exploitation.
- They should be prayerful so that God can help them overcome difficulties like Elijah.
- They should strive to lead lives free from corruption.
- They should remain faithful even if it means costing their lives to Naboth.
- Leaders should realize authority comes from God and are accountable to Him.
- They should avoid idolatry, which Elijah condemned.

- Perform tasks given by God however hard they may be as Elijah did – facing Ahab, killing the 450 false prophets etc.
- Finally, they should invite sinners to repent and bring them back to God.

## **TOPIC SEVEN: SELECTED ASPECTS OF AFRICAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE**

### **Question a: Explain African beliefs about God (or qualities)**

- African beliefs about their God are found in their proverbs, myths, songs, prayers, narratives and religious ceremonies.
- God was believed to be a supreme being who was beyond human understanding.
- The African communities believed that God was all-powerful – omnipotent.
- They believed that God's power is expressed in natural occurrences such as thunder, earthquake floods and volcanic eruptions.
- God is believed to be all-knowing omniscient.
- He is limitless and knows, hears and sees everything.
- He is also omnipresent – meaning he is everywhere at all times.
- Transcendent – beyond human understanding because of the transcendent nature, Africans found it impossible to represent him using physical representations. They viewed him as being far yet too near them.
- He was seen as the provider and sustainer of creation.
- They believed that God is everlasting. He has no beginning or end.
- God is merciful.
- They believed he is incorruptible.
- African communities associated God with justice.
- Physical features were often seen as a representation of awesome power of God. This is why large mountains, thick forest, unique rock formation were used as shrines.
- Africans viewed God to be mysterious.

### **Q b. Describe the African understanding of the Hierarchy of Beings**

#### **Hierarchy of Beings**

##### **Divinities**

- **Ancestors**
- **Human Beings**
- **Animals and Plants**
- **Non-living Things**
- God as the creator occupies the highest rank in the hierarchy of being – creator.
- The Divinities: Came next and control natural forces in the universe, created by God.

- The Common Spirits: Comprise spirits of people who died long time ago.
- Ancestors: (living dead): Spirits of those who died recently and are still remembered by the living.
- Human Beings: Consist of the living and the unborn.
- Animals and Plants: Come next – for man’s use as food and sacrifice to God.
- Last (7th) are non-living things such as mountains, rocks, rivers, caves, dwelling places of God and Spirits.

**Qc. Describe the Role of the ancestors to the living**

- The ancestors acted as intermediaries between God and human beings.
- They communicated the problems and wishes of human beings to God.
- God and the spirits used the ancestors to express their wishes concerning human beings.
- The ancestors welcomed those who died to the spirit world.
- They helped to preserve the culture and standards of a community.
- The ancestors blessed the living and corrected them through punishment.

**Q d. What was the responsibility of the living towards God?**

- To show gratitude to God and give thanks to him as an acknowledgement that He is the giver of life.
- To honor, worship and adore God by praying to Him for their needs.
- To pray to Him during or before a war, before planting, etc.
- To obey and trust Him.
- To take care of God’s creation
- To teach children about God.
- Appease him through sacrifice

**Q e. Describe the Traditional African ways of worshipping God**

- Sacrifice: They were used to ask God’s favour, thanksgiving, to avert evil and ask for forgiveness, before planting and after harvest, epidemics, birth, naming, invitation, weddings, funerals etc for different reasons.
- Offerings: Foodstuffs e.g. grain, honey, beer, milk was offered in recognition of God as owner of property and provider.
- Prayers and invocations: Commonest act of worship. A continuation activity done anytime as the need arises.
- Song and dance: People were involved both physically and spiritually. This brought the city together.
- Blessings and Salutations: Expressed in greetings and farewells e.g. “Go with God”, God be with you”.

**Q f. What were the African ways of venerating and communicating with the spirits and ancestors?**

- Venerating means showing respect to somebody.
- Spirits and ancestors were venerated because they were believed to be senior to human beings and closer to God.
- Sacrifices were offered to them as the ways of venerating them.
- Pouring libation was done.
- The living invited them during ceremonies such as birth, invitation, marriage and burial.
- They consulted diviners, mediums and medicine men to keep in contact.
- The living named after them – thus they became immortal and members in the physical world again.
- Their names were mentioned during prayer.
- By maintaining their graves

Giving them proper burial ceremonies

**TOPIC EIGHT: AFRICAN MORAL AND CULTURAL VALUES.**

**Q a. What is the significance of the kinship system?**

- Kinship means being related either by blood or marriages.
- The kinship system was important in the traditional African society because of the following factors.
- The kinship system regulated people's behavior towards each other. This promoted peaceful and harmonious relationships.
- It promoted co-operation among community members especially in times of difficulty.
- It helped to ensure that the disadvantaged members of the community were taken care of.
- The living dead and the ancestors were part of the African kinship system. This showed concern for the families or relatives they left behind.
- The kinship system led to the preservation of cultural identity.
- It provided a peaceful way of settling disputes with the elders acting as arbitrators.
- It ensured fairness and transparency in sharing out inheritance.
- The kinship system united the members of a family and clan by giving them a sense of belonging.
- It helped people to establish new relationships, especially through marriage.
- Kinship ties regulated marital customs rules and regulations. People who were related in any way could not be allowed to marry.



**Q b. Outline and explain factors contributing to harmony and mutual responsibility in the Traditional African Society**

- Good morals: Every member of the community was expected to do the right thing according to the norms of the community.
- Participation in communal activities: Means of the community were expected to participate in communal activities e.g. wrestling, dances and communal work.
- Sharing: People shared ideas and even property, which created harmony among the people.
- Division of labor: Tasks were distributed according to one's age; gender to avoid conflicts in roles.
- Rules: In Traditional African Communities, elders, men youth, and women had their respective roles to play that enhanced harmony in the community.
- Virtues: Virtues like generosity, obedience, kindness and honesty were encouraged since they contributed towards harmonious living.
- Religious beliefs and practices: A common belief in God, the spirits and ancestors created a sense of togetherness.

**Q c. What was the purpose of bride wealth in the Traditional African Society?**

- It was a way of thanking the bride's family for taking good care of her.
- It was a form of compensation to the bride's parents because the woman would now belong to another family.
- It was a sign of contract that the man would marry the girl and they would live together until death.
- It represented evidence of the groom's ability to take care of a wife and a family.
- It was a sign of generosity on the side of the man.
- It initiated a long-lasting friendship between the families of the groom and the bride.
- It cemented a marriage.
- It was a symbol of the marriage covenant between the bride and the groom.
- Bride wealth served as an outward seal of the marriage contract.

**Q d. Explain the role of medicine-men in the African Communities and their relevant today**

1) Medicine men

- They are also referred to as healers, herbalists or traditional doctors.
- They identified illness and their causes.
- They identified appropriate treatment and prevention measures for the illness.
- They averted the effects of a curse.

- They offered sacrifices and prayers to God and the ancestors.
- They prepared charms for protection against witchcraft and evil spirits.
- They gave medicine to increase fertility in both people and animals.
- They acted as counselors, guiding people on all issues of life.

## 2) Relevance of Modern Society

- Modern medicine has not fully displaced herbalists.
- Medical doctors and scientific researchers today work side by side with traditional healers since herbs are used to make modern medicine.
- Some people still believe that there are some illnesses that cannot be treated in hospitals hence; they turn to herbalists.
- Some people also believe that medicine people who practice magic have the power to change their fate.

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