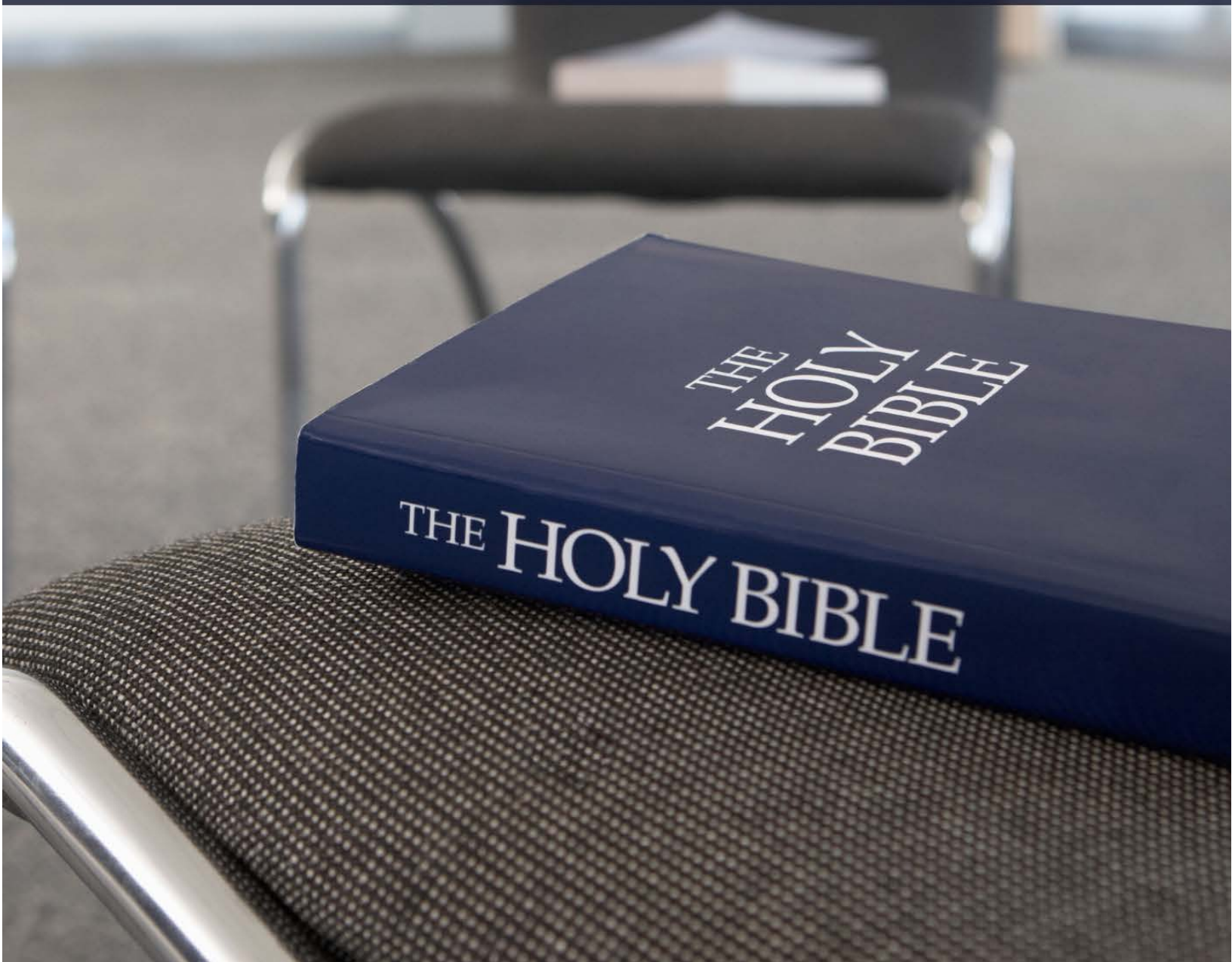


CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

FOR

Senior Secondary School

2



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Week 1&2

Topic: The Sovereignty of GOD

Content:

1. Sovereignty
2. What do we mean by the Sovereignty of GOD?
3. God the creator
4. The Parameters of God's Sovereignty

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Sovereignty is the ability to do whatever you want without consulting or taking permission from anybody. It is the ability to independently do all things. God made the whole universe from His volition and power. *Sovereignty* is understood in jurisprudence as the full right and power of a governing body to govern itself without any interference from outside sources or bodies.

The *Sovereignty of God* is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works not just some things but all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted (Isa. 46:11); nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things, but that He does so, always and without exception. In other words, God is not merely sovereign *de jure* (in principle), but sovereign *de facto* (in practice).

What do we mean by the Sovereignty of GOD?

We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the god-hood of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that

1. God is God.
2. He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what does Thou? (Dan. 4:35).
3. He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psa. 115:3).
4. He is "The Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleased Him best.
5. He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible." A. W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, chapter 1.

GOD the Creator

Before creation the world was without form and darkness was everywhere- no light, then God created everything from just His words.

The book of Genesis reveals the sovereign acts of GOD

1. Day One God created light because without light there will be no order. He separated the light from dark. The light was named day while the dark was named night. Genesis 1:1-5 –

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light

“day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

2. Day Two God created the firmament with mass of water. Firmament means the sky and the heaven. Genesis 1:6-8

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

3. Day Three God created the dry land and seas. The dry land is earth, He also made the seas, oceans and rivers on the third day. On this day God also made plants. There are more than 250,000 types of plants and all of them are different from each other. God is wonderful. Genesis 1:9-13

⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

4. Day Four God created the sun, moon and stars to lighten the earth. Sun to show light during the day and moon and stars to show light during the night. The sun is more than one million times bigger than the earth; but one star is bigger than the sun. Genesis 1:14-19

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

5. Day Five God created the fishes in the water, the birds that fly. All animals in water and air were created on the fifth day. After creating them God instructed them to reproduce their kind. Genesis 1:20-23

²⁰ And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

6. Day Six God created the animals, all insects and creeping things. The most important creature created on the sixth day was man. Genesis 1:24-31

²⁴ And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

7. Day Seven God rested, having completed all creations.

After God had created the heaven and earth; the animals, fishes, birds and plants He decided to create the man. God formed the first man, Adam out of dust from the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being. God created the Garden of Eden and made it a living place for Adam. The Garden of Eden was made beautiful with all kind of trees and flowers and rivers to water the water the plant and trees.

The Parameters of God's Sovereignty

- God cannot do anything that would deny His own character. Since God is immutable, His words must reflect His integrity (Numbers 23:19). God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). In all cases, God not only remains truthful, but keeps every oath and promise He makes.
- God cannot be tempted by evil. There is no element in His nature to which evil can make an appeal (James 1:13). While God will often test us, He tempts no one. In fact, God uses His unlimited power to enable us to resist and escape evil (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- God cannot deny or contradict Himself. God remains faithful to His covenant promises (Malachi 3:6). A promise is only as good as the person who makes it. Like God, His Word is immutable (1 Samuel 15:29). God does not revoke what He has given or discard who He has chosen (Romans 11:29).
- God cannot forgive sin without the payment being made. Because God is just, He cannot simply “wipe the slate clean” (Romans 6:23). Christ cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me...” (Matthew 26:39). Christ *had to* endure excruciating physical and spiritual agony, God's perfect justice pronounced on sin.
- God cannot force anyone to love Him or to receive His gift of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. It is an act of man's free will (John 1:11–13).

When an individual chooses to respond in faith, welcoming Jesus into his life, he becomes a new creation.

EVALUATION

1. What day did God create man?
2. Narrate the creation story
3. What is the Moral of this Lesson?

Week 3&4

Topic: GOD THE CONTROLLER OF THE UNIVERSE

INTRODUCTION: GOD THE CONTROLLER OF THE UNIVERSE

The Lord directed Jeremiah to a potter's house where the potter was manipulating clay to form pot, then the Lord said to Jeremiah: "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does? Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel." This verse tells us that God can do to us whatever He deems fit, just as the clay cannot question and dictate to the potter so does man, we cannot dictate for God. We are clay in His hands.

God is the creator and controller of the universe and all that is in it, whether animate or inanimate. Any use or disposition He chooses to make of any part of His creation is His sovereign right. God is accountable only to Himself. He reports to nobody. He is not required at any time to give to any person any explanation for anything He says or does. He is the superpower above all powers in every area of His creation.

Also God reminds us of His controlling power in Psalm 127:1-3 where He says:

*"Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.*

*Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.*

*² In vain you rise early
and stay up late,
toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to those he loves.*

*³ Children are a heritage from the Lord,
offspring a reward from him.*

By this He is telling us that we can do nothing without Him. You can't achieve anything if God's grace is not on your side. No matter the level of your

intelligence you can't achieve anything without God. He controls all that we have and want.

During creation God said: *"Let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earthly and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."* This reveals the importance God attached to man at the time of creation. Man was created to have absolute control over all the creatures and he is therefore accountable to the God his creator. God therefore, owns and controls the universe. Though He created man in His image and likeness and gave him authority, He doesn't share equality with man in any way.

God gave man trees, flowers and animals as food; therefore, man depends on God for his sustenance and existence. God gave man authority to subdue and control the other creatures; but God controls man. Therefore, God controls the universe.

Ways in which God controls the Universe

A. God controls Nature

1. All natural forces are in His control (Psalms 29:3-10).
2. The elements are at His command (Psalms 68:9; Jonah 1:4).
3. All the processes of nature are at His direction (Genesis 8:22; Psalms 107:33-34, Psalms 107:38; Jeremiah 31:35).

B. God controls all Creatures.

1. His care, for example, extends to the smallest of His creatures: He gives the beasts their food (Psalms 147:9).
2. Not a single sparrow falls to the ground apart from His will (Matthew 10:29).
3. He can appoint all His creatures to perform His will (Jonah 1:17; 2:10): even for ravens to convey bread and meat to His servants (1 Kings 17:6).

C. God controls all Circumstances and Situations

1. God, not chance, decides what happens in human affairs (Proverbs 16:33; compared with Jonah 1:7).
2. Behind every circumstance is the Lord (Amos 3:6).
3. He can shorten life or lengthen it (Job 1:21; Psalms 102:23).
4. The Lord brings both prosperity and disaster (Isaiah 45:7); success and victory in battle (1 Samuel 11:13) and the ability to get wealth are from Him (Deuteronomy 8:18), as too is the power to bring illness or to remove it (Deuteronomy 7:15).
5. Ordinary daily needs are within His concern and control (Matthew 6:30, Matthew 6:33).
6. The will of God may be worked out in what appears to be a complete accident (1 Kings 22:28, 1 Kings 22:34).

D. God controls Human Beings and Evil Individuals

1. There are occasions when God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has put up with evil individuals due for destruction. His purpose has been to make known the riches of His glory to those whom He has purposed to save (Romans 9:22-23).
2. Sometimes God sees to it that the worst of people are allowed to be exalted so that they may fulfill His purposes without their knowing it (Isaiah 10:5, Isaiah 10:7).
3. He uses even the enemies of His people to discipline them in their disobedience (Judges 2:14-15, Judges 2:21-23; Judges 2:3:12).
4. On the other hand, He can harden the hearts of His people's enemies (Pharaoh and Egyptians) so that they fall into His people's hands or even destroy themselves (Joshua 11:20; Judges 7:22).

EVALUATION

How is God the controller of man

Week 5

Topic: MOSES AS A LEADER

Content:

- 1. The Birth and Call of Moses**
- 2. Principles Moses exhibited as a Leader**
- 3. Some Leadership characteristics in Moses**

The Birth and Call of Moses

After the death of Joseph, a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph rose. He was afraid of the increasing population of the Israelites in Egypt. He started using Israelites as slaves- torturing them daily. He instructed the midwives to kill every new son born of Israelites, the midwives were reluctant in doing that. He commanded his people that every son born of the Israelites should be cast into the River Nile.

Moses was born at this critical period from the tribe of Levi. When Moses was born his mother tried to hide for three months, but when she could no longer hide him she made a waterproof basket and put Moses in it and place it on the reeds of the bank of the river. As the basket was floating on the river the daughter of Pharaoh who had come to bathe in the river saw it and picked the child and adopted him. She needed someone to care for the child, she unknowingly chose Moses mother (she didn't know that was Moses' mother). She named the child Moses because she said "I drew him out of water."

Moses got an education of a prince and grew in the palace of Pharaoh, but he was still conscious of the fact that he was an Hebrew. He hated the way his people were treated. This made Moses to kill an Egyptian and fled to Midian where he was taking care of the flock of his father-in-law. One day as he was taking care of the flock, God called him through a burning bush with flame that didn't consume

the grasses. As he drew nearer to see the wonders of fire that didn't burn the grasses God spoke to him: "Moses, Moses! Do not come near; pull off your shoe...." Exo 3:4-5.

Moses gave a lot of excuses why he might not be able to lead the Israelites but God assured him that He would be with him.

Following the example Moses set as a leader by emulating the character traits he developed and exhibited can help each member of your family become a better disciple of Christ.

Some Leadership characteristics in Moses

1. **Humility** – When the Lord first called to Moses from the burning bush, "Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." (Exodus 3:6 KJV) In other words, he was humble and recognized he was in a presence greater than his own. Great leaders in the gospel also recognize that they are servants to the Lord as well
2. **Delegation** – Moses also had to learn to delegate. A great leader cannot do all the work himself and must learn to ask the help of others who are faithful.
3. **Obedience** – God gave Moses several instructions and he obeyed them all.
4. **Persistence in the face of adversity** – Moses never falters from going before Pharaoh and demanding the Israelites be set free. Each time Pharaoh says no or reneges on his promise to let the people go, Moses continues in his mission. He does not go back to God and say, this is too hard. It is never going to happen.
5. **Foresight** – Heb 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Moses saw the big picture not just the problems at hand. He saw God's big picture. Too many get caught up in the little picture...man's picture. God's big picture is bigger than man's picture, no matter how good

man's picture is. Christ's riches are greater than Pharaoh's riches even if the path to Christ's riches leads us through suffering. It's still worth it to follow Christ.

6. Moses was a Man of Faith

7. A man of Integrity

Principles Moses exhibited as a Leader

1. Exodus 2:11-13 – Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. “Why are you beating up your friend?” Moses said to the one who had started the fight. (All Scripture quotations from the New Living Translation)

Observation: Moses saw what was happening to his fellow Hebrews, and he knew that it was not right. Thinking no, one was watching, he took matters into his own hands by killing the Egyptian. **Principle:**

When a leader does something morally wrong, that action can prevent him from having effective leadership. When a leader's actions do not match what he says, people will not follow his direction or vision.

2. **Exodus 3:11** – But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

Observation: Moses saw himself as someone not worthy of the task of leading the people out of Egypt. He did not see himself as worthy to appear before Pharaoh or to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. **Principle:**

In His sovereignty, God chose who He liked for leadership. Even if that leader does not seem capable of the task, God can still choose that leader.

3. **Exodus 3:1-2** – One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and

came to Sinai, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up.

Observation: God approached Moses in a foreign land while he was doing the normal work of tending the flock of his father-in-law's sheep. In that ordinary situation, God approached Moses. *Principle:*

God can approach His future leader wherever he is no matter what is doing but he has to be busy doing something

4. **Exodus 6:1-2** – “But Lord!” Moses objected. “My own people won't listen to me anymore. How can I expect Pharaoh to listen? I'm such a clumsy speaker!”

Observation: Moses was honest to confess what he perceived to be a weakness but also believed his weakness was stronger than God's ability to overcome it. *Principle:*

It is okay for a leader to share his unbelief in his own abilities. It is a sign that he is reliant and dependent on God, not himself. However, a leader must believe in God more than his own lack of ability.

5. **Exodus 14:13-15** – But Moses told the people, “Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The Lord himself will fight for you. Just stay calm.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! *Observation:* Moses showed faith that God would save him and the Israelites. However, God told Moses to get the people moving. Faith in God was not enough; the people had to act on that faith. *Principle:*

A strong faith in God and His power to save His people is a good quality to have in a leader. However, the leader also needs to play an active role in God's plan.

6. **Exodus 18:24** – Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions.

Observation: After listening to Jethro's advice Moses immediately puts that advice into action. *Principle:*

A leader must be teachable. This means that he is willing to learn new ways of doing things and that he follows through on what he learns.

7. **Deuteronomy 4:1-6** – And now, Israel, listen carefully to these decrees and regulations that I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you may live, so you may enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to or subtract from these commands I am giving you. Just obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you. “You saw for yourself what the Lord did to you at Baal-peor. There the Lord your God destroyed everyone who had worshiped Baal, the god of Pero. . . “Look, I now teach you these decrees and regulations just as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy. Obey them completely, and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will exclaim, ‘How wise and prudent are the people of this great nation!’

Observation: Moses strongly encouraged the people to obey and be obedient to God’s laws and God’s desire for how they should live. *Principle:*

A leader must urge people to live obediently and faithfully to God. Emphasis must be placed on living correctly in God’s eyes.

8. **Deuteronomy 31:9** – So Moses wrote this entire body of instruction in a book and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant, and to the elders of Israel

Observation: Moses wanted the Israelites to be obedient to the law so he wrote the instructions in a book and gave it to the Israelites. *Principle:*

A leader must take steps to ensure that his people are faithful and obedient to God’s teaching. This means the leader should put the teaching in to various forms so the people can retrieve it when needed (video, audio, written, etc.).

EVALUATION

1. How did God call Moses?
2. Why did Moses run from Egypt?

3. Who picked the baby Moses on the river?
4. Who took care of Moses after he was picked?

Week 6

Topic: The Leading of the Israelites by Moses

Introduction

Moses was reluctant to lead the Israelites out of Egypt because he thought that they would not believe that God actually appeared and sent him. He complained that he was not eloquent and God gave him Aaron to assist him. The Lord afflicted the Egyptians with a lot of plagues before Pharaoh reluctantly allowed the Israelites to go. As soon as he let them go he pursued them again because God had hardened his heart. Exo 14:14.

As the Israelites were leaving and Egyptians pursuing them there was big sea in front of them and Egyptians behind them. They cried to Moses for help, Moses cried to God who instructed him to strike his rod on the water. As he did that the sea divided and the Israelites crossed on dry land. As they finished passing God instructed him to strike it again to close the sea, then the Egyptian army were already half way on the dry land, the water closed and consumed the entire Egyptian army. By this God had fulfilled the covenant He made with their father Abraham.

When Moses went to the mountain the people cajoled Aaron to make a golden calf image for them to worship as God. God was angry and decided to wipe them out except Moses, but Moses interceded on their behalf and God forgave them.

The Israelites rebelled against God the second time when twelve spies sent out by Moses to spy the Promised Land came back. Ten out of the twelve spies brought negative reports that the Israelites were like grasshoppers before the occupants of the land. Only Caleb and Joshua brought encouraging news. God was angry, but Moses interceded again and God forgave them.

Moses Qualities as a Leader

1. Moses was a very patriotic nationalist that rendered selfless services to his people.
2. He was humble and never arrogant to people
3. He was courageous in facing challenges from Pharaoh
4. He was very obedient and had strong faith in God
5. Moses was never discouraged despite all the challenges and problems he encountered.
6. Moses was empathetic and always put the salvation of his people first before his personal comfort. You can't be a leader if you don't put your people first. Moses put his people's comfort and wellbeing first before his own.

Difficulty in Leading Stubborn People

It is difficult leading stubborn people especially those who are difficult to be pleased or satisfied. This was shown by the action of the Israelites. Because of murmuring the journey, they would have completed in 40 days took 40 years.

Their stubbornness did not make Moses stop leading them; he still loved them and interceded for them.

Moses' Complaint to the Lord (Numbers 11:11-15)

Now Moses brings the problems to the Lord in a kind of petulant way.

"¹¹ He asked the LORD, 'Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put **the burden of all these people** on me? ¹² Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? **Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant**, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? ¹³ **Where can I get meat** for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!'¹⁴ I cannot carry all these people by myself; **the burden is too heavy for me.** ¹⁵ If this is how you are going to treat me,

put me to death right now — if I have found favor in your eyes — and **do not let me face my own ruin.**” (Numbers 11:11-15)

This is not one of Moses’ greatest leadership moments. He blames God for the problems. They’re *your* problem, he tells God. Why do I have to deal with *your* problem people? At the root of Moses’ misery, however, are two elements:

1. The burden of leadership is too heavy for him.
2. He knows he is inadequate to supply what the people are demanding.

Moses is at his wits end. Unless God backs him up, he can’t “face [his] own ruin.” God answers Moses in two ways:

1. God puts some of his Spirit on 70 of Israel’s elders (which we examined in Lesson 4, Numbers 11:24-30)
2. God promises abundant meat (Numbers 11:31-34)

God’s promise of a month’s supply of meat is so huge even Moses can’t believe it. (Numbers 11:21-22). Moses’ vision of God is too small! Then God rebukes Moses and tells him to tell the people what he said, even if he can’t envision it!

“The LORD answered Moses, **‘Is the LORD’s arm too short?** You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you.’ So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said.” (Numbers 11:23-24a)

Moral of the Lesson: Life is always full of challenges. Just when we think that everything is going smoothly and according to God’s plan, we are faced with a challenge, something that causes us to feel inadequate once again, something that causes us to seek His direction and strength. It didn’t take very long for God to give Moses and the sons of Israel some challenges that would stretch their faith and patience.

EVALUATION

1. Why was God angry with Israelites after Moses returned from the mountain?
2. Mention five qualities of Moses

The Grumbling of Israel

God had delivered them. They were free from bondage and ready for a new life in a new land. They were praising God and singing songs to Him...until there was a slight problem. There was no water to drink. Instead of continuing to praise God, they began to grumble. Today's lesson is short but packed with truth that needs to be applied to our lives. Ask God to speak to your heart as you go to His Word.

Looking To God's Word

Exodus 15:22-27

1. How would bringing the sons of Israel to a place with no drinking water be a form of testing?
2. What was God trying to communicate to them in 15:26?

Deuteronomy 8:2

3. What was the purpose of God's testing of Israel?

This section of Exodus is the description of the travels of the people from the Red (Reed) Sea to Mount Sinai, which was a three-month journey (19:1). The rest of Exodus describes God's dealings with the Israelites during their encampment at Mount Sinai.

Looking Upward

4. How would you define grumbling?
5. What makes someone grumble? What is the root issue?
6. What is your typical response to adversity? Would people describe you as someone who grumbles?

Week 7

Topic: Joshua as a Leader

Introduction

As Moses was growing old he prayed to God to appoint a leader to replace him so that Israel would not be without a leader. The Lord instantly instructed Moses to take Joshua, the son of Nun. Moses did exactly as the Lord had commanded and Joshua took over the mantle of leadership.

The Role of Joshua in the Story of the Twelve Spies

Moses selected twelve spies to spy the land of Canaan, Joshua was one of them. When the spies came back they brought a negative report, whereas Joshua and Caleb were the only spies that brought positive report. Joshua warned them not to rebel against God and went further to encourage them that the Canaanites would be like food to them if the Lord was on their side. Joshua had faith in God, he trusted God's promise and ability.

Lessons for the Church Leaders

1. Many of the church leaders today fear certain people in the church probably because of their wealth, but Joshua did not fear the people, he was plain.
2. The church leaders of today should fear God and trust Him.
3. The church leaders should never doubt God. They should follow the good examples of Joshua.

Joshua Takes Over the Leadership of Israel

Shortly after the death of Moses the Lord called Joshua and assured him of victory. He further advised Joshua on the way he should work to achieve success.

The Conquest of Jericho: God gave Joshua the master plan for the capture of Jericho which was strictly adhered to by him. The Lord told him to lead the Israelite to march round Jericho for six days, and on the seventh day the priests should blow the trumpet. As soon as the people heard the sound, with song and shout the wall of Jericho fell down flat. The people went straight to the city and possessed it. Rahab, the harlot who spared the two spies, together with her household were not destroyed. Also, precious stones like gold, silver and the vessels of bronze were kept in the Lord's sanctuary.

Lessons from the Conquest of Jericho

1. With God nothing is impossible
2. Obedience- Joshua obeyed God without question
3. God uses people to rescue people, no matter their condition. God does not come down from heaven to help or rescue anybody, but He does that through someone.
4. Joshua had faith in God.

Joshua Rededicated the Israelites to Serve God

When Joshua was about to die he rededicated the Israelites to the service of God.

Why Joshua Succeeded as a Leader

1. He was courageous and had strong faith in God

2. He followed the instruction of God
3. He was prepared and he followed the footsteps of his predecessor, Moses.

Lessons to Learn

1. Christians are expected to work in faith not by sight
2. Joshua trusted God and followed His instructions
3. Every good deed has a reward. The family of Rahab who was a harlot was spared because she saved the lives of two spies who came to spy on Canaan.

Leadership Qualities in Joshua

i. A MAN OF HUMILITY

A. BEFORE HE WAS A LEADER, HE WAS WILLING TO SERVE...

1. For forty years he served under Moses in the Wilderness
2. He was known as "Moses' assistant", "his servant" - **Exo 24:13; 33:11**

-- Great leaders are people who have no problem with serving others if that is their lot in life; indeed, it helps prepare to them to lead

B. EVEN AS A LEADER, HE WAS WILLING TO SERVE...

1. Though having been magnified by the Lord himself - **Josh 3:7; 4:14**
2. He was still willing to serve One greater than himself - **Josh 5:13-15**

-- Great leaders do not let praise go to their head; they are humble enough to know when it is time to serve once again [Joshua's humility is also demonstrated as we consider another quality that we find in him...]

ii. A MAN OF FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD

A. AS DEMONSTRATED WHEN SENT TO SPY OUT THE LAND...

1. Ten of the twelve spies demonstrated their lack of faith in God by their report - **Num 13:25-28**
2. But despite the "peer pressure" he must have felt, Joshua (along with Caleb) demonstrated his faith in God by his report - cf. **Nu 14:6-9**

B. AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE FALL OF JERICHO...

1. The Lord gave him the instructions to take the city - **Josh 6:1-5**
2. Only full trust and faith in the Lord could have led Joshua to follow such instructions, but he did! - cf. **He 11:30**

[Great leaders realize they cannot place their faith in men (including themselves); they must look to God!]

Closely related to this is another quality of Joshua that made him a great leader: he was...]

iii.. A MAN OF GOD'S WORD

A. HIS SUCCESS WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO HIS ADHERENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

1. To ensure success, he had to fulfill all the Law as given by
Moses - **Josh 1:7**
2. To ensure that he did, he was to meditate upon the Law day and
night - **Josh 1:8**

B. TIME AND AGAIN, WE SEE THAT JOSHUA WAS TRUE TO THE WORD...

1. In reminding the two and half tribes of their responsibility
- **Josh 1:12-15**
2. In renewing the covenant at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim -
Josh 8:30-35
3. A summary of Joshua's devotion is found in **Josh 11:15**
4. Even at the end of his life, he encouraged the nation to heed
God's Word - **Josh 23:6,14-16**

[Faith comes from the Word of God (**Ro 10:17**), so we really can't expect one to be a man of faith without being a man of God's Word.]

For those who would lead, they need to heed the charge God gave Joshua (**Josh 1:8**), which is similar to the charge Paul gave Timothy (**1 Tim 4:13-16**).

Closely related to being a man of faith and trust is being...]

vii. A MAN OF PRAYER

A. WE SEE HIM PRAYING FOR HIS PEOPLE'S FAILURES...

1. Following the defeat at Ai - **Josh 7:6-9**
2. In which he and the elders pleaded with God in behalf of Israel

B. WE SEE HIM PRAYING IN THE MIDST OF WARFARE...

1. As Israel is routing the kings of the south - **Josh 10:9-14**
2. Trusting not in their own strength, he looks to the Lord for help, Who causes the sun and moon to stand still

vii A MAN WHO PUT GOD FIRST

A. BEFORE THE BUSINESS AT HAND...

1. Even in the middle of a military campaign - **Josh 8:30-35**; cf. **Deut 27-28**
2. Though it gave their enemies time to join together in opposition (**Josh 9:1-2**), Joshua still put God first and kept His commandment concerning the blessings and cursings

B. BEFORE OTHERS...

1. He cared not what others might do or think, he would serve the Lord! - **Josh 24:14-15**
2. His strong stand influenced others for good - **Josh 24:16**

EVALUATION

1. Describe how Jericho was destroyed and highlight the importance of praise.
2. Why did Joshua succeed as a leader?

Week 8&9

Topic: Deborah as a Leader

Introduction

For years after the death of Joshua the Israelites were ruled by Judges; they had no king. These judges, in most cases, were either prophets or prophetess and God often raised them particularly when there was problem in Israel. After the death of Ehud, Deborah took over as one of the judges in Israel. She was the wife of Lippadoth and a prophetess. According to the Bible, she used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim where the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Deborah was a judge and a prophetess. The only other person who was a combination prophet/judge was Samuel. And Deborah was a singer and songwriter—she had an impressive resume.

At the time of Deborah, Israel was under the oppression of Jabin, king of Canaan, Israel consulted Deborah for solution over this problem. Deborah invited Barak, a warrior in Israel and informed him that he was the one God was going to use to liberate Israel from the oppression of Jabin. Barak requested that Deborah should go with him, Deborah being a courageous woman accepted and accompanied Barak to the battle and Israel brought the Canaan army under the command of Sisera (Jabin's commander) to complete humiliation. Sisera ran to a woman, Jael for protection but the woman eventually killed him and Israel was liberated from the hand of Canaanites.

Deborah's Leadership – What to Learn

Deborah led when times were difficult.

Deborah rose to leadership at a dark time in Israel's history. Israel was in decline. It had fallen away from God, and was in need of a deliverer.

Judges 4:1-3 declares, “The Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the Lord ... they cried to the Lord for help.” Deborah says in Judges 5:7, “Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.”

Deborah arose when Israel needed new leadership to stop its fall. She did what great leaders do and that is to grow strong and step forward when times are difficult.

Deborah spoke with authority.

Leaders are subject matter experts within their sphere of influence. They add value, bring solutions, and speak with authority.

Judges 4:4 says Deborah was “a prophetess ... leading Israel at the time.” The nation of Israel respected Deborah as someone who spoke with authority concerning the things of God.

While you may not be a national leader like Deborah, you can learn to speak with authority within your own career specialty. Establish credibility by excelling at your job and helping others do the same with theirs. Earning the respect of your co-workers is the first step toward becoming their leader.

Deborah’s followers affirmed her leadership.

Leaders are magnets, not bulldozers, and Deborah was a magnet.

Judges 4:5 says, “She held court under the Palm of Deborah ... and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided.” Deborah made good use of all the gifts and opportunities God sent her way.

There is no hint in the Judges 4-5 passage of Deborah being a self-promoter. She magnified God and served his people. Deborah’s followers were better off for having spent time with her. People are attracted to the Deborah’s of the world.

Deborah didn’t have to fight her way up the organizational ladder. She was summoned by God and affirmed by her followers.

Deborah led by example.

Deborah, Israel's leader, called Barak, Israel's military commander, and instructed him to attack the army of Jabin, the king of Canaan who was oppressing Israel. Barak agreed to go and fight Jabin's army, but with one condition.

Judges 4:8 declares, "Barak said to her, 'If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go.'" She replies in Judges 4:9, "Very well," Deborah said, 'I will go with you."

Deborah led by example. She was not a warrior or battle commander and could have easily said she would be of better use by remaining behind, but she did not do that. She faced reality and exposed herself to the full consequences of her decision.

Under Deborah's leadership, Israel's enemy was defeated, the oppression was lifted, and Israel returned to the God of Abraham. Her story concludes in Judges 5:31 with these final words, "Then the land had peace forty years."

Deborah used her abilities to serve. She showed no selfishness in the use of her God-given abilities to judge Israel or to prophecy. Rather, she focused on helping the people of Israel improve their lives, honor God, and find freedom from their oppressors.

Deborah offers a bold and powerful role model for women today. Deborah had courage to face the enemy, even after 20 years of oppression. Her courage was contagious, and Barak was able to fulfill his God-given duty with Deborah's support. Her courage became encouragement.

Though the Bible's record of Deborah's life is brief, her impact was great. Her leadership and obedience to God's Word resulted in a changed nation for an entire generation. Those who study her life will find a role model of godly faith, boldness, wisdom, and worship.

Leadership Qualities of Deborah

1. Israel was under the oppression of Jabin king of Canaan for twenty years before God raised Deborah as judge over Israel. Through her God

instructed God to fight Sisera, Deborah being a courageous woman accompanied Barak to the battle field and Israel defeated Sisera and his soldiers. Israel was liberated from the oppression of Jabin.

2. For Deborah to be a judge in Israel that had no regard for women and for her judgment to be respected in such society was an evidence of her leadership qualities.
3. She was a successful leader because through her, the immediate problem of Israel which was oppression by king Jabin of Canaan was solved.

Ways Women Can Contribute to National Development

1. Women take part in politics and formation of government policies
2. Women contribute to government various programmes- both rural and urban women. For example rural women, better life programme etc.
3. Women take part in business and economic development
4. Enlightened women demonstrate equal abilities with men in education, law, politics etc.

Lessons to Learn

1. Deborah's achievements as a leader is a pointer that gender difference is not a limitation to leadership
2. Honesty, integrity and uprightness are qualities which a leader must demonstrate in order to succeed
3. God can use anybody to work- whether boy or girl.

Students are expected to study the book of Judges 3 and 4.

Test and Exercise

1. At the time Deborah became a judge in Israel, she was a
 - a. Seer.
 - b. Prophetess.
 - c. Priestess.
 - d. Medium.
2. The Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. This statement was made by Deborah to
 - a. Lappidoth.
 - b. Jael.
 - c. Barak.
 - d. Heber.
3. Which of the following does not portray the quality of leadership in the life of Deborah?
 - a. Ability to inspire others.
 - b. Her marriage to Lappidoth.
 - c. Her sound judgment of cases.
 - d. Her faith in God.
4. The Israelites under Barak defeated the Canaanite troop led by
 - a. Jael.
 - b. Heber.
 - c. Sisera.
 - d. Abinoam.
5. Deborah instructed Barak to engage the forces of Jabin in a battle at
 - a. River Kishon
 - b. Mount Gerizim.
 - c. Mount horeb.
 - d. River Tigris
6. "The Lord will sell Sisera into hands of a woman." This statement was directed to
 - a. Lappidoth
 - b. Barak.

- c. Jael.
 - d. Jabin.
7. Barak refused to be the Commander of the forces of Israel because
- a. Deborah's achievement indicates that
 - b. Women can be relied upon
 - c. Women possess admirable qualities
 - d. Good leadership is not the sole preserve of men
8. Jael was the wife of
- a. Barak
 - b. Abinoam
 - c. Heber
 - d. Zebulun
9. Which of the following women killed Sisera?
- a. Deborah.
 - b. Jael.
 - c. Rahab.
 - d. Zebulun.
10. Deborah's prophesy that Canaan would be defeated by Israel but the glory would go to a woman was fulfilled when
- a. Joshua's army spared Rahab.
 - b. Jael killed Sisera.
 - c. The Canaanite army became weak.
 - d. Jabin surrounded to a woman.
11. Which of the following is not true of Deborah? She
- a. was a prophetess.
 - b. killed Jabin.
 - c. was a judge.
 - d. helped Barak.
12. The system of government in Israel during the period of judges was
- a. democracy
 - b. monarchy

- c. oligarchy
- d. theocracy

13. How did Barak react when he was asked to lead Israelites against the Canaanites?

- a. He summoned courage and attacked Sisera.
- b. He made inquiries from the oracle.
- c. He summoned the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun
- d. he requested Deborah to accompany him.

Week 10

Topic: God's Care for his People II

God's Provision (Exodus 16)

When the Israelites left Elim where there was spring of water and palm trees, they came to the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. They had no food for days. This made the whole congregation to murmur against Moses and Aaron. As the saying goes, a hungry man is an angry man. God heard their murmuring and provided food (Manna) for them throughout their stay in the wilderness.

The Nature of God as Revealed in the Episode of the Gift of Manna and Quails.

1. It shows even when do not ask He always provides for our needs.
2. It signifies that God does not lead people halfway and abandon them, He finishes what he starts.
3. It shows that our God is a caring God

Lessons to Learn

1. God can cater for people's needs beyond their imagination. In Jeremiah 33, the Lord says: "Call upon me and I will answer you." The Israelites had no food and God provided for them the type of food they had never seen.
2. The mercy of God endures forever
3. God at times allow people to lack in order to prove Himself God of all sufficiency.

EVALUATION

1. Describe the circumstances that led to the gift of manna.

Week 11

Topic: God's Care for his People II

(Guidance and Protection) Exodus 14

As soon as the Israelites left the land of Egypt, pharaoh regretted allowing them to go, God decided to harden his heart in order to get glory over him (Exo 14:4). Pharaoh said "what is this we have done that let Israel go from serving us". Pharaoh quickly organized his soldiers and they pursued the Israelites. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians they were greatly afraid they cried to the Lord and blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord said to him "fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord...." Exodus 14: 13-15. The Lord instructed him to stretch the rod over the sea and divide it. The angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, the pillar of cloud that moved before them now stood behind them and stood between the camp of Israel and the camp of Egypt. The pillar of cloud provided light for the camp of Israel in the night.

As Moses struck the sea with his rod as the Lord instructed the sea divided and the Israelites walked on dry land, when they finished crossing he struck the sea again and the sea closed back, by this time the Egyptian army and Pharaoh were half way in the dry land. Pharaoh and his entire army perished on the sea.

God's Protective Device

1. God guided the Israelites as they went forth by the pillar of cloud. When the Egyptian army pursued them, He further guided them by causing the angel and the pillar of cloud to move behind and stand between the host of Israelites and Egyptians.
2. He created cloud and darkness to block the view of the Egyptians.

The Significance of Israel's Escape from Egypt

1. The people of Israel saw this as a miracle of deliverance from God
2. The miracle occupied prominent place in the development of their national religion.
3. They became a people in covenant with God
4. God defended his people
5. After their departure they became united and formed a nation.

Lessons to Learn

1. Moses cried unto God and God answered and gave His protection. In the same way Christians should also be prayerful and obedient to God's instruction
2. The Egyptians were punished because they were wicked and disobedient to God's instructions.
3. In Proverb 18:10, the Bible says: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run to it and are safe." This, therefore, follows that the protection of the Lord is available to all who serve the Lord in truth and in spirit.
4. Israel was saved from the hand of the Egyptians by the special grace of God. Likewise, over the years Nigeria has passed a lot of socio-political and economic problems but God saved us from destruction.

EVALUATION

1. Using the story of delivering Israel from bondage highlight the importance of prayer.

SECOND TERM NOTES ON C.R.K

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- WEEK 6 TOPIC: CONSEQUENCES OF SAUL’S DISOBEDIENCE
- WEEK 7 TOPIC: DAVID’S SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD (I Sam 26:1- 25; II Sam 12:15-25)
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- WEEK 10 TOPIC: MAKING GODLY DECISIONS (I Kings 3:3-28; 4:21-34)
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Week 1

Topic: God's Care for his People I

(Guidance and Protection) Exodus 14

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Lessons to Learn

1. Moses cried unto God and God answered and gave His protection. In the same way Christians should also be prayerful and obedient to God's instruction
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4. Israel was saved from the hand of the Egyptians by the special grace of God. Likewise, over the years Nigeria has passed a lot of socio-political and economic problems but God saved us from destruction.

EVALUATION

1. Using the story of delivering Israel from bondage highlight the importance of prayer.

Week 2

Topic: Parental Responsibility – King Asa

Bible reference – I Kings 15:9-15

The Good Example of Asa (I Kings 15:9-15; 22:41-44)

Asa reigned as king for forty-one years in Judah. He took over from his father Abijam. Abijam was described as one of the worst kings of Israel. Fortunately, his son Asa and his descendant Jehoshaphat did not walk in his ways, both did what was pleasing in the sight of God.

Asa's Achievement

1. Asa stamped out male cult and prostitution from the land
2. He destroyed all the idols that his father had made
3. He removed Maacah his mother from being the queen because she had an abominable image made for Asherah
4. He cut down Asherah's image and burnt it
5. He abolished idolatry
6. His heart was wholly true to God in his days
7. He rid the temple of Canaanite practices and wet objects.

Good Leadership of Asa's Son – King Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22:41-44)

Jehoshaphat succeeded his father, king Asa. He was thirty-five years when he began to reign. He walked in the ways of his father Asa, doing what was right in the sight of God, above all he made peace with the king of Israel. (1 kings 22:43)

Asa was full of faith, piety, zeal and courage. This made him to perform the reformation of manners, suppression of idolatry and male cult prostitution.

Jehoshaphat employed capable commissioner to help carry out these reforms.

The Role of Parents Compared

King Asa and his son, Jehoshaphat pleased the Lord by what was right in His sight. Although, Asa's father was bad but he did not follow his father's footsteps; rather he carried a lot of reforms which pleased the Lord. Jehoshaphat, his direct son emulated his good ways unlike the sons of Samuel and Eli who departed from the good examples of their fathers and decided to do evil.

Eli, Samuel and Asa compared

1. Eli's and Samuel's children did not follow their father's examples, Jehoshaphat (Asa's son) did.
2. Eli could not bring up his sons in the fear of God, Asa did
3. Eli's and Samuel Son's were worthless and corrupt while Asa's son was pious and worthy.
4. Israel rejected Samuel's Sons as rulers, Israel accepted Asa as their King
5. Eli's sons grew up in an environment of immorality, Asa brought up Jehoshaphat in an environment of piety

Lessons to Learn

1. Leaders should learn to follow the path of the Lord at all times so that the Lord would direct them on what is good
2. Even if the parents are bad and do not follow the way of God the children should strive to be different and do what is right. Dare to be different!
3. Children should depart from the evils ways of their parents.
4. You can choose to do what is right.

EVALUATION

1. What is the difference between Asa and Eli in carrying out their parental responsibility?

WEEK 3

TOPIC: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Samuel and Eli

Eli was a priest in Israel and he did not train his two sons well. By the time he was of age, his two sons took over the priestly duties from him. These sons, Hophni and Phinehas, unfortunately did not walk in the way of their father. The Bible described them as worthless men who showed no regards for the Lord because they treated the offerings of the Lord with contempt.

Back then, the custom with offerings was that whenever people made sacrifices, the priest's servant would come with *a three pronged fork* and dip it into the pan or pot while the meat was boiling. And whatever the fork brings out the priest would take for himself. But the sons of Eli did not respect this rule. Rather they preferred taking this meat raw and if the person offering the sacrifice refused they would take it by force. Apart from this, they also had sexual intercourse with the women who served at the entrance to the tent. And then they blasphemed against God. These acts were great sins in the sight of God. And he was very displeased with the sons of Eli.

God's Warning and the Failure of Eli

In reaction to the sins of the sons of Eli, God sent a man of God to warn him of the sins of his sons. God said He would slay Eli's two sons and remove the priesthood from his lineage forever. Meanwhile, Eli did his little best as an old man to caution his children, but then it was too late because he did not start early enough to impart good values in them. Moreover, God was determined to destroy them. So in confirmation of the warning made by the man of God, God revealed himself to a little boy Samuel who served the Lord in the house of Eli.

God's Punishment

God who had warned Eli before and vowed to destroy his children fulfilled it when there was a war between Israel and Philistines. In the battle, the Israelites were defeated and Hophni and Phinehas were killed with the Ark of God captured. When the news got to Eli he fell off his seat, broke his neck and died. Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas who was pregnant delivered prematurely and died. But before she died she named the child ***Ichabod***, the meaning of which was that the glory of God has departed from Israel.

The Lessons that can be Derived from the Action of Eli

1. Parents should take time to teach their children the word of God
2. There is need to pray together. The use of family altar should be of paramount importance
3. Parents should inculcate in their children the spirit of fear of God in all they do
4. There is need to heed the warnings of men of God
5. The consequences of immoral relationship between men and women should be pointed out to children
6. Disobedience to the commandments of God bring adverse consequences

EVALUATION

1. Why was God angry with Eli?
2. What was the punishment of Hophni and Phinehas?

WEEK 4

TOPIC: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Asa's Example (I Kings 15:9-15; 22:41-44)

Asa reigned as king for forty-one years in Judah after taking over from his father Abijam. Abijam was one of the worst kings of Israel. Fortunately, his son Asa and his descendant Jehoshaphat did not walk in his ways, both did things that were pleasing in the sight of God. Below are some of Asa's achievements-

1. Asa stamped out male cult and prostitution from the land
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The Role of Parents Compared

King Asa and his son Jehoshaphat pleased the Lord by doing what was right in His sight. Although, Asa's father was bad, he [Asa] did not follow in his father's footsteps. Instead, he carried out a lot of reforms which pleased the Lord. Jehoshaphat, Asa's direct son emulated his good ways unlike the sons of other notable men of God (specifically Eli's) who departed from the good examples of their fathers and decided to do evil.

Lessons to Learn

- I. People and leaders should learn to follow the path of the Lord at all times so that the Lord would direct them on what is good
- II. Even if the parents are bad and do not follow the way of God the children should strive to be different and do what is right
- III. Children should depart from the evils of the parents

EVALUATION

- A. What is the difference in the manner with which Asa and Eli carried out their parental responsibilities?

WEEK 5

TOPIC: SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

Soon after the appointment of Saul as the king of Israel, God gave him assignment through Samuel saying- "I will punish what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy everything they have. Do not spare them but kill both male and female, infants and suckling; ox, sheep and camel." Saul did carry out the assignment, but not as instructed by God. He had organized his soldiers, and went after the Amalekites and defeated them. But rather than destroying everything as he was instructed by God, he took the best of the things he saw and destroyed worthless things instead. Above all, he spared Agag the Amalekite king and brought him home. God knew about Saul's disobedience and it angered him greatly. Therefore, God decided to dethrone Saul as king of Israel. He [God] sent Samuel to Saul again, and when Samuel confronted him about his disobedience to God, he lied to Saul, saying that he had carried out the instruction. He did not know that God had revealed everything to Samuel! Samuel then questioned Saul about the "bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen" he heard coming from Saul's barn, to which Saul claimed that it was the people that came to offer sacrifice to the Lord...

Please note that this incident was a typical example of gross indiscipline and lack of repentance. Saul knew he had disobeyed God. But instead of admitting his fault and repenting, he resorted to shifting blames.

Summary of the Circumstances that Led to the Rejection of Saul as King

- 1) Saul was made king over Israel by Samuel and was told to hearken to the words of God.
- 2) The Lord instructed Saul to punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israelites on their way from Egypt.

- 3) Saul actually carried out the assignment but not according to instruction
- 4) He spared the best of things for himself contrary to God's instruction to destroy everything

EVALUATION

- 1. Why did God reject Saul as king?

FURTHER READING: I Samuel 15:1-19

WEEK 6

TOPIC: CONSEQUENCES OF SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

Saul's disobedience cost him the kingdom. Samuel announced God's rejection Saul as king of Israel, saying- "For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and so the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel". I Samuel 15:26.

Consequently, the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an [evil spirit] from the Lord tormented him day and night. Whenever this torment started, he could only be relieved when he listened to music. It was because of this that David came into Saul's inner circles; for he [David] was very skilled in playing the lyre (I Samuel 16:17-23).

Meanwhile, the ultimate [worst] punishment for Saul's disobedience came during a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines at **Mount Gilboa**. Saul and his three sons (**Jonathan, Malchisua and Abinadab**) all died. The Philistines cut off Saul's head, took off his armour and put it in the temple of **Ashtaroh** and fastened his body to the wall of **Bethsham**. When the men of Jabeshilead heard what had happened to Saul and his three sons, they took their bodies, burnt them and buried the remains under the **Tamarisk** and fasted for seven days.

Saul's Major Punishment

1. Saul's disobedience made him to be removed as king of Israel
2. He suffered mental problems and was killed along with his three sons by the Philistines on **Mount Gilboa**.

Lessons to Learn

- i. Christians should be obedient to God's instruction for the reward of being obedient outweighs whatever you stand to gain by being disobedient

- ii. One's favor with God can turn to sorrow once one starts living a life of disobedience and sinful life
- iii. God is omniscient; man cannot do anything in secret without Him knowing
- iv. One man's disobedience can lead to the suffering of the entire nation as seen in Saul's case
- v. God's plan for our life can be distracted through disobedience.

EVALUATION

- 1) Mention five things disobedience can do to us.

WEEK 7

TOPIC: DAVID'S SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD (I Sam 26:1-25; II Sam 12:15-25)

David Spared Saul

The people of Ziph came and revealed to Saul where David was hiding and Saul arose with his army and went in search of David in the wilderness of Ziph. When David noticed that Saul was after him, he went with Abishai to where Saul was fast asleep with Abner (his Commander) and his other men. Abishai requested that David let him to pin Saul to the earth with his sword, but David refused. David and Abishai left with Saul's spear and jar of water instead. No man saw them as all the men in Saul's camp were deeply asleep.

When David had gone for a distance to a vantage position, he called upon Abner and reprimanded him for failing to keep proper watch over his master, Saul. David asked him about Saul's spear and jar of water. Meanwhile, Saul recognised David's voice and called him. David asked why he came out in search of him to kill him without any cause. Saul felt guilty and repented of his sin and promised not to harm David. He appreciated David for saving his life and David returned the spear and jar of water he had taken from Saul's camp. Do note that David spared Saul's life because he feared and respected God, thereby admitting to the will of God. This equally demonstrates David's high sense of forgiveness.

Lessons to Learn

1. God is love: He wants peace and love to reign on earth. Man should therefore show love even to those who hate him. Saul went in search of David to kill him but ironically David had every opportunity to kill Saul but he spared him.
2. David sparing Saul's life made him to repent of his sins. This teaches that when people show love to those who hate them they could be forced by their conscience to drop the hatred like Saul did

3. Sparing Saul's life demonstrated David's faith in God and his submission to the will of God. You should endeavor to emulate this example.

EVALUATION

1. Why is important to show love even to our enemy?
2. Why did David spare Saul's life?

WEEK 8

TOPIC: JONAH SUBMITS TO THE WILL OF GOD (Jonah 1 & 2)

The sins and wickedness of the people of Nineveh had become unbearable and God needed somebody to go and preach to them and tell them about the calamity he would send them if they fail to repent. He sent Jonah to go to Nineveh but he [Jonah] refused. Instead, he set forth to run away from God. He thought God is like a man from whom he could hide. He decided to go to Joppa where he boarded a ship going to Tarshish. On the sea God sent a violent storm that made the sailors to fear for their lives. As the ship was about to sink, they threw away to the sea all the loads on the ship. Each and every one of them was praying to their own different gods. But lo and behold, Jonah who was the only one asleep in the deck in spite of the pandemonium. When he introduced his name

The people then knew that Jonah was running away from God because he told them. So they asked Jonah “what should we do to you to make this ship calm down for us?” Jonah replied “Pick me up and throw me into the sea, and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon us”. The men were reluctant to throw him down the sea because they didn’t want to shed innocent blood. But as the storm became more violent, they took Jonah, prayed to God not to hold them responsible for his death then threw him into the sea. Immediately the storm stopped. The sailors were marveled and offered sacrifice to God and promised to serve him.

Meanwhile, a big fish came and swallowed Jonah. He would then spend three days inside the belly of the fish. While there, he prayed to God to forgive him and God heard his prayers. Consequently, commanded the fish to spit him out on the beach near Nineveh. On the bank of the sea God spoke to Jonah again to go to the people of Nineveh, preaching and warning them of God’s imminent calamity. He obeyed this time and did exactly as instructed. He preached around the city. It took Jonah three days to go round the city. The people of Nineveh believed the message and repented, fasted and prayed and wore sackcloth to show they had

repented. God saw their repentance and had mercy on them and changed His mind from punishing them. However, Jonah was expecting God to punish Nineveh.

EVALUATION

- I. Why was Jonah running away?
- II. Where was he running to?
- III. What was his punishment for disobeying?

WEEK 9

TOPIC: THE THREE HEBREW BOYS ESCAPED DEATH FOR OBEYING GOD

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are names that are very popular among Christians. But do you know the actual circumstances that led to their everlasting fame? Well I am here to briefly remind you just in case you have forgotten. Due to the outstanding qualities in these young men they were appointed officials in the Babylonian kingdom. But then a time came when Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image and commanded all the officials and subjects in the provinces of Babylon to come for the dedication of the image. He ordered that when they hear the sound of the horn pipe, lyre, harp and of all kinds of music, that all the people should fall down and worship the golden image. Everybody else obeyed this injunction except for the three Hebrew boys who vehemently refused to bow down to a man-made god. This made the king mad at them, and so he ordered that the furnace should be heated seven more times so that guards could bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:16-18).

The young men were cast into the fire which the Bible recorded was so hot to the extent that the flame consumed those men who cast the Hebrew boys into the furnace. But instead of being consumed, Shadrach and his brothers were joined by God's spirit and this greatly astonished the king. He then ordered them to come out of the fire and made them stand in the presence of the Prefects, Government Officials, Counselors and other important men in Babylon. They all observed that the fire had no effect on the Hebrew boys. The expression of boldness, courage and faith by these Jews gave king Nebuchadnezzar the true picture of God and his authority as the God of Israel.

The king therefore decreed that any person that would ever speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego should be destroyed with his household. This was the profit of great faith, confidence and courage and obedience to God.

Esther Obeyed Mordecai

Haman the Prime Minister in Persai vowed to destroy the Jews which included Mordecai and Esther the wife of *king Xerxes*. Mordecai then sent a message to Esther edging her to intervene as she would be among those that would be destroyed. Esther then asked all the Jews (including herself) to fast and pray for three days. God intervened and the gallows made for Mordecai destroyed Haman.

Please note that God does not neglect the cries of his people in distress. However, he works miracles through humans, which was why He used Esther who was a queen. Esther was in a better position to intervene because she was a queen, so the people would obey her easily.

EVALUATION

1. Why were they ready to die?
2. Why did God save Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
3. Why did God use Esther?

WEEK 10

TOPIC: MAKING GODLY DECISIONS (I Kings 3:3-28; 4:21-34)

Solomon's Wisdom

The success of any leader is largely dependent on his or her ability to make good decisions. To drive home this point, we shall now look at the story of Solomon and how he was able to make good/Godly decisions as the King of Israel. The Bible says that when he [Solomon] went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to the Lord, God appeared to him in a dream and said to him: "Ask what shall I give you." To this offer Solomon requested "Give to your servant an understanding mind to govern the people that I may discern between good and evil." Solomon's request pleased the Lord for he did not ask for wealth and vain things for his personal gains only, God gave him the wisdom, and added wealth and honor to it.

Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth excelled the Wisdom of all the other surrounding Nations

In terms of wealth, Solomon is said to be one of the wealthiest kings there ever were. The Bible recorded that he reigned over all the kingdoms; his kingdom extended from the Euphrates River in the north to Egypt in the south. Solomon made arrangement with Hiran of Tyre to supply cedar and cypress timbers with which to build the temple of God. His wisdom also attracted many nations who came to pay him homage and form alliances with him. Due to his wisdom and astute leadership skills, Israel experienced peace throughout his 40 years reign.

The unwise Decisions of Solomon and Rehoboam (I Kings 9:15-23)

Due to the peace in Israel during his reign, Solomon lived in luxury. He engaged in so many expensive projects and taxed the people heavily. The worst of his mistakes was having 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of whom were from

different foreign nations that worshiped idols. His downfall therefore started in his old age when all the women in his life brought their gods to Israel and required Solomon to make altars for the gods even his wives sacrificed to such gods. Please note that he could not even stop his wives from worshipping idols and bringing such idols to Israel, but had even helped them to build altars for sacrifices. This act made God angry with Solomon, ultimately leading to his downfall. So God punished him by telling him that after his death his vast kingdom would be divided in two and his son Rehoboam would govern the smallest portion.

Do note that God shifted this punishment from coming when Solomon was alive because of His servant David who was Solomon's father.

Lessons to Learn from Solomon's Misuse of God's Blessing of Wisdom

1. God will always punish anyone who disobey Him no matter his position
2. Solomon became arrogant and proud, and that led to his downfall
3. When we are in the position of leadership we should listen to the voice of those we are leading.

EVALUATION

1. Why did Solomon fall?
2. What made God pleased with Solomon after his request in the dream?

WEEK 11

TOPIC: KING REHOBAM'S UNWISE DECISION

Following Solomon's death, the next in line to succeed him was his son Rehoboam. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah the Ammonite, and she was one of the many wives of Solomon whom he had brought in from foreign, pagan-cultured lands. The Israelites then approached Rehoboam and asked him if he would tax them heavily like his father Solomon did. He asked them to come back in three days for an answer. In the meantime, Rehoboam sought counsel from his father's advisers and they told him to listen to the people. But he also sought advice from his friends who told him not to listen to the people. He accepted his friends' advice. And by this time, *Jeroboam*, who had revolted against Solomon's heavy taxation and even went on exile to Egypt as a result had returned to Israel.

Rehoboam's unwise decision not to listen to the people and the advice of his father's advisers led to the people rejecting him. Consequently, Jeroboam was crowned king of ten (out of the twelve) tribes of Israel. In other words, the kingdom of Solomon was torn apart and Rehoboam Solomon's son was left with just two tribes (namely Judah and Benjamin) while Jeroboam ruled over majority of the tribes. Meanwhile, even though he was left with just two of the tribes, Rehoboam still misbehaved just like his father by marrying many foreign wives as well as having concubines. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines.

Lessons to Learn

- a. Whenever things are going well for people they must remember God who is the source of their provision
- b. For people to be successful in life they must avoid taking unwise decision especially when they see that the interest of others are at stake

c. The numerous marriages with foreign women brought the wrath of God upon Solomon. This brought pagan worship to Israel, this made the Lord to tear Solomon kingdom after his death.

EVALUATION

1. Compare the two advice taken by Rehoboam

WEEK 12

TOPIC: GREED AND ITS EFFECTS

Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard (I Kings 21:1-29)

Greed can simply be defined as the excessive desire for something and in proper Christian pallance, it is usually categorized as sin. People can be greedy for food, money or other forms of wealth. A greedy person can commit any crime to ensure that s/he satisfies [their] desires. Greed is a bad quality in person and bad phenomenon in the society at large because of its many evil consequences. In the next paragraph, you shall see how Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and the evil consequences of his greedy action.

Naboth, the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel near the palace of King Ahab. Meanwhile, the king wanted this vineyard from Naboth to use for a vegetable garden because it was near his palace. He proposed to exchange it with another vineyard or preferably with money. But Naboth refused both offers. He said to Ahab: "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my father." This statement annoyed Ahab so much and he told his wife Jezebel who comforted him and assured him she would surely give him Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel, a wicked woman, then quickly plotted how to destroy Naboth and take over his vineyard.

After Jezebel plotted and successfully ensured that Naboth was killed, she said to her husband "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive but dead." (I Kings 21:15)

Consequences of Ahab's Greed

As Ahab moved in to take possession of the vineyard, unknown to them God already knew everything they did. God sent Elijah to them. God then sent Elijah to decree that, "in the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, there shall

dogs lick Ahab's blood". God further decreed through Elijah: "You did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord says: "I am going to bring horrible trouble on you. I will destroy your children after you. I will cut off every male in Israel who is related to you. It does not matter whether they are slaves or free... You have made me very angry. You have caused Israel to commit sin. "e; – 1 Kings 21:20-22.

The Bible recorded that Ahab repented later from his evil ways, but the Lord only postponed his punishment to his children.

Lessons to Learn

1. The evil consequence of greed, in most cases outweighs the benefits, if any. In some cases, it has lingering effects. In the case of Ahab his greed for little things like vineyard led to the destruction of his future generation. What a big curse, people should be contented with what they have.
2. It is better to have little that is blessed than to have much that is curse.

EVALUATION

1. What is the role of Jezebel in destroying the lineage of her husband Ahab?

WEEEEK 13

TOPIC: GEHAZI'S GREED (I Kings 5: 1-29)

Gehazi, Elisha's servant destroyed his life and destiny because of greed. All when it began when Naaman (a commander of the army of Syria) needed for his leprosy. Through recommendations, he came to Elisha to be cured by the God of Israel. When he reached the gate of Elisha's house he stopped even as Elisha sent Gehazi to tell Naaman to dip himself seven times in river Jordan and get himself cured. After much reluctance, Naaman did as he was instructed and cured. He came back to see Elisha with gifts which Elisha rejected. At this point Gehazi allowed himself to be used by the devil. He said to himself- "My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him." His greed made him lie and collect the gifts from Naaman who was on his way home.

When Gehazi returned, Elisha asked him where he was coming from. That was an opportunity to confess and be forgiven, instead he lied again. Elisha knew what he had done, he said to him: "Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes—or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves? Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever." Immediately Gehazi's skin became leprous.

Lessons to Learn

1. Elisha being a man of God may have seen the evil consequences of collecting such gifts from Naaman, so he decided to avoid it. His servant Gehazi was not aware of this, he was only moved by greed, and he did not think twice before on the possible reason his master rejected the gifts.
2. Again, when Gehazi was asked where he was coming from, he lied again. This shows that he was a dishonest person and probably might have been doing such dishonesty since.

3. Dishonesty is one of the characteristics of a greedy person. We can also see that consequence of greed may not give you the opportunity of a second chance.

EVALUATION

1. Prove that Gehazi was a very dishonest and greedy person

THIRD TERM NOTES ON C.R.K

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WEEK 1

TOPIC: ELIJAH AT MOUNT SINAI (I Kings 18:17-46)

King Ahab and his wife nearly succeeded in confusing the Israelites and turning away their hearts from God with introduction of the worship of Baal. The contest on Mount Camel can be said to have been inspired by God and this gave the people spiritual rebirth.

Ahab, through the instruction the instruction of Elijah gathered the people of Israel on Mount Camel. Elijah came out and said: "How long will you go limping between two opinions. If the Lord is God follow Him, if Baal follow him." He further made a request that "let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one and cut in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire in it, and I will prepare the other bull, lay on it on the wood with no fire." The contest was that any one that answers with fire to consume the meat is the through God.

The prophets of Baal numbering about four hundred and fifty were given the chance to pray and call on their god, Baal. They prayed from morning till night but Baal did not answer. They even cut themselves yet Baal did not answer. After that Elijah came and first of all repaired the altar of God that had been thrown down . he picked twelve stones representing twelve tribes of Israel. He made an altar with these stones in the name of the Lord. He cut the bull, placed it on the altar and asked them to pour four jars of water on the altar and the offering. Elijah prayed and immediately fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. The people were convinced and said "the Lord is God, the Lord is God." Elijah ordered the people to seize the prophets of Baal and they were all killed. Elijah then prayed and rain came back, it rained heavily and that marked the end of the drought.

Lessons to be Learnt

1. Elijah's action shows that the weakness of a leader may ruin a nation. Ahab weakness enabled Jezebel to replace Yahweh's worship with Baal's in Israel.
2. Most interreligious marriages have their consequences.

3. God is always on hand to defend His course hence He called Elijah to defend the worship of Yahweh.
4. God controls nature
5. He cares for those who obey Him
6. He is above all things- rulers and their subjects
7. God's command must be obeyed to avoid punishment
8. God is powerful and hears His people when they call upon Him.

EVALUATION

- I. How many were the prophets of Baal?
- II. In your own understanding why did Elijah pour more water on his altar?

WEEK 2

TOPIC: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

Religious Tension in Israel (1 Kings 16:29-39)

When the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt He established a new covenant with them in form of Ten Commandments. The first of those commandments forbids the Israelites from worshiping any other god beside the Almighty God. Through Moses God gave them ordinances and structures which they must follow at all times.

During the time of Ahab he married a foreigner, Jezebel, from Sidon. Jezebel then introduced the worship of the Sidonian god, Baal to Israelites. Together with her husband they erected an altar for Baal. This led to religious tension in Israel. Jezebel persecuted the prophets of God by killing them, while the ones that were alive went into hiding. Apparently Ahab was considered as one of the worst kings of Israel. He did not only sin he as well led the Israelites to sin. This annoyed God greatly, therefore sent Elijah to go and proclaim to the king that there would be drought (no rain) for three and half years as punishment for worshiping idol. For proclaiming this Ahab and Jezebel hunted Elijah in Israel and beyond, but the Lord was with him: God provided security, food and water for him.

In Israel, Obadiah who was the head of Ahab's household had a great fear of God in him. Following the persecution of God's prophets Obadiah gathered some hundreds of prophets of God and hid them in a cave, providing water and food for them daily. There was serious tension in Israel, Jezebel and her group worked hard to instill and solidify the worship of Baal in Israel. God showed His supremacy by withholding rain. This drought hit Jezebel's household greatly but God made provision for Elijah and the other hundreds of God's prophets in hiding. In all the desperate search Jezebel and Ahab did to kill Elijah they did not succeed.

Lessons to Learn About God's Supremacy

- a. The rain that God withheld for three and half years demonstrated the manifestation of God's power.
- b. Elijah and Obadiah were very courageous
- c. God protected those prophets that were loyal to Him in Israel

Lessons to Learn About Leadership

- a. Good leadership should not lead the people astray
- b. They must have good sense of judgment
- c. They must be careful in allowing foreign culture

EVALUATION

- i. Discuss the circumstances that brought religious tension in Israel
- ii. Why were Jezebel and Ahab hunting Elijah?

WEEK 3

TOPIC: KING JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS (II Kings 2:1-30)

Josiah was eight years when he began to reign as king. He reigned for twenty-one years in Jerusalem. He did what was good in the sight of God. He walked in the way of his grandfather, David. He showed much interest in the things of God. One of his first assignments was the repair and renovation of the temple. Later when the book of the law was found in the temple by Hilkiah the high priest, Josiah engaged in other reforms. The book was read to the king and when he heard the contents he tore his cloth as sign of repentance because he knew they had been transgressing.

Josiah sent Hilkiah, the high priest; Shaphem, the secretary and others to enquire of the Lord through prophetess Hildah, the wife of Shallim. The prophetess said: "Thus said the Lord, behold I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read." (I Kings 22:16-17). The Lord said that because Josiah was patient and humbled himself before the Lord when he heard the words read to him, his eyes would not see evil and he would rule his people in peace. King Josiah summoned all the elders in Israel and read the book of the covenant which was found in the temple to them. King Josiah stood by the temple's pillar and made a covenant to walk with the Lord and keep His commandments and His testimonies and His structures with all his heart and soul.

Josiah's Reform

- a. He ordered the priest to bring out all the vessels made for Baal and Asherah and burn them.
- b. He deposed all the idolatrous priests whom the king of Jude had ordained to burn incense in the high places of the cities of Judah and Jerusalem. He also brought Asherah image from the temple and burned it.

- c. He broke down the house of the male cult prostitutes (cult prostitutes was a situation, where the idol priest made love with the deceitful belief that the sexual act will cause the fertility god to make the land fertile).
- d. He defied Tophet to prevent people from burning their sons and daughter for sacrifice to Molach. He further removed the horses the king of Judah dedicated to the sun.
- e. Josiah carried out his reforms up to the northern kingdom, he removed the shrines of the high places that w there in the city of Samaria which the kings of Israel had made.
- f. He restored the feast of Passover and commanded the people to observe it as it is written in the book of the covenant.
- g. He abolished witchcraft, sorcery, soothsaying, divination and their idols

EVALUATION

1. Mention the reforms Josiah made.

WEEK 4

TOPIC: SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TODAY'S RELIGIOUS SITUATION AND THAT OF JOSIAH

Josiah is well known for his thorough cleansing of the land of Israel, destroying every idolatrous legacies in totality. Israel was transgressing since all those while before Josiah came, the land needed cleansing, Josiah did that.

1. Crimes and various vices are rampant in the churches today
2. There are many corrupt preachers and churches today
3. As it was in the days of Josiah, when people were filled with immoral act. In the society today people we think are practicing the right religion are doing something else.
4. There are many wrong teachings in our society today, we have derailed from the actual meaning God wants.

Significance of Josiah's Reforms

1. It brought about spiritual revival in Israel
2. The reforms made the people to rededicate themselves to God.
3. The ordinances and statues of God were now made clearer to the people.

Lessons to Learn

1. Josiah, in spite of his young age, he was a perfect example of a good leader
2. He did not follow the footstep of his father
3. People should not have followed the bad behaviors of others.
4. Churches and the name of God should be respected.

EVALUATION

1. What are the similarities between today's religious situation and that of Ahab?

WEEK 5

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE NATION

The Condition of the Nation (II Kings 24:25:1-17)

A nation as a corporate entity undergoes some turbulent times. This may be political, economic or social problem. It is in the face of the problem that people show love for their nation by identifying themselves with its problem and proffering solution. In the series of the battle that led to the final destruction of Judah Pharaoh Necho of Egypt was the first to come up against the land. Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim king in place of his brother Jehoahaz and changed his name to Jehoiakim. He took Jehoahaz away to Egypt where he eventually died. Subsequently, Egypt was defeated by Babylon under king Nebuchadnezzar for three years before he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar sent a contingent of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites to destroy Judah. It is worthy to note that it had earlier been prophesied that the Lord would send enemies that would destroy Judah because of the atrocities of the king.

Jehoiakim died before the arrival of the invaders. His 18-year-old son, Jehoiachin reigned in his place like his father, he did what was evil in the sight of God. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city he took him captive and carried out all the treasures in the house of the Lord. He carried away all the mighty men of valor. Only the poorest groups were left. The king passed sentence against him. They slew his two sons and removed his eyes, he later burned the house of the Lord and all the good buildings in Jerusalem.

Response to the State of the Nation (Nehemiah 1:1-11)

Following the conquest of Israel by Babylon Israel did not exist again as a nation. The captives of Israel settled in a particular area in Babylon most of them eventually attained positions of importance in the government of the land. Later, Persia defeated Babylon and became world super power. During the first year of

king Cyrus, king of Persia, God stirred his spirit and he issued decree for all the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of the Lord. Various Jewish patriots rose to the occasion and played various roles which finally saw the establishment of Israel as a nation. Some people rose up and mounted stiff opposition and made several attempts to frustrate the people's efforts but they kept on succeeding because of God was with them.

Reasons for the Positive Response of the Jews to Return Home

1. The people had the feeling that home is home coupled with the spirit of nationalism.
2. In a foreign land, they could not freely practice their culture and religion
3. Slavery is a curse to any people
4. It shows the fulfillment of God's promise

EVALUATION

1. What led to the freedom of Israelites in Babylon?

WEEK 6

TOPIC: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM BY NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah, a captive in Babylon was visited by Hanai. Nehemiah wanted to know the state of Jerusalem and her inhabitants. Nehemiah was told that the remnant of the land were in great trouble and shame. He was told that the gates and the walls were broken down and destroyed. This made Nehemiah sad and wept bitterly. He fasted and prayed for several days. He requested for his freedom from the king of Babylon. He was allowed to go. On his arrival in Jerusalem he delivered the King's letter to the governors of the provinces. In the letters, it was written that the materials needed by Nehemiah for the reconstruction of the city be supplied to him. The people started building the walls of Jerusalem. Samballat and Tobiah opposed the reconstruction works.

Lessons to Learn from Nehemiah's Action

1. Nehemiah showed the spirit of love for his nation
2. Nehemiah motivated his people into action
3. Nehemiah's faith in God was demonstrated through prayer and action.

Lesson to Learn from the Action of the Jews

1. The commitment of the prominent Jews to rebuilding of their nation is worthy of emulation. These people occupied prominent positions in the government of the country where they were in exile but this didn't make them forget their own country.

EVALUATION

1. Explain the reconstruction of the Jerusalem.

WEEK 7

TOPIC: FAITH IN GOD

Faith and Grace (Daniel 3:1-30)

According to Hebrews 11:1-2, faith is defined as the assurance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. The Bible tells us in Luke 1:37 with God all things are possible. Such was the case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego whose faith and confidence in God was second to none.

Due to the outstanding qualities in these men they were appointed officials in Babylonian kingdom. A situation came when Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image and commanded all the officials in the provinces of Babylon to come for the dedication of the image. He ordered that when they hear the sound of the horn pipe, lyre, harp and kind of music all the various officials should fall down and worship the golden image. The three Hebrew boys refused to bow down and this made the king mad at them, he ordered that furnace should be heated seven more times. He ordered great hefty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:16-18). The fire was so hot that the flame consumed those men who cast the Hebrew boys into the furnace.

The king was astonished when he discovered that men were not hurt, and although had been bound but were loosed. He ordered them to come out of the fire and made them stand in the presence of the prefects, government officials, counselors and other important men in Babylon. They all observed that the fire had no effect on the men. The expression of boldness, courage and faith by these Jews gave king Nebuchadnezzar the true picture of God and his authority as the God of Israel. The king therefore, decreed that any person that would ever speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego should be destroyed with his household. This was the profit of great faith, confidence and courage in God.

EVALUATION

1. How was the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego tested?

WEEK 8

TOPIC: NAAMAN'S HEALING AND THE LESSONS HE LEARNT

Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army, he had leprosy. He had tried different ways and things to be cured to no avail. An Israelite slave girl serving Naaman's wife suggested if Naaman could go to Samaria as there was a prophet who could heal his leprosy. Naaman took the girl's advice, collected a letter from Syrian king informing him of Naaman's coming and predicament. But as soon as the king of Israel got the letter, he tore his robes and said "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!" Naaman knew not who to meet, he just knew that when he got to Israel he would be healed. When Elisha learnt of the king's unhappiness after receiving the letter he said to him: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."

When Naaman came to the gate of Elisha's house, Elisha sent his servant Gehazi to go and tell Naaman to go to river Jordan and dip himself there seven times. Naaman was not happy because he thought that Elisha would come and shout and call on the name of God and lay hands on him. He queried why he would dip himself in river Jordan when they had better rivers in their country. He left angry, unsatisfied and disappointed. He knew not what was faith. He thought that prayer was all about shouting.

Naaman's servant convinced him to obey the prophet since it was for his own good. Naaman did as Elisha instructed. On the seventh dip his skin became as fresh as new born child's skin. He reluctantly did it and God healed. His joy knew no bound. He and his attendants went back to Elisha to offer and show appreciation: "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant." Elisha rejected the gift. It did not end there. Naaman said: "If you will not, please let me, your servant, be given as much earth (sand) as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord. Naaman left not just

with changed and clean body but with a repented and determined heart to serve the Lord.

Lessons Learnt by Naaman on his Healing

1. He became convinced that God of Israel is the only true God
2. He learnt that prophets of Israel had power to heal and do miracles
3. He learnt that God is a forgiving God

EVALUATION

1. Identify the moment when pride nearly spoiled the healing
2. Identify the happy ending in Naaman story.

WEEK 9

TOPIC: FAITH IN GOD Daniel 6:17-28

The story of Daniel was another case of somebody who had absolute in God and based on this, God delivered him when he was cast into the lion's den. While in Babylon, he attained new heights in the government of the land because he had excellent spirit. The king loved him and planned to set him over as king. This attracted jealousy against him. The rest of the government officials and satraps therefore conspired to destroy Daniel. Knowing fully well that Daniel loved God and served Him continually they planned their strategy along the line requested him to decree that nobody in the kingdom should make petition to their god for thirty days. They further requested that the king should establish the inter-diet and sign the document so that it could not be changed.

King Dairus signed the document and inter-diet according to their request, not knowing that it was planned to rope in somebody he loved. Daniel knew about the decree he went ahead and continued to make his supplication to God. When the conspirators noticed this they reported to the king When the king heard this he was distressed. Based on this pressure Daniel was cast into the den of lions but the king prayed for Daniel that God would deliver him. The king had a sleepless night after Daniel was thrown in the den, he prayed and fasted for Daniel.

Early the following morning the king went to the den and called out for Daniel and Daniel answered saying that his God sent His angels to shut the mouth of the lions and they had not hurt him. (Daniel 6:20). The king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be brought of the den. He ordered those who accused Daniel to the thrown into the den alongside their wives and children. They were completely devoured by the lions. Darius decreed that all over his kingdom everybody should fear and worship the God of Daniel for He is the living God, He is the God that works sings and wonders Daniel 6:26.

Lessons to Learn

1. Absolute trust and confidence in God will save people in times of difficulty
2. Those who spend time plotting evil against innocent people perish by their evil plot while the innocent is set free.
3. At times devil and his agents plot to distract people from serving God because they know they cannot succeed in having them when they are at peace with God.
4. Isaiah 54:17 says in righteousness you shall be established. Christians should endeavour to live a holy life

Lessons to Present Day Priests and Evangelists

1. Priests and evangelists are advised to dedicate more time for God and always pray for God's spiritual support
2. When the opposition borders on threat to life they should report to the authorities of the land.

EVALUATION

1. Why didn't the lions devour Daniel?

WEEK 10

TOPIC: SOCIAL JUSTICE (Amos 2: 6-8)

There was a high level of social and moral decadence in Israel as in the time of prophet Amos. The focus of his prophecies was mainly the social injustice which had eaten deep into the social life of Israel. There was no true fear of God in the mind of the people. Amos was therefore called by God to go and warn the people. The theme of Amos prophecy is summed up in the book of Amos 2:6-8.

The following societal ills spurred Amos prophecies:

- a. The judges took bribe and perverted justice. The poor were denied justice
- b. The poor were robbed of their properties. They pledged such properties to borrow money.
- c. The rich exploited the poor by selling to them with false weights and measures, thereby becoming richer at the expense of the poor.
- d. There were cases of forced slavery. Some poor farmers who borrowed money from lenders and couldn't pay back were forced to become the servants of the rich.
- e. Sexual immorality was on the increase
- f. Amos called the Samaritan women cows of Bashan because many of them encouraged their husbands to bring their ill-gotten wine home to drink.

Opposition Against Amos by Amaziah

When social injustice and religious malpractice had reached their peak Amos condemned them. The priest of the royal sanctuary of Bethel, Amiyah reported Amos to the king accusing him of conspiracy and sedition. Amos was ordered to

go to Judah where he belonged to prophesy. He prophesied the following curses on Amaziah:

1. His wife would become a harlot in the city
2. His sons and daughters would be slain by the sword
3. Israel would surely go into exile
4. His land would be divided

Reasons why those who Oppose God Would Be Condemned

1. Since God is our creature it is wrong to oppose Him
2. They deceived others
3. Their teaching led to destruction
4. They violate God's order and will Punishment

He also warned them of the punishment that would come upon them if they refused

to repent which include-

1. The Samaritan women would be taken to exile
2. Those who exploited the poor to build for themselves houses of hewn stone would be taken on exile, they wouldn't dwell in those houses
3. The punishment that would come upon them would be so great that people would weep bitterly
4. Their hopes would be dashed while their feat would be turned to mourning.

Vices Condemned by Amos that are Still Rampant in the Society

- a. Oppression of the poor by the rich

- b. Injustice in the court
- c. Cheating in business
- d. Luxury through illegal and bad means

ASSESSMENT

1. What are the vices condemned by Amos that are still prevalent today?
2. What are the reasons those who oppose God would be punished?
3. What were the societal ills that spurred Amos' prophecies?

WEEK 11

TOPIC: TRUE RELIGION (Amos 5:21-31)

Apart from social justice that had been corrupted, the religion of the Israelites was no longer practiced as they had deviated from observing the covenant made with God. Their hearts were not truly with God, they only pretended by fulfilling the physical obligations of worship such as payment of tithes and offering sacrifices while the real fear of God was not in them. Their religion had been polluted with the worship of idols; a case in point was the golden calves made by Jeroboam which he put one at Bethel and the other at Dan. This Bethel was the place of worship for Israelites by then. Also, there were other idols brought by the foreign women that various kings of Israel had married. All these combined to pollute the true worship of God in Israel, they felt they could appease God by their sacrifices but God rejected their offerings and sacrifices because they were not from people with a pure heart (Amos 5:21-24).

The Theme of Amos Message to the Israelites

1. The people should repent and seek God with all their strength and might so that God would surely forgive them
2. They should uphold justice in all their dealings
3. Righteousness should be seen in all their lives
4. God was after their hearts and not their offerings
5. They should do away with religious practices
6. They days of the Lord should be kept

Lessons to Learn

1. People should worship God in spirit and in truth
2. Payment of tithes and offerings is meaningless without an upright life

3. The society should love those who speak the truth
4. Too much of luxuries and pleasures drag people into all kinds of evil and social vices
5. In Nigeria, bribery, corruption and cheating, oppression of the poor by the rich have their roots in love of money and pleasure.

EVALUATION

1. Explain the practices Amos condemned in Israel.