

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

- The book of Deuteronomy deals with the spoken words of Moses to the people of Israel when they were in the land of Moabites.
- Moses in his address gave moral instructions prescribed in the Ten Commandments (10) to the Israelites as they prepared to enter and occupy the Promised Land (Canaan). This was also the time when Moses was about to die.
- The book of Deuteronomy is an extension of the Exodus event. The major theme in this book includes: -
- **The covenant relationship with emphasis on the law of Love.**
- **Act of Herem (Deuteronomy 6:7:8)**
- **Summary of the Israelites obligation toward God and one another (Duet 10, 12:22)**
- **God's greatness towards the Israelites/ act of election Duet: 11;**
- **Offering of the first fruit (Deuteronomy 26: 1:10)**
- **Blessings and curses (Duet: 28,46)**

THEME OF LOVE

1. Moses in chapter 6 called upon the Israelites to remember the Lord for his great deeds which were out of his love.
2. Moses called upon the Israelites to observe the great commandment of love and make it the basis of their lives. In other words, all the activities of the Israelites had to be governed by love.
3. God required the Israelites to love the lord their God with all their hearts, souls and with all their strength. Thus their love for God should not be hypocritical.
4. The Israelites had to extend God's love to the future generation. They were therefore to teach their children about this commandment.
5. Moses instructed the Israelites to love God alone according to him, this would ensure God's blessings onto the people.
6. The Israelites were also to extend this love to their fellow men in an effort to live as one and to ensure God's continuous love and care for them.
7. The Israelites were required to show love to the under privileged and foreigners.
8. The orphans and the widows had to be treated fairly and the Israelites weren't to mistreat strangers like their former slave masters (Egyptians). Deuteronomy 10:18-19
9. Moses emphasized that even the promises God made to the Israelites great ancestors were because of his love for mankind and specifically the people he had chosen.
10. Moses emphasized that their love for God should not be out of fear for punishment but should be a genuine one from the bottom of their hearts.
11. It's also noted that God out of his love liberated the Israelites from their Egyptian exile life characterized by slavery.
12. Its further noted that God initiated the Sinaitic covenant out of his love by observing his loving for mankind.

13. The Israelites were to honor God, worship only him and were to make their promises in his name alone to show their love. Therefore, they were not to worship any other god if they were to escape God's destruction.
14. The Israelites were to obey the commandment of love in order for their nation to prosper and also to please God. Chapter 7:1 –following points out that the divine election of Israel as a nation was out of God's strong love.
15. The Israelites were to serve God faithfully in showing their love for him. Faithfulness among themselves was also to be manifestation of God's love towards them (Duet 8:5)
16. The Israelites were expected to repent off their sins to show their love for him. Faithfulness among themselves was also to be manifestation of God's love towards them (Duet 8:5).
17. They were called to extend their love to foreigners however strange they may be. Duet 10:19.

THEME OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The theme of love is spread all over and is significant in the New Testament as discussed below.

1. Its pointed out that God out of his love for the world sent his only son to die for mankind and that who so ever believes in him shall have life to the fullness (john 3:16)
2. The greatest commandment according to Christ is the love of God with all one's strength, soul and mind (Mark 12:28).
3. Christ also points out that the second greatest commandment is the love of one's neighbor as much as one's self (Mark 12:31)
4. Christ called for the love of enemies and emphasized need of being/ doing good for them. (Mathew 5:3-5)
5. The New Testament teaches that it's God's love for mankind which made Jesus to die on the cross to liberate all sinners who would believe in him.
6. John teaches that love between Jesus and the believers is similar to that between the father and Jesus. Jn. 16:27
7. To Christ, the love of God and neighbor is better and more important than offering animals and other sacrifices to God. That why he taught that if you are bringing your offering and you remember that you offended your brother, first leave to offer go and reconcile with the brother.
8. Jesus' feeding miracles indicated the love he had for the people. He could not leave them to go hungry.
9. Jesus refers to himself as a good shepherd who loves his sheep and knows them by name.
10. Jesus teaches that if Christians obey his commands, they will in his love and he required Christians to love one another just as he had loved them. Jn. 15:10-12
11. Christ called upon his followers to love one another just as he had loved them.
12. He emphasized that the greatest love a person can have for his friends in to give his life for them. Christ is therefore presented as having laid a foundation of love.

13. Christ emphasized that God loves a believer because of the love such a believer has for him. He points out that loving him is a means of having a direct access to the father's blessings.
14. According to St. Paul, love is the greatest gift a person is given. He looks at love as being unique with no string attached (1st Corinthians 13:13).
15. St. Paul emphasized that a believer is inseparable from the love of Christ. Love is therefore a divine victory of believers to reflect in their lives (Romans 8:33-39).
16. It's also noted that true love can forgive and that is characterized by mercy, kindness, patience and truthfulness among others (1st Corinthians 13:4-14)
17. Love according to St. Paul is eternal. It lasts forever and stands all the test of the world.
18. St. Paul teaches Christians to carry one another's burden if they are to fulfill the all of Christ.
19. James calls upon Christians treat all people equally and by doing so they will be observing the law of love as given by Jesus Christ.

OBLIGATIONS OF ISRAELITES

- The Israelites were to teach each generation the Ten Commandments and were to constantly remind them of their faith.
- They also love God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt, protecting them in the wilderness till they reached.
- The Israelites were to observe monotheism as the basis of their life. They were not to bow down before any god.
- They were to honor and worship God. They were to make their promises in his name alone.
- The Israelites were to remain obedient to the covenant laws. Therefore, their daily activities had to reflect compliance to the laws. The Israelites were required to love their neighbors. They were to live as one without any misunderstandings.
- They were also required to extend love to foreigners or strangers. Therefore, they were not to discriminate them but to treat them equally.
- Israelites were to carry the act of Herem and destroy every nation that the Lord would bless on their powers. They had to show them no mercy and treat them as enemies.
- The Israelites had to remain holy just as their father was (God) therefore they were to avoid any situation that could lead them into sinning.
- They had to remain as a theocratic nation i.e. their economic, political, social and religious ways of using had to be determined by the laws of God.

THE ACT OF HEREM

1. Herem is a Hebrew word meaning total destruction of people and their belongings. It was one of the obligations that Israelites had to fulfill.
2. The act of the Herem was also one of the instructions that God gave Moses to pass onto the Israelites as they were about to enter and occupy the Promised Land.

3. It was a mode of operation where God commanded his people to wipe out a given group of people.
4. It meant absolute faithfulness to God and absolute ban on compromise with pagan religious beliefs of other nations.
5. God was aware that in case they disobeyed this command, they would be tempted to worship foreign gods which would be a violation of monotheism.
6. When carrying out this act, they were restricted from even taking gold ornaments or idols from the foreign land as this would displease God.
7. Sparing an enemy would by implication mean that the Israelites were seeking unnecessary foreign alliances which was abominable in the sight of the lord.
8. Through Moses, God commanded Israelites to destroy their enemies and all their property completely.
9. The Israelites were to destroy plants, human beings, animals and houses in case they would face enemies.
10. During destruction the Israelites were not to spare and have mercy on anything. This was because they would be doing God's will.
11. Sparing of enemies would be disobedience and therefore lack of respect for God's command. It would also displease God which could result into them being destroyed.
12. The Israelites were to carry the act of Herem in order to show their absolute faithfulness to God remain holy and live according to government laws.
13. The Israelites were also to carry out the act of Herem in order to avoid future apostasy (abandoning one's faith) which would be due to foreign influence.
14. The act of Herem was further necessary in order to avoid temptations of worshiping other gods of the conquered people including Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites among others.
15. The act of Herem would reflect the divine election of Israel as a nation which was not its own set but out of unique strong love (Deut. 7:7-8)
16. Destroying enemies and other property. It signified Israelites might and the supremacy of Yahweh versus other gods.
17. Carrying out act of Herem would make God to keep covenant he made with his people and show them his covenant.
18. The Israelites were also to be blessed in form of prospering in their nation after carrying out the act of Herem. They would increase in number and have many children besides their fields producing good harvests and bearing a lot of cattle and sheep among others.
19. God was also to protect the Israelites from any kind of sickness after carrying out the act of Herem. (Deut. 7:15)

REASONS FOR HEREM

1. It was carried out to avoid future apostasy which would contaminate their religious life.
2. It was to show their total commitment to God (to show their obedience to God).

3. It was an assurance of Gods people that the promised land of Canaan belongs to them despite the Canaanites first settlement. Thus it was carried out to avail them with their ancestral land.
4. It was to punish the pagan people for their atrocities e.g. The Amalekites who had killed the Jews during the exodus.
5. The act was a battle between God the almighty and other gods. In other words, it was one way of showing Gods power and control over other nations.
6. Herem was carried out to punish all the sinful nations (group of people).
7. It was to show the universality of God. it indeed showed that God can use any body he wishes to punish others or any state.
8. By practicing Herem the Israelites would win blessings as promised to their fore fathers.
9. Herem was to establish Israel as a divinely elected nation and so were to be used by God as promised to their fore father.
10. Finally, it was carried out to test the faith of Gods people the Israelites.
11. The act of Herem was further necessary in order to avoid temptations of worshiping other gods of the conquered people including Hittites, Amorites, Jobsites among others.
12. Carrying out act of Herem would make God to keep covenant he made with his people and show them his covenant.
13. God was also to protect the Israelites from any kind of sickness after carrying out the act of Herem. (Deut. 7:15)

CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ACT ORF HEREM

1. To Christians the act of Herem is revealed differently depending on the circumstances surrounding the nature of the destruction that ought to be carried out.
2. It implies that Christians have positive and negative attitude towards the act of Herem among which these should be considered.
3. To Christians, its necessary to destroy the pagan alters or the shrines and idols especially if the owners of such things are willing and are ready to accept Christianity.
4. Christians need to destroy inherited properties which would otherwise turn them into pagans especially if such were items from the witch doctors.
5. Christians ought to practice the act of Herem in self-defense. In this case, if the life of such Christians is threatened there is already an impending death he/she can be forced to destroy the enemy.
6. It also necessary for Christians to destroy pornographic materials like magazines and indecent tapes/ films etc.
7. Christians have to destroy the sins surrounding them totally. This means that Christians have to help in cleansing of people's hearts other than their property.
8. To Christians Herem is looked at as an attempt to destroy all evil forces. For example, Jesus' chasing of demons, he destroyed all the properties of those who were misusing his father's house.

9. However, Christians need to be merciful and kind to their enemies. This calls for the need of sparing enemies even if such enemies are threatening kill, taking care of Christ who surrendered his life to his enemies.
10. Christians should show love to their enemies and even pray for them. They have to do good to those hating them and bless those cursing them (Luke 6:27-28)
11. Christians need to practice the moral ritual of forgiveness. They should at all times be ready to make a fresh start whenever these misunderstandings would have happened like Jesus who forgave those who persecuted and killed him.
12. Christians are under no obligation to kill according to God's commandments carrying the act of Herem is going against God's plan for life.
13. Christians need to realize that they are all sinners and have no right to judge others. Judgment is only done by God because all human beings by nature do fall short of God's glory.
14. Carrying the act of Herem subjects even the innocent people to suffering. This means that such an act is not relevant (necessary) in human society.

CONCEPT OF DIVINE ELECTION CH. 11

1. The divine election of Israelites as a special nation has its roots in the call of Abraham initiated by God himself to begin its salvation plan for human kind.
2. Through the divine election, Israel gained the new and special status. The Israelites became the chosen people, the priestly house and the people of God.
3. The divine election shows God's greatness and the greatness of the people he had chosen in relation to other nations.
4. Because they were a special people of God they were to worship only one God and not a pagan or foreign gods.
5. The worshiping of other gods would lead them into punishment. God would act and take away all their blessings.
6. By the divine election, the Israelites were bound to the Sinaitic covenant. They were to be fully committed to it and worshiping only Yahweh – the God of their ancestors.
7. The divine election involved special blessings. As God's chosen people they were blessed with Promised Land, God's protection, provision of food and wealth besides joy and happiness.
8. Israelites were under the obligation to make choice following their divine election. They had to choose either to obey God and receive more blessings or to disobey him and be cursed.
9. Moses told the Israelites to choose between life and death especially with their actions.
10. The later generation of Israel had to acknowledge the concept of divine election. In other words, the Israelites had to teach their children those concepts and its requirements.
11. The Israelites had to continue loving God with all their hearts. This was one way of maintaining a strong relationship with God as the chosen people. God showed his love for

the people through the divine election. In other words, Israelites had done nothing to be chosen but the choice was out of love that God had for them.

12. Through the divine election, all activities of the Israelites were to be guided by Yahweh. They weren't to act out on their own but were to follow what God expected them to do.
13. The divine election had a moral requirement. The Israelites were supposed to be morally upright and show good e.g. to the other nations.
14. The success of Israelites in all spheres of life was to depend on their obedience and faithfulness to Yahweh. Turning against him would result into their punishment.
15. As people of God, they were to be protected by God and God was to be the source of their victory.
16. Because of being a theocratic nation, Israel had to live exemplary because the Israelites had to keep in mind that God choose them out of his own love and will.

GUIDING QUESTIONS.

Discuss the concept of election found in the book of Deuteronomy.

What is the relevance of this concept to modern Christians?

RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE ELECTION TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

1. Christians should maintain the special relationship they share with Jesus Christ their savior through him they are elected children of God.
2. Christians should live in God's love they received during Baptism which made them a chosen people of God. Thus they should love God too.
3. Christians should live in unity as members of the church with Christ as their leader through him they became the chosen special race of God.
4. Christians should accept Christ's teaching and live by it because they became divinely elected as God's children by accepting to follow Christ.
5. Christians should live holy lives for the body of Christians is a temple of God and the spirit of God lives in it. There is hence a need to live according to the requirement of God.
6. Christians should obey God's commands so as to acquire divine blessings. This is what binds them as a divinely elected people.
7. Christians ought to show good examples to others by being morally upright. They should be the light of a society so as to influence other members positively.
8. Christians should have faith in Christ because he is the truth, the way and live in the kingdom of God who elected them through sending him to die for their sins. Christians should always take time and pray. Through prayers Christians open themselves to God and therefore maintain the required relationship as the elect of God.
9. Christians ought to be proud because of following Christ. They have to express this publically for they have been given special gift in the form of wisdom from God.
10. Christians should always repent their sins to avoid perishing because of being divinely elected through Christ. God is always willing to welcome whoever accepts to renew his relationship with him.

11. Christians ought to prepare themselves for the second coming of Jesus Christ hence be ready for judgment basing on their behaviors.
12. All Christians should confess Jesus as their savior because they share a special relationship with him
13. Christians should treat all people equally for they are members of the church headed by Jesus Christ.
14. Christians should seek divine blessings by living righteous lives in obedience to God's commands.
15. Christians should leave all cultural practices which make them enslaved by Satan this is because they were freed by Jesus Christ and they are a special community.

THE OFFERING OF THE FIRST HARVEST Deut. 26:1-10

- After they had occupied the new land, the Israelites were told to offer their first part of each crop harvest from their new land of Canaan to their God.
- The details of how this was to be done is found Deut 26:1-10

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS OFFERING.

1. It was an acknowledgement that God alone was the provider of their needs. By giving back to him part of what he had provided.
2. It was a statement of faith to chosen people of God. it was an indicator of a belief in God.
3. This act was to re-affirm their election deliverance from Egypt and guidance under God to the Promised Land.
4. It was an appreciation of Yahweh's blessings that had come on since the beginning of exodus.
5. It also showed that Yahweh could fulfill his promises to the people of Israel thus it indicated the fulfillment of the promises of the fertile land of Canaan.
6. This offering was an acknowledgement by the Israelites of what Yahweh had done for them i.e. liberating them from slavery, providing them food, water and fighting on their behalf to conquer the land.
7. It showed Israelites ancestry that is from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from whom the ritual of offering began.
8. It was a way of dedicating Israel as a nation to the Lord God by offering the first harvest to God rather than other gods.
9. The offering of the first harvest to God was a divine command amongst the people and with their God which implied that all harvest come from God.
10. It was an implication of Israelites total love and devotion to their God by offering the 1st harvest to their God.
11. It indicated that Israelites were God's first born having a unique relationship with God by offering what they had harvested to God.
12. It was a way commemorating their life experience in Egypt where they had no possession of their own but working as slaves and by God's power they were liberated.

13. This 1st harvest offering was to recognize God as the controller of the fertility of their new home and the creator of all things.
14. It was a way of giving part of their yields back to God who had enabled them to get such harvests.

RELEVANCE OF THE COMMAND TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians should demonstrate the true worship of God through giving of what they have.
2. Christians ought to give offertories to the church as a way of sharing with God.
3. Christians have an obligation of giving tithe i.e. tithe of their annual produce back to God.
4. Christians should give thanks to God in whatever they do, because it's God who gives them knowledge to all what they do.
5. Christians should share whatever they have with other Christians especially with the poor.
6. Christians ought to have a spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial to show that Christian's lives belong to God.
7. A Christian's giving should come from the bottom of their heart so as to be accepted by God.
8. Christians should ask blessings from God by giving the best of what they have back to him,
9. They should devote some time to God for some special purposes and they should pray for the new things that they get in life.
10. They should show gratitude to God for the good things he had done for them.
11. Christians should show genuine love for God and follow man by sharing what they have.
12. Christians ought to acknowledge that they are elects of God with demands from him. Thus they should fulfill those demands with Him.
13. Christians should depend on God for all what they want because all good things are given to us by him.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Discuss the significance of the offering of the first harvest to God.

What is the relevance of this command to Christians?

BLESSINGS AND CURSES (Duet: 28:1-26)

- Deuteronomy 28:1-26 gives a detailed description of the blessings and curses among the Israelites. God's chosen people and the descendants of Abraham.
 - The Israelites had to make choice between blessings and curses basing on the covenant relationship.
 - Deuteronomy 28:1 shows that obedience to God's command would bring more blessings.
1. The Israelites were required to observe/ maintain monotheism as a basis of their lives so as to receive God's blessings.
 2. The Israelites were to be blessed with abundant wealth if they would observe the Sinaitic covenant. The wealth was to be in form of animals like cattle and sheep among others.
 3. Israel was also to maintain theocracy (being ruled by God) and receive the blessing of stability hence their stable lives had to depend on their acceptance of God as their ruler.

4. The Israelites were to trust Yahweh and be blessed with good crop yield with abundant food supply.
5. They would be blessed with victories of blessings over their enemies that they should defeat them and maintain their status.
6. The Israelites would also be blessed with fertility of the body. They were to have many children and spread all over the land they would be given.
7. For blessings Moses noted that if the Israelites obeyed the Lord and faithfully kept his commands, God would protect Israel in whatever they do.
8. As a result of obeying God, there would be prosperity in Israel and no one would fail in life.
9. The Israelites would be respected by their neighbors because of being in a good relationship with their God.
10. They would be blessed with safety wherever they would go. God would always keep them safe for He would walk with them.
11. The Lord would make Israel greater than other nations and would be made his priests on earth.
12. They would have plenty of rain and would be able to plant a lot of crops season after season.
13. Due to their obedience, God would make the Israelites to be great leaders to other people.
14. The Lord would also bless their towns and everything in them because they abide by the Lord's command.
15. God would defeat all their enemies and scatter them in seven directions.
16. God would declare them his own people and all nations would fear Israel.
17. God would bless all their undertakings and bless them in the land of Canaan.

On the other hand, the curses would befall the Israelites as a result of their disobedience to the covenant requirements.

1. Through breaking the covenant, the Israelites would experience incurable diseases like leprosy.
2. The Israelites were to suffer from dust and drought resulting into famine until they would perish due to disobedience.
3. They were to suffer military defeat in any confrontation with their neighbors. Their enemies will scatter them in seven directions.
4. The Israelites would suffer the second exile and be subjected to oppression and exploitation as it was the case with the Egyptian slavery.
5. The Israelites women would suffer barrenness and hence childlessness would be the characteristic of any marriage relationship.
6. There would be poverty, their yields would decline, the cattle, sheep and oxen would be stolen and so many related problems.
7. The Israelites would suffer natural calamities and catastrophes in the form of earthquake, flooding etc.

8. God would desert them and they would die out of their own mistakes hence God would withdraw all his assist to the people he had chosen.
9. The Israelites would lose their fame, respect and status as the chosen people and would therefore be minimized by their neighbors who thought of them being strong.
10. Their sons and daughters would be taken by other nations and defiled without them having nothing to do.
11. The Israelites disobeyed God and did not keep his commands, they would experience shortage of food and would suffer from famine.
12. Many people in Israel would die and others would be eaten by wild animals and birds.
13. They would have confusion and many of them would become blind and lose their way.
14. I they practice syncretism or apostasy they punishment would follow, they would lose their happiness and suffering would befall them.

WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIAN DO TO GET BLESSINGS

- Christians should obey God's instructions in order to get God's blessings.
- They should treat each other with love and care.
- They should repent for their sins so as to be pardoned.
- They should forgive each other in case of any wrongs done to them.
- Christians should attend fellowship to share God's words as members of the same congregation.
- They should insist on telling the truth.
- They should have faith in God.
- They should live Holy lives
- They should administer baptism to the new converts.
- They should have Eucharist regularly.
- Christians should love their God and their neighbors.
- They should be patient in whatever they do.
- They should be contented with God's providence.

NB. Any good Christian actions.

UNDERSTANDING OF CURSES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

1. To the Africans curses were believed to befall an individual or community after annoying god especially the activities of the elders and community as a whole.
2. Curses were also as a result of failure to give respect to the spirits. This may explain why sacrifices were offered, given to these spirits intended to appease them.
3. The Africans also believed that annoying the living dead would result into curses. These living dead were considered part of the family and superior to the living members.
4. Curses in African traditional society called for the need of consulting gods in the shrines. This was done with the intention of finding out the possible causes of the curses.

5. Having sexual relation with a relative (incest) would result into curses. This was because they believed such people were already connected by blood.
6. To the Africans indecent burial of a clan/family member especially if such an individual was influential, it would cause tragedy and suffering to the living ones.
7. Curses were also closely associated with killing of relatives. This would mean breakage in blood relationship of the people believed to annoy the ancestral spirits.
8. Disrespect to secret objects and places like shrines would cause curses something bad had to happen because of the spiritual nature of such things.
9. In African traditional society, to them curses associated to disrespect of elder people especially the parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents because these people are believed to be close to God hence any kind of abuse would annoy the spiritual world.
10. Breaking of blood pact would result into curses. Blood pact involved making promises in the name of God to show one's commitment hence breaking it would mean in the social relationship involving even God and the spirit world.
11. Curses were associated with breaking of norms and customs of the society which to the traditional Africans had a deeper connection with the spiritual world.
12. To the Africans, they had a belief that failure to take care of the graveyard/ burial grounds especially by cleaning them would cause curses.
13. Also curses would come in situations of failure/refusal to share with the living dead.
14. Getting power, prestige and wealth through wrong means would also make society/ one to be cursed by the ancestors.
15. Witchcraft would also bring curses to society from Gods to those people participating in it.
16. In case the gods were not happy with the way someone enjoyed his wealth or treats people in society would lead to curses.

CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN (JOSHUA 1-12)

After the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for a great number of years (40years). They finally reached Canaan under the leadership of Joshua following the death of Moses who had led them from/ out of Egypt.

To the Israelites, the conquest of Canaan was seen as another mighty act of God and through Joshua they prepared themselves carefully to cross River Jordan into Canaan.

God through Joshua commanded the Israelites to sanctify/ purify themselves as they prepared to occupy the Promised Land. They had to keep themselves free from any evil.

The priests were instructed to lead the Israelites carrying the Ark act of covenant with a distance existing between themselves and the Israelites they were leading.

Reaching the edge of River Jordan, the water is said to have stopped flowing their by allowing the Israelites to cross into Canaan which marked the beginning of new life as the chosen people of God.

However, before settling down, the Israelites had to fight several wars given the fact that they were simply entering into a land being occupied by other people.

Judges who were also military leaders led the Israelites into attacking several city states of Canaan e.g. Jericho, Gilgal and Bethel among others in the early beginning and the conquest was finalized when Jerusalem was captured during the reign of King David.

However, in some places like Shechem, the Israelites entered peacefully as they were given a good welcome. This was because they were believed to be related to those people basing on the ground that Abraham their great grandfather had at one time been to this place where he had built an altar and worshiped God. Jacob also had once bought a piece of land in the same place. (Joshua 24-32)

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONQUEST OF CANAAN

1. The Israelites used a surprise attack approach on their enemies hence meaning that the enemies weren't aware of such attacks and they were easily defeated.
2. God's will and protection played a role in the successful conquest of Canaan. God had earlier on promised protection from their enemies and had even protected them in the wilderness.
3. The Israelites were well prepared to launch the attack on their enemies. In the wilderness they had already fought successful battles over other groups e.g. the Amalekites as such learnt more combat attacks.
4. The strong desire to occupy the land promised to their great grandfather Abraham contributed to the Israelites successful conquest they knew that the land belonged to them thus they fought with a lot of vigor and moral to obtain it.
5. The use of collaborators helped the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan. Among others, a Canaanite prostitute in the name of Rahab rescued the Israelites spies by hiding them on top of her roof when King Jericho had planned for their arrest.
6. The Israelites were bound by nationalistic feelings. They fought as one people and were ready at any cost to defend themselves.
7. Related to the above, there was disunity among the Canaanites tribes, each tribe fought her own and as such couldn't overcome the formidable force of Israel under leadership.
8. The desire to live a settled life motivated and gave determination to the Israelites to fight until the end. This had followed their long life wondering in the wilderness which they had got tired of.
9. The assumed invisibility of Israel contributed to their successful conquest of Canaan. News of their earlier clash with the Egyptians and other tribes in the wilderness like the Amalekites had already widely spread in the Canaanite city states and as such they got prepared for the wars and were therefore easily defeated.
10. The role played by the Israelites who were already settled in Canaan contributed to their successful conquests. At Shechem the Israelites were given a warm welcome because of the knowledge that Abraham and Jericho had earlier settled there before.

THE COVENANT RENEWAL CEREMONY

The covenant renewal deals with God's instructions to the Israelites through Joshua as their leader they came at a time when the Israelites had successfully conquered and settled in Canaan (Promised Land)

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem and called on the elders, other leaders and judges to come into the presence of God.

Through Joshua God reminded the Israelites of his blessings and promises he had made to their great grandfather Abraham.

Joshua pointed out the monotheistic faith of Israel's forefathers i.e. Abraham and Moses. He reminded the Israelites also to do the same.

Joshua reminded the Israelites about the roles of Moses and Aaron at the time they were suffering in Egypt under slavery.

Joshua presented God as being merciful and saving. He reminded them that God out of his love chose them and mercifully saved them from their Egyptian king and his magicians among others.

Joshua reminded the Israelites that their God was omnipresent and was therefore watching their behaviors hence he called upon them to be holy like him.

Joshua also reminded the Israelites about the covenant they entered into with God at Mount Sinai and called upon them to maintain it.

Joshua reminded the Israelites how God protected them from their enemies e.g. the Amalekites, Amorites, Moabites and the Canaanites.

Joshua further reminded the Israelites that their God gave them a fertile land Canaan in which they would live forever until.

Joshua called upon the Israelites to serve and honor only one God (Yahweh) they were to get rid of their gods which their ancestors used to worship at Mesopotamia and in Egypt (Joshua 24:14)

Joshua also pointed out the likely consequences of serving other gods. For this, Yahweh wouldn't forgive them but would punish and destroy them.

The Israelites thereafter answered Joshua offering their commitment to Yahweh and promised to obey him.

At the climax of the covenant renewal Joshua wrote the command he had read to the people in the book of the law.

Joshua then took a large stone and set it under an Oak tree in the Lord's sanctuary. The stone was to act as a witness to help the Israelites remain/ keep away from rebellious activities against God.

The covenant renewal involved the incorporation of foreign tribes into Yahweh's community.

Joshua thereafter dispersed the people and they all returned to their own part of land. He died shortly and was buried at Shechem.

REASONS FOR THE COVENANT RENEWAL

The Israelites had started backsliding and quite often they were tempted to abandon Yahweh (Exodus 32)

Most of the mature Israelites present at the time of the Sinai covenant had started dying. Therefore, those who were very young or hadn't yet been born during the Sinai covenant had to

be introduced to such an important aspect of their lives so that they could enter into a personal and bidding relationship with Yahweh.

The Canaan land was a place full of morality and therefore a covenant renewal was aimed at preventing the Israelites from falling prey to such immorality.

The Israelites had incorporated some Canaanites into their society hence such people had to be taught about the covenant faith which was inspired by God.

The Israelites had started trusting their won powers following their successful conquest of the Canaan land. Hence the covenant renewal was an occasion Joshua used to remind the Israelites of God's assistance.

Some Israelites had started looking at Joshua as their only leader because of his role in their conquest and settlement in Canaan. Joshua therefore intended to show them that they were God's people and were bound to his laws only.

By organizing the covenant renewal Joshua intended to serve a warning to the Israelites about the polytheistic nature of the society they had settled in. it was therefore a call for the Israelites to maintain monotheism.

Joshua intended to remind the Israelites about their responsibilities and obligations as per the sinaitic covenant. **Hence any future sinning and its subsequent punishment would lead out of the Israelites disobedience.**

The covenant renewal was necessary to re-affirm Israel as a theocratic nation. It therefore showed/ signified that the leaders who were there at that time were mere servants of God (Joshua 24:1)

The covenant renewal was intended to allow the new generation to know about their history especially the origin.

Joshua intended to remind the Israelites about the roles Yahweh played in their lives. They had to recall that their God was a God with power, love and care among others.

PROBLEMS/ CHALLENGES IN THE PROMISED LAND

1. There were land disputes among the Israelites basing on tribal differences with some showing greediness. Joshua however solved this problem by dividing the land himself.
2. Disunity developed among the various tribes of the Israel. This was because after settling in the land given to them each tribe started thinking about themselves as individual tribes other than the nation of Israel.
3. There were constant attacks on the Israelites from the neighbours. The Canaanites made the Israelites life increasingly difficult by attacking them because they believed that their land had been hijacked by these foreigners and were therefore determined to fight back.
4. Sexual immorality especially prostitution became common. The Israelites especially men got engaged in these activities majorly because of the beautiful Canaanites covenant laws where the Israelites weren't meant to have any sexual relations with other nations.
5. There was leadership vacuum particularly after the death of Joshua. This contributed to the later power struggle which eventually created disunity among the Israelites.

6. The Israelites experienced period of drought. This resulted into famine which subjected the people to suffering.
7. The societies of the Israelites settled were permissive. People behaved in any way they wanted. This attracted Israelites who felt betrayed by the covenant laws.
8. Israelites backslide and started practicing religious syncretism in other words they started worshipping Yahweh and Baal at the same time.
9. Because of the pagan influence the Israelites disobeyed Yahweh. They failed to carry out the act of Herem as instructed but instead became friendly to the people.
10. The Israelites were influenced by the leadership system that their neighbours who were being led by kings they demanded for a physical king and neglected Yahweh's theocratic rule over them but this was against the covenant faith.
11. Diseases and natural epidemics became common among the Israelites which left them physically weak and were therefore unable to earn a living.
12. Kingship in Israel, resulted into foreign alliance. This led to the importation of pagan practices into the Israelites community.
13. Infertility in some areas where they settled which lessened food production leading to famine in the land.
14. Sometimes God's ways appeared to be too rigid and difficult which forced some of them to divert from them.
15. God's wrath; sometimes God would severely punish his people which increased fear for God among the Israelites thus abandoning him.
16. The Israelites lacked leaders who would show a good example as judges, priests and kings were morally sick.
17. The wars of conquest made many of them lose their lives.
18. Their leaders turned against them and enslaved the Israelites while others were killed.

RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

This is the fusion of different religious beliefs; ideas and practices. This was the case when the Israelites conquered and settled in Canaan. It particularly became Common after the death of Joshua when the Israelites started borrowing the religious practices beliefs and ideas from the Canaanite religion and mixing it with their own but which was contrary to what Yahweh had commanded them to do and therefore it signified their disobedience.

CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

1. The Israelites had lost faith in Yahweh. They didn't see the need of believing in him and this came after they had forgotten the contribution of Yahweh in their history like liberating them from the Egyptian slavery. Protecting them against their enemies and giving them food among others. This therefore made them to trust the Canaanite religious way of life.

2. There was also absence/ lack of exemplary leaders particularly after the death of Joshua. This made them to behave in any way they thought like hence why some of them became a victim of religious syncretism (Joshua 17:6)
3. Religious syncretism became common because of the absence of vision. The Israelites believed that God was lacking time to answer their prayers. This encouraged them to go ahead and begin practicing the Canaanite religion.
4. According to the Israelites, the covenant laws were as strict on their ways of life and yet the Canaanite religion appeared to have a lot of laxity/ freedom. The Canaanite religion recognized freedom of worship and even prostitution.
5. The Canaanite gods were visible and yet Yahweh was invisible hence the Israelites were tired of worshipping an invisible God from their time of liberation to the time of settling in the Canaanite land who had visible gods.
6. Failure to carry the act of Herem as God had commanded led to the syncretism. This came as a result of the Israelites mixing freely with their enemies and their different ways of life yet they were meant to destroy them because of this they failed to resist the temptation of worshipping the Canaanite god.
7. The new generation of Israel that settled at Canaan lacked the real understanding of what Yahweh had done to their ancestors and even who Yahweh was. They couldn't therefore see the need of believing him and because of this they started believing in the Canaanite religion,
8. The Canaanite gods appeared to offer a more practical and quick solution to the people's problems than Yahweh e.g. Baal who was the chief go responsible for the health of the people and their animals appeared to have made all the Canaanites and their animals appeared attracted to Israelites to be
9. Religious syncretism came up because of the excitement associate with the worshipping of the Canaanite gods. Among other, Baal worship allowed sexual intercourse during the occasions. This therefore influenced the Israelites to copy such a way.
10. The transitional period from nomadic life agrarian life contributed to religious syncretism thus this was because Baal was responsible for good agricultural products. This meant that the Israelites had to consult Baal such that they could.
11. The Israelites relaxed after acquiring the promised land hence could no longer see the importance of Yahweh in their lives hence because of this, they resorted to Baal worship because it seemed new.
12. Similarity in the names of God i.e. the Canaanites and Israelites God contributed to religious syncretism. Both of them referred to the supreme being as "El" even the patriarch had referred to their God as "El shadai" meaning the God of the mountain and yet the Canaanite chief god was also called "El".
13. Infertility in some areas where they settled which lessened food production leading to famine in the land.

14. Sometimes God's ways appeared to be too rigid and difficult which forced some of them to divert from them.
15. God's wrath; sometimes God would severely punish his people which increased fear for God among the Israelites thus abandoning him.
16. Drought and famine in the land were common which disorganized them and forced them look for a solution from pagan gods.

HOW THE ISRAELITES PRACTICED SYNCRETISM?

1. They inter married with the pagan tribes of Canaanites, Moabites, Sidonites, etc. against God's law to them.
2. They worshipped idols and images of the Canaanite gods.
3. They even took over the religious beliefs of the Canaanites thus breaking the monotheistic way of life.
4. They took over the social cultural lifestyle of the Canaanite tribes against God's guidelines.
5. They started disobeying the covenant faith and Mosaic Law codes.
6. They demanded for human kings to lead over them like their pagan neighbouring nations
7. They even gave pagan names to their children thus desecrating the purity of the community. For example, Gideon was named Ishabaal.
8. They built high places at the official worship places of God like Bethel and Shiloh to worship Baal.
9. They got involved in the pagan fertility cults which showed distrust to their God.
10. They also got involved in the pagan sacrificial system including human sacrifices. For example, king Ahaz sacrificed his son to pagan gods.
11. They became obstinate and unwilling to repent to their God.
12. They disobeyed and even persecuted God's prophets and believed in the prophets of Baal.
13. Even the priests and prophets were corrupted by the Canaanite religion and culture.
14. The priests failed to teach people God's word to maintain covenant faith.
15. The Israelites failed to carry out the act of Herem. For example, during the reign of king Saul, he refused to practice Herem to the Amalekites.
16. They totally refused to listen to God's prophets and behaved the way they wanted.
17. They carried out divination. People came asking for the revelation from pieces of wood.
18. They made idols/images of their God. For example, Jeroboam made two golden calves which he placed at Bethel and Dan respectively.
19. They built houses in pagan fashions. For example, the pillars being made of the images of gods and goddesses.
20. They entered into alliances with Canaanites and foreign nations for example David and Solomon made a treaty with Tyre.
21. Seasons and feasts were timed according to Baal Calendar.

Justify the view that the way the Israelites behaved in the Promised Land was a total disappointment to Yahweh.

DANGERS OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM/ CONSEQUENCES OF BETRAYAL

1. God withdrew their favour from them and they lived less God's blessings.
2. They Lost military confrontation e.g. the philistines defeated the Israelites and even took the ark of covenant.
3. They were hit by disasters like famine, locusts, drought and diseases.
4. God's visions became rare and people became like sheep without a shepherd.
5. The Israelites were dominated by a foreign army and were taken to the second exile. The northern tribes went to Assyrian exile and the southern to Babylon.
6. They were attacked by beasts which destroyed both humans and their crops.
7. Disunity among themselves i.e. the Israelites blamed and turned against each other e.g. king Saul wanted to kill David after realizing that he would be a next king to replace him.
8. Infertility of crops, animals and human beings where their wives became barren.
9. Class distinction among the Israelites of the rich and poor
10. It contributed to the division of Israel. It got divided into two independent nations that is the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom.
11. Their worshiping places such as Bethel, Dan and Jerusalem were destroyed.
12. The people suffered under their own kings who oppressed and exploited them.

HOW CHRISTIANS PRACTICE RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM TODAY

- Marrying polygamous which is contrary to God's intention of creating only one man and woman.
- Wearing protecting charms like around the neck, arms, wrist and other private parts etc.
- Building of shrines to represent places of worship for the traditional gods while at the same time contributing towards the building of the church.
- Believing in superstitions like abandoning one's journey after meeting a dog or woman as the first thing of the day.
- Some humans do offer child sacrifices to gods for various reasons e.g. prosperity, protection among others.
- Giving names to newly born babies, relating to traditional practices e.g. names of twins.
- Consulting mediums/ witchdoctors at a certain given moment and going to the church thereafter.
- They live immoral lives that don't depict God's holiness.
- They disobey God's commands and follow easy ways which are un Godly.
- They speak evil against the holy spirit and God
- Some Christians are corrupt and embezzle government money for personal ends.
- Some Christian leaders are dictators and hate fellow Christians.
- They tell lies during campaigns.
- They cheat on the gifts collected to support God's work.

- They don't pay tithe in church for God's blessing in their jobs.
- They even go to the extent of persecuting those who are involved in Christian ministry.
- They get involved in drunkenness and worldly songs that defile their minds

CHARACTERISTICS/ FEATURES OF THE CANAANITE RELIGION

This was a religion which was in existence when Israelites entered and settled at Canaan. It was characterized by the following.

1. It was a polytheistic religion i.e. it involved the worshiping of many gods like Baal who was the chief god and Astarte the wife of Baal, mot the god of death.
2. The gods and goddesses had images i.e. they were represented by carvings from clay, wood or metals. They also took the form of insects, birds, animals like cows and goats.
3. It had hierarchy of gods. Among all gods, Baal was a chief god followed by his wife Astarte then mot and others.
4. It was a nature religion that is worshiping of the gods depended on weather and the agriculture season e.g. Baal who was responsible for rain was worshiped during drought or in absence of rain so that it could rain.
5. The gods had their own particular location where they were worshiped and consulted. Among the Canaanites most of the gods were worshiped facing the north.
6. The gods rivaled among themselves e.g. Baal was always in conflict with mot god of death.
7. It recognized the practiced temple prostitution. The Canaanites believed that a man, his crops and animals could be fertile after having sexual intercourse with the prostitute stationed at pagan temples.
8. The gods and goddesses were believed to be violent and powerful but were easily controlled by human beings through performing magical rituals.
9. Offering sacrifices was an important aspect of the Canaanite religion. Among others human beings, cows, goats and other animals were sacrificed.
10. The Canaanite religion involved the use of mediators i.e. the priest acted as link between gods/goddesses and man.
11. The Canaanite religious rituals aimed at ensuring the fertility of land, animals and people.

COMPARISON BETWEEN CANAANITE AND ISRAELITE RELIGION

- Both of them believe in a supreme being and they both address them using the same name "El"
- Offering sacrifices was an important aspect of both religions.
- Both religions had mediators whose main function was to link man and the Supreme Being through various activities like sacrifices and prayers.
- In both religions, the prosperity of the people depended on their relationship with the Supreme Being. Obedience would mean prosperity and disobedience would mean suffering.

- In both religions there existed religious festivals in which rituals were performed among others, the Israelites had the Passover festival and the Canaanites had the new moon festival.
- Both religions had religious centers especially during the time of judges. The Israelites had religious places like Shechem and Shiloh and the Canaanite had theirs like Ugarit.
- There existed prophets in both religions all of which acted as God's spokesmen.

DIFFERENCE

- The Canaanites religion was polytheistic while the Israelites religion was monotheistic.
- Whereas the Canaanite gods and goddesses were visible the Israelite God was invisible.
- The Canaanite gods had wives and were married while the Israelites God was supreme. Baal had a wife Astarte and the Canaanite supreme god "El" had a wife called Asherah.
- Whereas the Canaanite gods were violent, the Israelites God was loving, merciful and forgiving.
- The Canaanite gods would be controlled by human beings through magical practices. While the God of the Israelites had full control over his people.
- The Canaanite gods had images in form of lizards, bulls, goats etc. which was contrary to the Israelites God who was self-represented.
- Whereas the Canaanites religion tolerated the act of impurity like prostitution. The Israelites God demanded holiness and purity.
- The Canaanite gods were believed to have continual conflicts with each other like Baal god against the Mot god while the God of Israel was supreme and tolerated no rival.
- The prophets and priests of Israel were true, pure and moral while the Canaanite prophets and priests were false and immoral.
- The Canaanite gods could forget their duties. Among others the worshipers had to play sex with the temple prostitutes so as to remind Baal about his responsibility of fertility (1st Kings 18:26-27). The God of Israel was the one instead reminding the people about their conduct.
- In Baal worshiping temple prostitution was practiced in order to ensure the fertility of people, animals and crops while in the Israelites religion prostitution was highly condemned and punishable by stoning the victim to death.
- Whereas the Israelites religion recognized only animal sacrifices and crop offering, the Canaanite religion involved human sacrifices besides animals and crop offering.
- The Israelites religion was dependent on the covenant laws which were written while the Canaanite religion had nothing like laws at/ to which it was bound.
- The Canaanites offered sacrifices from anywhere while among the Israelites places of sacrifices were chosen by God.
- The worship of God in Israel was both inner/spiritual and physical while among the Canaanites worship was physical.

- The Canaanite religion involved worshiping heavenly bodies and physical features while the Israelites only worshiped God.
- In the Israel's religion kings were restricted from carrying out religious duties while in the Canaanite religion kings would carry out religious activities like offering sacrifices.
- In Israel's religion even leaders respected God's laws while in the Canaanite religion the leaders were above the law.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AFRICAN RELIGION

- African religion was African culture, involving respecting the dos and don'ts of society. Every culture was religion and all people were religious.
- Africans believed in the creator, God referred to as Ruhanga- among the Bunyoro, Katonda-among the Baganda, one in charge of the entire creation.
- God held a respected position, considered the supreme creator has special attributes as sustainer, and protector and holy.
- Africans believed in small gods as the assistants to God like Nalubale among the Baganda, Musoke the god of rain, Ddungu was the god of hunting etc. clan gods and family gods, "emandwa" in Bunyororo all considered assistants of God.
- Believed in ancestral spirits treated as means through which Africans communicated to the gods and creator.
- Africans had music, dance and drama as a form of worship. The Kikuyu sang God is good today, yesterday, tomorrow and forever.
- Africans prayed and worshipped their divine beings, God, gods and their departed relatives, the Ancestors.
- The religion involved sacrifices given to the divine beings for appreciation and worship, these included, white hen, black cock, etc. For example, the Karamajongs sacrificed a black bull to their gods.
- Offering of food and grain were given to the divine ones through libations and burning them for the divine beings to receive them through smoke.
- The religion involved the respect of religious objects such as trees, stones, mountains, Anthills etc., considered to be dwelling places and thus holy.
- There was respect for art and symbol, such as trees, sticks, stools, cups etc. these were considered to be dwelling places of divine ones, the gods.
- The Africans rites of passage, celebrated the African religious life, from conception to pregnancy, birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death
- The African Religion involved a number social ceremonies such as over a great harvest, new rain a great hunt, success at war/raid.
- African moral life was religious, and thus the expectations for trust, obedience, Honesty, respect.
- Immorality in the society was punishable while one was still alive, which was either personal or social, hence barrenness, diseases, drought, famine.
- Morality in society involved blessings, as appreciation for good conduct by the divine beings, hence, many children, heavy rains etc.
- African words explained reality in religious terms, hence names of people places and objects.

- African songs, riddles, poems and wise sayings, also explained reality in religious terms and were thus highly respected to be passed on to the young.
- African religion was found in personal experiences. Dreams and visions were respected for fore-telling, explaining events and resolving challenges in society.
- Prophets and prophetic messages were valued for they were considered Divine tellers, very close to the spirit world, and God.
- There were divinities, the divine beings, the seer, prophets, medicine men, and ancestry spirits, who served as mediums to God.
- Religious leaders included political leaders and prophets, relatives and children. Everyone was to respect the order of beings respectively.
- African traditional religion was and still not written down like other religions i.e. it has no written scriptures but it is found in people's minds and practices.

JUDGES IN ISRAEL

The term Judge is derived from the term "sopate" meaning executor of justice. It also means helper, ruler rather than giver of judgement.

The judges were national heroes and symbols of nationalism. Unlike in case of kingship where the office was hereditary, the office of a judge was appointive only by God.

Judges were charismatic leaders and the spirit of God gave such individuals extra ordinary strength and wisdom to lead others. Among others they included Deborah, Ehud, Gideon Samson and Samuel.

ROLES OF JUDGES

1. Judges acted as military leaders. They were able to organize and command the Israelites when fighting their enemies.
2. Judges acted as God's representative on earth among the Israelites. Israel being a theocratic nation, the people would talk to God through judges.
3. Judges helped to maintain morality in Israel. They ensured that the Israelites who contravened the moral code were punished. Among others, they ensured that the Benjamite rapists were punished (Joshua 19:22-30 and 28:11 and 18:28)
4. Judges had the responsibility of conquering new territories to make it part of the Promised Land.
5. Judges solved the disputes arising among the Israelites from time to time. It was important in maintaining justice.
6. Some of the judges composed hymns e.g. Deborah composed songs praising Yahweh's omnipresence and greatness.
7. The judges helped the priests in carrying out some of their duties. Among others, they emphasized the observation of Sabbath as a holy day and the role of circumcision.
8. Judges helped in motivating Israelites in doing some agricultural work like cultivation. This had followed their semi-nomadic way life and their eventual settlement at Canaan where they had to adjust to a new life.

9. Judges helped the Israelites to renew the covenant laws and faith. They could bring the 12 tribes of Israel together and places like shechem and Shiloh such that they could re-affirm their faith in Yahweh.
10. Judges prophesized. They were able to foretell events ahead of time. For example, Deborah prophesized defeat of Sisera a commander of one of the Israelites enemies and indeed it happened (judges 4:12-24)
11. Judges acted as mediators between God's people and their God.
12. Some judges stood to show God's powerfulness for example, Samson who could even tear a lion apart.

SAMUEL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONARCHY IN ISRAEL

In 1st book of Samuel there is a transition from the period of judges to the formation of the Israel monarchy with Samuel as the central figure. He is considered the last and the greatest judge of Israel.

Immediately the Israelites settled at Canaan, they were indirectly being governed by God through priests and judges. Priesthood as stated in the book of Leviticus was hereditary and didn't only involve divine services but also the political management of the people medical functions and settlement of disputes among others.

Samuel came into being at the time when there was a priest called Eli serving in the temple at Shiloh.

Samuel by God's decision inherited the priesthood which was quite abnormal from Eli's sons.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

1. Samuel was a son born to Elkanah married to two wives Peninnah and Hannah. Thus it was a polygamous family.
2. Elkanah had too much love for Hannah but unfortunately she was barren and thus could not have children while Peninnah was fertile and had children. This became a great source of conflict in Elkanah's home.
3. The great love Elkanah had for Hannah angered Peninnah and the inability of Hannah to have children was a great disappointment to her.
4. Peninnah used to minimize Hannah to the extent that she could not eat.
5. It was a tradition for Elkanah and his family to go for an annual festival at Shiloh, during the occasion Peninnah and her children were entitled to offer a half of the sacrificial meal and Hannah was given less because of being alone.
6. However, Peninnah used this chance to criticize Hannah and this even made her very sad about her barrenness.
7. At one annual festival when Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas were performing their priestly duties and after the sacrificial meal, Hannah went to the temple to pray to God.
8. She prayed in her heart with only the lips moving and she whispered deeply asking God to look into her problems and give her a son. She promised to give the son wholly to God.

9. Hannah had been regarded as an outcast in society thus her enemies had already judged her wrong.
10. She knew that God was holy and protects the weak in their agony.
11. Peninnah had become proud because of the children she had not knowing that he was God who controlled human destiny.
12. Eli on observing Hannah praying, first thought she was mad or drunk but she denied and explained that she was telling God her problems.
13. Hannah had given up and constantly cried bitterly thus she was left alone and that is why behaved as if she was drunk.
14. Eli thereafter blessed her and asked God to listen to her prayers.
15. When the period of sacrifices was over elkanah and his family went back to their place at Ramah where Hannah was able to conceive later and had a son whom she named Samuel "ask from God"
16. During this time the people of Israel had broken their covenant obligation to God. Therefore, by all means Samuel had to be born to revive the religious situation.
17. The political situation of Israel also facilitated the birth of Samuel. The charismatic judges had relaxed in their duties so God wanted a fair Judge no wonder that He gave Hannah Samuel.
18. The military situation also facilitated Samuel's birth. Every now and again Israel was registering military defeats from her enemies because God had withdrawn his protection an eventuality leading to Samuel's birth.
19. At that time there were many false prophets in Israel. These often misled people into bad acts and Samuel's birth was to assist in solving the problems created by false prophets.
20. By this time the priestly office had become useless, Eli had grown old while his sons had become too wicked that their replacement was inevitable. This culminated into Samuel's birth.

Discuss the circumstances under which Samuel was born.

Examine the circumstances that led to the birth of Samuel?

THE MAIN FEATURES OF HANNAH'S THANKS GIVING PRAYER.

1. Immediately the boy was weaned Hannah picked a 3year old bull, a jar of flowers and some wines and she took Samuel to God's house at Shiloh and she dedicated him for the service of the lord as he lived.
2. After this Hannah worshiped God and gave a prayer of dedication.
3. In the prayer Hannah exalted God with devotion.
4. She indicated of how by getting Samuel her enemies had been brought to their knees.
5. She rejoiced over her victory in view of the past humiliation.
6. When praying she recognized the holiness of God.
7. In the prayer she referred to God as a rock on which she based her faith.
8. While praying she recognized that God gives life to the lifeless and death to those proud of it.

9. She maintained that it is God who graces the barren with seven children and makes the proud mothers of many suffer with none.
10. She acknowledged God as the protector.
11. In her prayer she acknowledged God as all knowing.
12. She exalted God for raising the needy from dust and for elevating the poor as well as humbling the rich.
13. She exalted God for humbling some people and making others great.
14. She recognized that the foundation of the world belonged to God and on them He built the world.
15. She praised God as a protector of the faithful while making the wicked disappear in darkness.

GOD PROMISED TO BRING ELI'S FAMILY TO AN END/ GOD'S REJECTION OF ELI'S FAMILY

The Angel of the Lord came to Eli and announced the destruction of Eli's sons because of the various crimes they had committed (1st Samuel 27:30)

This was a very sad announcement to Eli because it implied that his role as a priest was going to be handed over to people of God's choice and therefore the end and history.

The Israelites also believed that a man whose children died before him was cursed, which to Eli wasn't an exemption.

REASONS WHY GOD REJECTED ELI AND HIS FAMILY

1. Eli and his family were rejected because of greediness which was clearly exhibited by his sons before the worshipers. They would eat much during sacrifices leaving other people to suffer and this made the people to complain to the Lord.
2. In relation to above, Eli's sons violated the rules governing sacrifices. They would eat the best part of the sacrifices before even Yahweh had been given his share. They had also started presenting animals with defects and deformation. (1st Samuel 2:12)
3. Eli was rejected because his sons defiled the Lord's sanctuary. They took advantage of their position and started having sexual intercourse with the women working in the temple. This showed that the boys had yielded the Canaanite religion as opposed to the demands of the covenant laws.
4. Eli's family was rejected because his sons had no respect for him. Even when he made an attempt to warn them about their misconduct, none of them could listen to him. This was contrary to the covenant requirement where children had to respect their parents (Exodus 20:12)
5. Eli had failed to discipline his sons by punishing them as they continued with their misconduct. This showed a bad example to others as a holy man working on behalf of God.
6. The rejection of Eli's family was because his sons had failed to follow the good example their father had set. He worked faithfully as a mediator between God and his people but his sons were doing the contrary hence their rejection (1st Samuel 2:23-25)

7. Eli's sons became proud and arrogant because of their position. They also discriminated the worshippers basing on what they had. In this case, they praised the rich and despised the poor yet all these were Yahweh's people and therefore equal.
8. God rejected Eli's family because his sons were corrupt and were taking bribes. They misused people's sacrifices by taking them as their personal belonging. This explains why God could reject some of the sacrifices which even made people very annoyed.
9. Eli's sons were using vulgar language in places of worship. Besides they quite often spoke evil things about God, this was blasphemy as it showed no respect to God as demanded in the covenant laws. (Exodus 20:7) for this reason Eli together with his sons were rejected.
10. Eli's rejection was because his sons had become rude and intimidated people who brought their sacrifices at Shiloh (1st Samuel 2:16) they used force to get the best part of the sacrificial meal from the worshipers. This was a sin before the Lord hence their rejection.
11. Eli's family was rejected because his sons practiced religious syncretism and yet they were supposed to serve only Yahweh. Among others they had started practicing cult prostitution which was a Canaanite practice (1st Samuel 2:22)
12. The character of the boy Samuel who remained faithful as he worked with Eli contributed to Eli's sons being rejected. Although he was an adopted child, his faithfulness made him to appear to be a perfect substitute to Eli's sons who were unfaithful.
13. Eli who was already growing old took it for granted to appoint his sons as priest without consulting Yahweh. To this it appeared that he had turned the charismatic leadership into family affairs.
14. Eli's sons were not a good guide to the Israelites. They misled others and so God rejected them in order to choose someone else who would rectify the situation.
15. Eli's sons were sexually immoral. They misused sex by sleeping with the maids who worked on the alter. This however was a disgrace to Yahweh which led to their rejection from the priestly office.
16. Age was another fundamental factor that prompted Eli's rejection. He became very old and so it became very necessary for him to be rejected as he could no longer serve effectively as God's priest.
17. Eli appointed his sons without consulting God thus making priesthood hereditary. By doing so Eli had changed the charismatic leadership into a family affair and so God had to reject the family.

EFFECTS/CONSEQUENCES OF ELI'S FAMILY SINS

- It led to the rejection of Eli's family from serving God as priests.
- God's visions became rare by the time the family became wicked until when God talked to Samuel when announcing the rejection of Eli's family.
- God also punished the Israelites as a community. They were defeated by the Philistines who captured the ark of the covenant which was a symbol of might and unity of Israel.
- Both sons of Eli that is Hophni and Phinehas died. They were killed during this war.

- Eli also died when he heard that his sons had died and the covenant box was captured. He fell off his chair by the side of the gate and died.
- Samuel was called in the vision to replace the wicked family of Eli.
- God rejected the sacrifices offered by his children on behalf of the Israelites because they were officiated by wicked people.
- Eli's family became very poor because the priestly privileges were removed from them.
- Israel was equally affected by disasters such as drought and famine.
- Eli's name was removed from Israel completely because of his children.
- With Eli's rejection there was a registered transformation of the religious institution in Israel.

PURNISHMENT PASSED ON TO ELI'S FAMILY

1. They were no longer to offer sacrifices for forgiveness. Even if they were to do so, it couldn't be accepted because they were wrong people giving the sacrifices.
2. They were not to be respected since they also had no respect to the people and God.
3. The privilege of hereditary priesthood was given to another family. Samuel who was an adopted son inherited priesthood from Eli instead of Eli's sons. It highly troubled them.
4. The life span of Eli's family members was to be reduced from generation to generation implying that Eli's generation would eventually come to an end and hence the end of history.
5. Eli's family members were to die a violent death. This was to serve as an example for others to behave properly.
6. The family members were not to continue serving as priest and if they did, they were to become blind and hopeless.
7. Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas were to die on the same day.
8. Eli's family was to be reduced to extreme poverty. They were to beg food and seek employment in an unidentified land.
9. Eli's family members were to be troubled and look with envy on the blessings God was to give to other people.

LESSONS TO MODERN RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM THE REJECTION OF ELI'S FAMILY

1. Religious leaders should be mindful of their conduct as they render their services because God is all knowing.
2. There is need for religious leaders to up bring their children in a proper way hence they should discipline them where necessary.
3. Religious leaders should be honest and fight corruption. They should serve their people diligently to keep good public image not like the sons of Eli who became corrupt and painted a bad public image on their family.

4. Religious leaders should have respect for God and his people. Eli's sons were punished because of having no respect for their father and other people.
5. Religious leaders should treat all people equally. To them, both the poor and rich are God's people and therefore same unlike Eli's sons who praised the rich and criticized/ despised the poor.
6. Religious leaders need to serve God with holiness and dedicate themselves in God's services. Eli's sons defiled God's sanctuary by having sexual intercourse with the worshipers and were therefore punished.
7. Modern religious leaders should live a simple and humble life. They should refrain from being proud and arrogant because of their positions like Eli's sons who were later on punished for this behavior.
8. Religious leaders need to seek God's guidance through prayers during family problems. Eli as a priest could have sought for God's assistance during his family problems before being rejected.
9. Religious leaders should accept punishment from God even when it is communicated by humble people. God used Samuel to punish Eli and his family.
10. Religious leaders should obey and serve God faithfully. Eli and his sons failed to uphold the responsibility of priesthood at Shiloh and were rejected and Samuel who worked faithfully took over the responsibility.
11. Religious leaders should be contented with who they are and what they have. They should therefore fight greediness as manifested by Eli's sons who grabbed the worshiper's sacrifices and were punished.
12. Religious leaders should learn to listen to people's views/outcries. Eli ought to have listened to the people's outcry but he did little by only warning his sons and was eventually rejected.
13. They ought to show love to God and his people in their services unlike Eli's sons who cared only for themselves.
14. Religious leaders should always accept their mistakes. They should therefore repent rather than giving excuses just like Eli accepted to suffer the guilt of his sons.
15. Religious leaders should consult God first before encouraging or recruiting their children into divine offices which they may not have been called for.
16. They should take part in disciplining their children so as to have a desirable image towards the public.
17. They should listen to the rebuke from their parents and elders of the church so as to escape being judged and punished by God.
18. They should keep their bodies holy by having self-control in case they are serving among women. Eli's children had sex with the maids who worked in God's sanctuary.

Account for the rejection of Eli's family from priesthood?

What can religious leaders learn from this rejection?

THE CALL OF SAMUEL (1st Samuel 3:1- following)

- Despite the corruption at Shiloh Samuel remained faithful and served the Lord under the guidance of Eli. He grew up seeing all the evil acts in Eli's family.
- At that time visions and the word of the Lord had become rare. People even never saw visions because they became unfaithful and the priest house had been defiled.
- The call of Samuel became dramatic while him and Eli were sleeping in the temple, the Lord called him and he answered "here I am" and went to Eli thinking it was Eli calling him but which Eli denied and sent him back to sleep.
- Samuel found it difficult to recognize the lord's voice because by that time it was not common for God to talk to people.
- The Lord again called for Samuel went back to Eli and still Eli denied having called him.
- When Samuel heard the 3rd call again he went to Eli. The old spirit this time realized that it must be God calling the young boy. So Eli instructed Samuel to respond and say "Lord your servant is listening" after hearing another call.
- When Samuel went back to sleep the Lord called him the 4th time and he responded as Eli had instructed him. God thereafter pronounced to Samuel his intention to destroy Eli's family.
- God told Samuel that He was going to do something in Israel which would make everybody astonished.
- That all the prophecies against Eli's family would come true.
- Yahweh therefore, swore to the house of Eli that the guilt of Eli's house was not to be forgiven at all.
- Eli with the knowledge that God had spoken to Samuel commanded him to reveal the message that he did so.
- In his reply Eli simply said "he is the Lord, no will do whatever seems right to him" this implied that Eli allowed and accepted the punishment of dying because of the sins of his sons.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SAMUEL'S CALL TO THE ISRAELITES

- The call of Samuel gave Israel a prophet who would warn the Israelites about god's coming judgment like when he announced God's judgment to Eli's family.
- The call gave Israel a priest who always mediated between Yahweh and the Israelites especially during the time of worship as outlined in the regulations concerning priests in the book of Leviticus.
- It gave Israelites a priest who offered sacrifices to Yahweh on behalf of Israel. Such sacrifices were accepted by Yahweh leading to harmony and peace in Israel.
- The call gave Israel a charismatic leader leading to Yahweh's visions which were rare in

Israel to be reflected again from time to time.

- The call gave Israel a judge who settled conflicts ranging from land to other social conflicts.
- The call gave Israel a military leader who commanded Israelites during times of military crisis out of his leadership skill.
- It gave Israel a priest who encouraged repentance in Israel. Out of his advice, theocracy was revived where Israelites included Yahweh in all their social, political and religious life.
- The call gave Israelites a leader who acted as a mediator linking the Israelites to Yahweh and Yahweh to the Israelites.
- The call gave Israel a seer who assisted the Israelites community in solving local problems like later when he helped Saul to recover his father's lost donkeys.
- The call gave Israel a king maker whom God ordered to anoint kings in Israel hence anointed Saul as the first king of Israel and David his successor.
- The call gave Israel a spokesman of Yahweh who delivered Yahweh's message to Israel like when he delivered Yahweh's message of the rejection of Eli's family.
- The call gave Israel an intercessor who would plead on behalf of the Israelites through prayer whenever Yahweh wanted to punish them.
- The call gave Israel a religious leader who guided them towards the covenant faith emphasizing the importance of observing and following the ten commandments and other laws of God.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CALL OF MOSES AND SAMUEL

1. Both Moses and Samuel were called to pronounce God's judgment and punishment. Moses pronounced punishment to the Egyptian slave masters and Samuel to Eli's family.
2. They were both called unaware and at awkward time. Moses was in the bush looking after the sheep and Samuel was asleep during the night.
3. Both Moses and Samuel were called and sent to specific people. Moses was sent to liberate the Israelites and Samuel to Eli's family.
4. Both of them were called while away from their homes. Moses was in exile in the Median land and Samuel was at Eli's home in Shiloh away from his parents in Ramah.
5. Both Moses and Samuel were in the hands of priests at the time of their call. Moses was living with Jethro the Median priest and Samuel with Eli a priest at Shiloh.

6. Both were called at the time when God's words and visions were rare. Moses only had his mind to suffering of his people under the Egyptian slavery and at the time of Samuel the Israelites had started practicing religious syncretism.
7. God's revelation to both Moses and Samuel were dramatic. God appeared to Moses through a burning bush which was unconsumed and to Samuel through strange voice at night.
8. Both Samuel and Moses were given a difficult task which they tried to avoid. Moses tried to object God's instructions by giving some excuses like inability to speak well knowing God's name. Samuel also feared to reveal God's message to Eli.
9. Both Moses and Samuel were born at the time of crisis. Moses was born during the political crisis in Egypt and Samuel during the mental crisis in Elkanah's family.
10. Both Moses and Samuel communicated to God directly without any intermediary.
11. God initiated the call for both Moses and Samuel with the intention of bringing salvation to mankind.
12. Both Moses and Samuel were alone at the time of their call. Moses was in the bush looking after sheep of his father in law Jethro and to Samuel he was sleeping far away from Eli.

DIFFERENCES

1. Moses was called and given a helper. Aaron but Samuel was called and worked less a helper.
2. Samuel was called when he was still young while Moses was called at an old age.
3. The call of Moses involved movements contrary to Samuel's call. Moses had to leave the median land and go back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites while Samuel's call happened when he was together with the people he had to deliver God's image.
4. Samuel was called when he had already entered the service of God but to Moses, it was the beginning point of service.
5. God revealed his name in the call of Moses as being "I AM WHO I AM" but to Samuel God talked to him less identifying himself.
6. Samuel's call had an eye witness. It was witnessed by Eli but Moses was alone in the bush looking after the sheep of his father in-law.
7. Moses was called when he was already married but Samuel was still single at the time of his call.
8. Samuel willingly accepted God's call but Moses first objected his call by giving excuses like inability to speak fluently and demanding for the name of God.
9. Moses was called before the formation of Israel as a nation while Samuel was called after the formation of Israel as a nation.
10. Moses was given divine power to perform miracles while Samuel was just authorized to pass judgement to Eli.
11. God appeared to Moses and Samuel in different forms. Moses was in the form of fire and to Samuel inform of a strange voice.

12. Moses had taken a refuge in the median land at the time of his call following his criminal act of killing an Egyptian slave master. Samuel on the other hand was at Eli's house with the blessing of the mother.

HOW THE CALL OF SAMUEL INFLUENCED THE LIFE AND HISTORY OF ISRAEL? THE EXTENT TO WHICH HIS CALL WAS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE?

To a large extent

- His call led to the death of Eli's sons who were disobedient to God and the Israelites.
- It led to the rise of Samuel himself who later only knew the Israelites heritage.
- It endured monotheism in Israel once again.
- His coming into the scene forced the philistines to return with the ark of covenant.
- Samuel purified Shiloh the worshiping place previously defiled by sexual immorality.
- Samuel called back the Israelites through organizing national repentance.
- Israel started enjoying prosperity as opposed to the time of Eli.
- Corruption that was practiced by Eli's sons was eradicated.
- Samuel restored the Israelites hope in the roles of priests. People became satisfied with their sacrifices.
- Israel was able to defeat her enemies.
- Israel changed her stats to kingship from a theocratic nation.
- The Lord's vision and words became common among the people again.
- The Israelites started living a life based on sinaitic covenant.
- However, Idolatry persisted.
- Israelites demanded for a physical king.
- Religious syncretism persisted.
- Corruption resurfaced by the sons of Samuel.
- Made a mistake and appointed his sons as priests without consulting the elders.
- Enemies of Israel continued to fight them.
- Samuel became inefficient like Eli due to old age.
- Samuel also failed to enforce discipline in his children. They were also immoral.

THE DEATH OF ELI AND HIS SONS (1st Samuel 4:1- following)

The death of Eli and his sons was a fulfillment of Samuel's prophesy. Whatever God said through Samuel came true.

The philistines attacked Israel and over-powered it despite the fact that Israelites had carried the covenant backs with the hope of God's protection.

Eli's sons; Hophni and Phinehas had come with the covenant box. At battle field they were killed and the covenant box was carried away by philistines. They died on the same time as the Angle of Lord had earlier long prophesized.

When Eli at the age of 98 was informed of the death of two sons and the taking away of the covenant box he got shocked and died instantly. This was another confirmation of Samuel's prophesy.

Eli died after being a leader for 40 years. Later on his daughter in law the wife in law died shortly after giving birth to a son whom she named Ichabod thus meaning "God's glory has left Israel" (1st Samuel 4:19-22)

ROLE PLAYED BY SAMUEL AS A KING, PROPHET AND JUDGE AS WELL AS A KING MAKER

Samuel's explanation of his domination was based on the misconduct of people and the evasion of God particularly at the time they were settling down at Canaan. Samuel therefore became the leader of the people as a priest, judge, the prophet as well as the king maker as observed below;

1. As a priest, Samuel taught Israelites God's message. He came at a time when God's word was rare and he took an effort to change the status quo.
2. In Samuel's reign fortunately the Ark of covenant was returned by the philistines because of the fear of God of Israel, but in spite of this the philistines continued to dominate Israel.
3. As a priest Samuel organized a day of national repentance at Mizpah and Gilgal where he asked the people to dedicate themselves to God and to destroy all the foreign gods and images they worshiped. (1st Samuel 7:3-4). The Israelites obeyed and left their idols of Baal and Astarte and God rewarded them with victory over the philistines.
4. As a priest, Samuel sacrificed and offered on behalf of the Israelites. Among others, he offered and burnt sacrifices for sin offerings and fellowship offerings. He followed all the laws regarding sacrifices as put in the book of Leviticus.
5. Samuel purified Shiloh a worshiping place which had been defiled by weakening of sons of Eli.
6. Samuel as a prophet delivered God's message to the people among others God sent him to Eli, Saul and David.
7. As a prophet, everything Samuel spoke became true and a reality. He prophesized the death of Eli and his family and it was eventually fulfilled when Eli's sons were killed at the battle field and Eli there after he also died.
8. Samuel's reign as a prophet witnessed God's vision and message. This came after a long period of absence following misconduct of the Israelites.
9. Samuel was a military leader. He was courageous enough and helped the Israelites to defeat their enemies like the Amalekites who had attacked them at Mizpah.
10. Samuel as a seer e.g. he assisted Saul to trace the lost donkeys of his father.
11. He acted as a chief judge over people's disputes. He moved all over Canaan settling people's cases in places like Bethel, Mizpah, and even at his birth place Ramah.
12. As a judge Samuel called upon the Israelites to live as one people. He showed them the need of behaving as brothers and sisters of one loving father. This helped them.

13. Samuel acted as a king maker. He anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel following the people's demanding for a kingdom.
14. Samuel further went ahead and guided the king on his roles. He gave Saul some laws which he was to follow as a king of Lord's people.
15. Samuel acted as a counsellor to the king. On several occasions he advised king Saul especially during difficulties.
16. Samuel mediated between the Israelites and Yahweh. Among others Israelites demanded for a king through Samuel and in his response he prayed to God and he answered him by giving him a go ahead to meet people's desires.
17. As a priest Samuel revived the Israelites respect to God's leaders. The Israelites listened to him as opposed to time of Eli when the people had lost respect on their leaders.
18. Samuel defended the covenant faith he quit often called upon the Israelites to maintain good and harmonious relationships with Yahweh through following the Ten Commandments.
19. As a national leader Samuel provided charismatic leadership and the Israelites looked at him as the center of their hopes.
20. Samuel also rehabilitated the central sanctuary at Shiloh. He built it up, he eradicated centers where idols had been erected by the notorious sons of Eli and thus monotheism prevailed under his leadership.

However, Samuel as a leader had his own weaknesses;

1. He became too inefficient especially in carrying his duties as a priest where he failed to offer sacrifices. A case in point is during the war against the Amalekites where Saul was forced to offer sacrifices on his behalf and yet as a king this was not his role and therefore as a result, this contributed to Yahweh's rejection of sacrifices and the subsequent defeat of the Israelites.
2. Samuel also blundered and chose his own sons to succeed him in spite their misbehavior.
3. Samuel failed to discipline his children. He appeared to be too reluctant in performing his duty as a father and this eventually led to the misbehavior of his children.
4. Samuel also made charismatic leadership hereditary by choosing his Sons as judges over God's people. Joel and Abijah were made leaders in Israel but they did not follow their father's ways.
5. Samuel who Anointed Saul as first king facilitated his failure. Instead of helping Saul to repent like how Nathan was to David, Samuel just cursed king Saul.
6. Samuel made Saul work as a king difficult by over supervising him and failed to give him a chance to apply his personal wisdom.
7. Even during Samuel's reign, the Israelites continued with syncretism. Thus he failed to re-institute pure monotheism as expected.
8. The enemies of Israel continued to threaten her existence during Samuel's reign. The philistines continued to attack Israel. Thus he failed to completely defeat Israel's enemies.