

## **GOD'S SALVATION FOR MANKIND THROUGH THE PATRIARCH (Genesis 12)**

The word patriarch means the head of an extended family. In this case it refers to Abraham and his immediate descendants Isaac and Jacob and the great grand descendants such as Moses and David. Therefore, the patriarchs were the ancestors of those who later came to be called the Israelites.

It was as a result of the call of Abraham by God to move to a strange land (Canaan) that the salvation history of mankind begun. Therefore, the important biblical theme of election or being chosen begins with the story of Abraham who responded to the voice of God with obedience, trust and love.

From Gen 3 to 11 its indicated that God hadn't got somebody who was faithful to cooperate with, God tried with Noah who was a good man at the beginning but later broke the relationship with God so God couldn't continue with him although he was a savior of the remnants at the times of the floods.

After the floods sin continued to spread and God took the initiative to rescue mankind by calling Abraham to start off his main plan for salvation. It shows that God never wanted to leave man in such a fallen state.

### **CALL OF ABRAHAM (Gen 12:1 following)**

The call of Abraham marked a new beginning in the history of mankind. God took the initiative to begin the work of salvation to bring mankind in fellowship with him.

Abraham was the son of Terah in the city of UR in Babylon. By the time of his call Abraham was an old man of 75years.

He was originally known as Abram but his name was changed later during the course of his relationship with God.

Abraham had a beautiful but barren wife by the names of Sarai and was later named Sarah by God during the making of the covenant.

Abraham was a wealthy man. He had a number of domestic animals and slaves. Abraham was a known worshiper of many gods (polytheist). He worshiped the gods of the moon, weather, sun etc.

Abraham had many relatives with whom he was living with together. During his call God told Abraham to leave his native land and relatives to go to a land he was going to be shown. When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with total faith, obedience and trust.

Besides Abraham didn't mind on his personal comfort and the risks he would encounter on his way.

In the same way God told Abraham to change the form of his name from Abram to Abraham. He then moved from the city of Ur to the city of Hiran where he settled for a while. This city was highly civilized and because of this Abraham even acquired more wealth before he started moving to Canaan together with his father Terah wife Sarah and his nephew Lot.

## REASONS FOR THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

1. **Reconciliation;** God wanted to use Abraham as a means of reconciling with mankind. Right from Genesis 3; Man had created a gap between himself and God. Therefore, the call of Abraham was an avenue to reconcile the sinful man with God.
2. **Salvation to mankind;** God wanted to use Abraham as a means of salvation to mankind. In Gen 3:15 God had promised that the offspring of the woman would crush the devil. Therefore, the call of Abraham was an instrument God intended to use for salvation.
3. **Restoration of God's image;** God wanted to restore his image into man and man's fallen dignity. These had followed the continuous disobedience of man where he had been behaving contrary to God's expectation.
4. **Bringing back joy and happiness;** God called Abraham to restore joy, happiness, freedom and harmony which man had lost after eating the forbidden fruit in Gen 3.
5. **To institute monotheism;** God called Abraham start monotheism that is the worship of one God. Man was created to worship God only but unfortunately he had started worshiping other beings. In the cities where Abram was living people were worshiping many gods e.g. sun and moon.
6. **To make a covenant;** God called Abraham to enter into a covenant relationship with him. This covenant would mark a new beginning in the life history of mankind. This is evident at a later stage through the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants that reached the climax through the birth of Christ.
7. **God called Abraham to create a model nation;** In this case God wanted to use the Israelites to serve to the rest of other races, races of the world such that they may realize his love for mankind.
8. **God calls anyone;** God wanted to show that he calls anybody irrespective of his background. Abraham was a moon worshiper and never a sinner but in spite of all this, God decided to use him to serve his purpose.
9. **Save him from sinning;** God called Abraham to remove and save him from the sinful environment he was living in. this explains why God instructed Abraham to leave his native land and go into a land he was going to show him.
10. **God wanted to show the power of faith and obedience;** Right from Gen 3:11, man has failed to be faithful and disobeyed. God therefore had intended to show that through faith and obedience one could be blessed just as Abraham received blessings.

11. **Initiating a theocratic nation;** Abraham was called to start a nation of believers guided and ruled by God himself.
12. **God wanted to show his love for the fallen man through the call of Abraham;** In this case God intended to show that he doesn't leave a sinner in a fallen state completely. It's because of this that God chose Abraham to extend his enduring love for the man he had created.
13. **God called Abraham to extend his blessings to mankind;** This is evident during the course of the call when God told Abraham that through him the whole world would be blessed.
14. **To make promises to Abraham;** God had a number of promises He wanted to make to Abraham which promises later became a reality in Abraham's life. For example, the promise of a child.
15. **Manifestation of God's existence;** God wanted to show that He was a reality since during Abraham's time, the almighty God had been forgotten by man. That is why God revealed Himself to Abraham during his call an eventuality which proved Him as a living God.
16. **Model of faith;** God called Abraham so as to make him a model of faith and make his name great in all nations and generations.
17. **Divine election;** By calling Abraham, God wanted to begin the mission of divine election where a group of people would be put aside to specially serve and worship God.
18. **Give him land;** God wanted to give Abraham his own possession that is the land of Canaan which as flowing with milk and honey.

**Question; account for the call of Abraham by the invisible God?**

## **MANIFESTATION OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH IN GOD**

When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with faith, obedience and trust. This was a positive attitude which became instrumental in showing his faithfulness considering that he had no knowledge of the God calling him.

1. **Moving to a strange land;** Abraham accepted to move into a strange land which God was going to show him even when he was an old man of 75years. To man of Abraham's age, status, cultural background and economic stand, it was practically difficult to accept such a call.
2. **Believed in God's promises;** Abraham believed in God's promise including blessings, land, son and a great nation. However, it would have been very difficult for Abraham to believe in all these promises if he wasn't man of faith.
3. **Allowing monotheism and the invisible God;** Abraham abandoned the worshipping the visible traditional gods and started worshipping the invisible God who spoke to him. In other words Abraham embraced monotheism at the expense of polytheism.
4. **Building of alters;** When Abraham reached places like Bethel, Shechem and Dan, he built alters for worshipping his new God showing that he had faith in the new God.

5. **Abraham accepted and made a covenant with God;** He believed and trusted that God would fulfill His promises. Abraham's covenant with God is recorded in Genesis; 15 and 17; respectively.
6. **Circumcision at an old age;** Abraham accepted the custom of circumcision to himself and of all the male children i.e. his descendants. It was to act as an outward sign of the covenant he had made with God.
7. **Offering sacrifices to God;** Abraham offered several sacrifices to God. In this case he sacrificed the best animals and birds. This explains why God accepted his sacrifices.
8. **Abraham's faith made him to change the form of his name and that of his wife;** He was originally called Abram but later changed to Abraham after making a covenant with God even the name of his wife changed from Sarai to Sarah.
9. **Abraham willingly accepted to sacrifice his only son called Isaac when God tested his faith;** Had it not been his faith he could have hesitated God's demand for sacrificing his only successor.
10. **Abraham prayed to God to spare the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah;** It was Abraham's faith that made God to reveal his plan for destroying these cities (Gen 18:16 – following)

## **HOW CHRISTIANS CAN DEMONSTRATE THEIR FAITH TODAY**

- Accepting baptism
- Helping the needy
- Following the ten commandments
- Giving offertory in the church
- Fasting
- Meditating upon God's wonders
- Praying consequently
- Repenting
- Accepting to suffer innocently e.g. persecution, discrimination
- Preaching the good news
- Fellowshiping
- Accepting God's call through serving others
- Embracing the idea of reconciliation and forgiveness
- Going for holy wedding

## **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**

1. Abraham was promised a land which was unknown to him. He was to leave his native land and go into his land which later became known as Canaan.

2. Abraham was promised very many descendants. These descendants were to occupy the Promised Land.
3. Abraham was promised a child and that the child would be a son. This came as good news considering that Abraham who was already 75 years.
4. God promised him divine protection. In this case God was to curse whoever would curse Abraham.
5. God promised Abraham to be the source of blessings to all other nations. God is quoted as saying "I will bless those who bless 'you'" Gen 12:3
6. Abraham was promised a famous name. his name would be known all over the world Gen 12:12
7. God promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation (Gen 12:2)
8. God promised Abraham that he was to be prosperous throughout his life. This made God to give a lot of wealth to Abraham and his descendants.
9. God also promised Abraham a peaceful and honorable death. This promise was made by God during the making of the covenant.
10. Abraham was also promised that his descendants were to be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years but after this period they would come out with a great possession.
11. Abraham was further promised that the nations which would enslave his descendants would be punished.
12. God also promised Abraham to curse whoever would curse him and to bless whoever would bless him.
13. God also promised Abraham that kings would come from his line. No wonder that God granted Israel the institution of kingship.

### **GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (Gen 15: and 17:)**

A covenant is a binding agreement which can either be made between two individuals or a group of individuals. A covenant made between two unequal parties e.g. God and man is known as Sovereign Agreement.

Various types of covenants are found in all societies and cultures. In some societies a covenant is sealed with an oath while in others they have blood pacts showing that the agreement is permanent.

In the same way God couldn't use Abraham without making a covenant relationship with him and this was a covenant between two unequal parties. In this case God took the initiative to bring Abraham closer to him through a covenant by asking him to offer sacrifices.

Abraham had to bring some animals (goats, cows, ram) all of 3 years old and some birds (dove, pigeon) to which he responded positively.

Abram cut the animals into two halves and placed each half opposite the other into rows but did not cut the birds. Then Abraham waited for the Lord to act (Gen 15:10)

Late in the evening smoky firepot and a flaming torch suddenly appeared and passed in between the halves of the animals. This shows God's presence and acceptance of Abraham's sacrifices then Abraham had God's voice promising that the land of Canaan in which Abraham was to go could be given to his descendants.

This covenant between Abraham with God marked a new beginning of divine human relationship with God that became very important to all nations. In this case, it became a foundation of Israel's faith. As an outward sign of the covenant relationship, Abraham and his descendants were to follow the custom of circumcision of the male children.

### **MAIN FEATURES/ CHARACTERISTICS OF COVENANT**

1. This covenant is binding agreement between two equal parties. In this case God who is the creator is supreme and Abraham who is the creature is inferior.
2. The covenant was sealed with sacrifices offered by Abraham to God (Gen 15:9). In this case Abraham sacrificed a cow, goat and a ram with each of them being 3 years old and a dove and a pigeon.
3. This covenant was characterized by a confirmation of promises. In this case God promised Abraham the possession of the Canaan land, blessings, many descendants and divine protection etc.
4. This covenant involved change in form of names. In this case Abram came to be Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. This shows a new life and beginning.
5. The physical sign of the covenant was that Abraham and his descendants had to follow the custom of circumcision of all the male children including the slaves in their community. This was to show that Abraham and his descendants were the chosen people and belong to the covenant relationship. It was also to show that God was going to fulfill his promises to Abraham.
6. The covenant was characterized by faith, trust and obedience on the side of Abraham. In this case Abraham responded positively and willingly to all instructions God gave him.
7. The covenant was characterized by God's presence. In this case God appeared to Abraham in form of smoky fire pot and a flaming torch (Gen 15:17)
8. This covenant was God's personal initiative. In this case God played an important role of revealing himself to Abraham to mark the beginning of his salvation plan for mankind following the disobedience of man from Gen 3:11
9. This covenant was conditional, whatever God put in place was without any restriction and God appeared to be willing to fulfill all his obligations.
10. This covenant involved a direct command between two parties. There wasn't intermediary i.e. God came into direct contact with Abraham.
11. The birth of Isaac was the final sign of the covenant between God and Abraham.
12. It was characterised by cutting of the animals into halves put opposite each other.

13. It was characterised by vultures attempting to take the sacrifice away and Abraham would chase them.
14. It was characterised by Abraham's falling asleep when the son was going down.
15. It was characterised by fear and terror which came over Abraham
16. It was bilateral. It involved two parties that is God and Abraham.
17. It was between two unequal parties God, the superior, and Abraham the inferior party.
18. It was universal in nature. This covenant involved the whole human race as everybody would be affected by it.
19. It was everlasting in nature/character. It was to stand from generation to generation.
20. Abraham's worship changed from polytheism to monotheism.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FALL OF MAN (Gen 3) AND THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 12)**

1. In the story of fall of man, there was lack and loss of faith in God. When God revealed himself and called Abraham. God intended to restore his faith in mankind. Its rightly proved when Abraham responded with faith during his call.
2. After man had disobeyed and sinned against God in Genesis 3; Man lost contact with his creator. This means that the call of Abraham in chapter 12; was to reunite the sinful man with God.
3. As one of the punishments after the fall of man in Gen 3 God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. In the call of Abraham, God intended to give him a new land which later came to be known as Canaan.
4. After the fall of man in Gen 3 man lost his joy, freedom and harmony. In the call of Abraham God intended to bring salvation to mankind. Therefore, this was a state towards restoring the lost joy, freedom and harmony.
5. The fall of man in Gen 3 brought him a lot of curses like the soil producing weeds and thorns and the woman delivering in pain. In the call of Abraham God intended to restore blessings man had lost.
6. Man's disobedience in Genesis 3 annoyed God as reflected in the judgment pronounced and the subsequent punishment. In the call of Abraham God aimed at forgiving the sinful man and bringing him closer.
7. Adam and Eve and even their descendants sinned against God by worshiping other gods. In the call of Abraham God started a new type of worship based on monotheism. In this case God instructed Abraham to abandon his traditional gods like the moon and the sun.
8. God called Abraham to begin his salvation plan for the sinful man which started with clothing Adam and Eve.
9. After the disobedience man lost his human dignity and shame came into existence as reflected in the way Adam and Eve thought they were naked. In the call of Abraham God restored his lost dignity because Abraham responded to God without fear as it was the case with Adam and Eve.

10. Adam and Eve sinned against God because of their greediness and the desire for material things however during the call of Abraham God instructed him to leave his wealthy city and go to the land he was going to show him.
11. God punished man after sinning against him. Therefore, the call of Abraham was intended to bring reconciliation between the sinful man and God.
12. Man lost God's love after sinning in Genesis 3. Through the call of Abraham God proved and revived his continuous love to the sinful man.
13. Man sinned against God by disobeying his command through eating the forbidden fruit. When God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with obedience hence meaning that God revived the obedience that Adam and Eve lost in the beginning through the call of Abraham.
14. After the fall of man, Adam and Eve lost God's glory and holiness. Abraham's response indicated repentance and restoration of God's glory and holiness.
15. Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 sin by being rebellious. However, when God revealed himself to Abraham, he responded with humility. This is an indication of man transforming his sinful nature which begun with the fall of man.

### **IMPORTANCE OF ABRAHAM TO THE JEWS/ ISRAELITES/ HEBREWS**

1. **Abraham who was the son of Terah became the great ancestor of the Jews.** On several occasions, the Israelites refer to themselves as the descendants of Abraham. This was because of the close relationship God was having with them and that God had with Abraham during his call.
2. **Abraham's call marked the beginning of the salvation history of the Jews.** It explains why the Israelites could time and again call on the God of Abraham to help them especially during difficulties.
3. **The Jews shared the blessings and promises which God made to Abraham.** Among others the Israelites were able to acquire the land of Canaan which was first promised to Abraham. God also provided protection against their enemies like the Canaanites.
4. **Through God's choice of Abraham, the Jews became the chosen people and therefore superior to others around them.** This became a source of pride among the Jews that started with Abraham.
5. **The custom of circumcision of all the male children in the Jewish society began with Abraham.** Therefore, this means that by following circumcision the Jews belonged to the Abrahamic covenant. In other words, the ritual of circumcision became a physical sign of the Jews as the descendants of Abraham.
6. **Abraham's response to move to a strange land gave a meaning to the later necessary movement of the Jews in the wilderness.** Just as their grandfather wandered in the wilderness to reach Canaan, the Israelites also wandered on the wilderness after leaving Egypt before reaching Canaan. The land promised to their grandfather Abraham.



7. **Abraham's construction of the alters to sacrifice to God like in Genesis 20:9 became an important aspect of the Israelites religion to a later age.** Therefore, to the Jews, Abraham is the founder of their religion.
8. **Abrahamic covenant became a basis for future covenants among the Jews.** Just as God initiated the Abrahamic covenant so is the case in the sinaitic covenant and Davidic covenant. All of which involved sacrifices and building alters. So the Jews it means that God was doing the same thing he did with their grandfather Abraham.
9. **Abraham's faith in God laid a strong foundation of faith among the Jews.** This is reflected in the later history when the prophets preferred to the humble beginning of Israel as having their roots in Abraham's faith (Isaiah 51:1-3). The prophets also called upon the Israelites to be as righteous as their grandfather Abraham (Ezekiel 33:22-23)
10. **To the Jews Abraham is the founder of monotheism which became the religion with Israel.** In Exodus 22 the Israelites were called to worship only Yahweh the God that delivered them from their Egyptian slavery.
11. **The call of Moses in Exodus 3:1- following was an avenue God intended to use in order to fulfil his promises in the Abrahamic covenant of (Gen 15:13-16).** In these verses the descendants of Abraham were to be strangers in a foreign land and to be treated like slaves but God was also to punish their masters. This eventually came true when Moses finally delivered the Israelites from their slavery and the Egyptians punished.
12. **Through Abram, the Jews learnt how to be obedient to God.** Therefore, its right to argue that the Jews freely accepted to enter into a covenant God had initiated at the foot of Mountain Sinai because of their knowledge of Abraham's obedience to God during his call.
13. **The Israelites escaped destruction** their way to the promised land because God wanted to keep the promises he had made to Abraham.
14. **The Israelites were protected by God** from their enemies as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
15. **Theophany;** God's revelation became central to future calls of the faithful Jews to God's service because of Abraham's relationship with God.
16. **Abraham became the theological yardstick** that the future prophets used to teach the Israelites about their relationship with God.
17. **Possession of land;** The Jews from Egypt were able to get their own possession the land of Canaan because of the promise God had made to Abraham.
18. **Theocracy;** The Israelites became a theocratic nation due to God's relationship with Abraham.
19. **Israel became a source of blessing** to other nations because of God's promises to Abraham.

## **HOW GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM AFFECT CHRISTIANS**

### **TODAY/CONSEQUENCES OF ABRAHAM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO THE CHURCH**

1. Christians receive blessings because they believe in Christ, Abraham's descendant. Abraham's was to be a source of blessings.
2. Those who disobey God's orders fall under a curse. Abraham had been promised that those who bless him would be blessed and those who curse him would be cursed.
3. Jesus Christ the foundation stone of Christianity according to Paul is a son of Abraham. He is a son of faith promised to Abraham.
4. Christians are many because Abraham was promised many descendants. Christians realise that they are descendants of Abraham by promise.
5. The Christians are a great nation of God-Abraham was promised that his name would be made great.
6. Abraham's descendants were to suffer in Egypt but would be released. Christians sometimes suffer even when they have not sinned. If they persevere they come out victorious.
7. Christians hope for the Promised land in Heaven is linked to Abraham who had been promised a land full of milk and honey.
8. He was promised an everlasting covenant and in the New Testament, Jesus established an everlasting covenant for Christians.
9. Christians are called upon to change just like Abraham's name was changed and that is why they also receive new names during Baptism.
10. Salvation to Christians comes from following Christ, Abraham's promised son.
11. Paul even makes reference to the righteousness of Abraham, the father of faith of all believers which is the same righteousness expected of Christians.
12. Christians take on baptism as an external sign to show their acceptance of Christ just like Abraham took on circumcision.
13. Christians receive protection from God because of their descent from Abraham.
14. Christians are assured of salvation through Jesus Christ which salvation plan started with Abraham.
15. Christians become kings and priests because of being directly related to Abraham who was promised that his descendants will be leaders.
16. Taking risks; Modern Christians are challenged to take risks in faith well knowing that their protector is God who protected Abraham.
17. Vocation; Abraham call points to Christian vocations like priesthood, monks and nuns which Christians take on to serve God.
18. Christians act of building churches as places of worship for God was got from Abraham's act of building altars to worship God.
19. The praying attitude of Christians especially the intercessional prayers were adopted from Abraham who interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah.
20. Christians' belief in one God has its route in Abraham's relationship with God who believed in one God.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE TO GOD FOR MANKIND TODAY**

- Abraham is the great ancestor of Christ who is the saviour of mankind. Therefore, mankind is able to get/ to restore the blessing and the promises made to Abraham through Christ their savior.
- After the covenant relationship Abraham became a close friend of God because of his belief and therefore became the father of all believers. This means that Christians can only build a good relationship with God through following the examples of Abraham's belief and faith.
- Abraham set an example of a belief in one God (monotheism). So when God calls a Christian one is expected to live out the past experience and begin to worship only God by believing in Christ his son.
- Just as God instructed Abraham and his descendants to follow the right practicing of circumcision which was a sign to confirm Abraham as a member of the covenant relationship, Christians today have to follow the rights of baptism and confirmation in order to qualify as members of the new covenant through Christ the descendant of Abraham.
- God took the initiative towards the universal salvation following the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore, Abraham's response to God's call marked the beginning of the universal salvation of all human beings. This shows God's concern and mercy towards human beings in a personal way.
- Christians are entitled to enjoy God's promises and blessings to Abraham through Christ whereas Abraham was promised the land of Canaan; Christians today are promised heaven through their union with Christ who is the descendant of Abraham.
- The sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sin of man was final and it replaced the sacrifice of animals which Abraham did following the sinful nature of man from Gen 3:11. Therefore Christians are expected to sacrifice their lives for the service of God.
- Through Abraham God started the institution of divine calling. Therefore, to Christians this marked the beginning of taking up religious vocations (calls) in the service of God e.g. being a pastor, bishop, priest etc.

## **LESSONS/ SIGNIFICANCIES/ RELEVANCES TO CHRISTIANS**

1. Christians should have Faith which is practical just as Abraham accepted to offer his only son Isaac when God tested his faith. Therefore, Christians should accompany their faith with good work.
2. Christians should take God as a loving father and should therefore extend their love to the neighbors. God's love is revealed not only to Abraham but to his descendants as exemplified by God's promise which had to be fulfilled in the future.

3. Christians should accept people in God's service regardless of his/her social economic or religious background among others. Abraham was a worshiper of many gods but God decided to use him to serve his purpose of bringing salvation to mankind.
4. Christians should worship God only. After his call and the subsequent covenant with God, Abraham left his traditional gods and embraced monotheism.
5. Christians should forgive and reconcile with one another. Through the call of Abraham God forgave the sinful nature of man and initiated a covenant intended to bring salvation to mankind.
6. Christians should give material support to their churches. Abraham built many alters and later offered numerous sacrifices to God.
7. Christians should live holy and pure lives. Abraham left all his traditional practices and got committed to the union he had entered into with God.
8. Christians should accept to endure suffering in the service of God. Abraham's call involved breaking away from the past life which he was used to and beginning a new life.
9. Christians ought to be patient in life. In the course of making a covenant, Abraham had to wait for God to respond to his offerings which came late in the evening (Gen 15:9-17)
10. Christians should always pray to God for themselves and for others. Abraham prayed for cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when God revealed his plan of destroying them (Gen 22-27)
11. Christians should give their lives to God in trust and obedience just like Abraham believed in God's protection as he moved to the Promised Land. This meant that Christians should forget about their personal comfort while serving God.
12. Christians ought to Baptize their family members and other people to bring them in God's kingdom just as Abraham was told circumcise all his family members.
13. They should strive to live a righteous and perfect life before God as their ancestor Abraham was righteous with God.
14. They should live and be guided by the new and everlasting covenant made through Christ who is a direct descendant of Abraham.

### **ABRAHAM AS PRESENTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

1. Abraham is presented as the grandfather of Christ who begun the salvation history of mankind (Mathew 1:1)
2. Christ presents Abraham seated together with Isaac and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven awaiting people with faith (Mathew 8:11-12) and (Luke 13:28-29)
3. Abraham is referred to as the ancestor of the Israelites whom God had shown mercy beginning with him and to his descendants (Luke 46-55)
4. Luke 1:68-79 looks at Abraham enjoying a close relationship and friendship with God who had made a solemn promise to rescue his descendants from their enemies.
5. Abraham is referred to as a man of faith. St. Paul points out that he was able to receive God's blessings because of his faith (Roman 4:1- following)

6. Christ referred to himself as having been in existence before Abraham was born. He is quoted saying "Before Abraham was born I am." (John 8:50).
7. St. James called upon the masses to put their faith in action like their ancestor Abraham. He points out that Abraham was put right with God through his faith when he accepted to sacrifice his only son Isaac (James 2:14-26)
8. The Pharisees/teachers of the law referred to themselves as being the grandchildren of Abraham. This kind of feeling made them to become hostile to Christ whom they thought was trying to disassociate them from their ancestor by under mining his importance (John 8:31-47)
9. St. Paul acknowledges all the faithful believers as the descendants of Abraham who were to receive what God promised through him.
10. When Jesus was teaching, he referred to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as people who will be present in heaven.
11. In John's gospel Jesus taught the Jews that sons of Abraham are expected to do the same things that he did.
12. 1Peter gives the relationship of Abraham and Sarah as an example of a good relationship expected among the wives and husbands.

### **THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL'S PATRIARCHS**

Patriarchs were the ancestors of Israel's religious life and culture. They include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David. These people are taken to have been the founder of Israel as a nation.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PATRIARCHAL RELIGION**

Israel's Patriarchs were very religious and their religion was characterized by the following;

1. Sacrifices; The Israel's fore fathers offered sacrifices to God which was the major way of showing gratitude to their God. For example, at Shechem, Abraham built an altar and offered a sacrifice to God.
2. Prayers as a way of worship; Prayers were part of patriarchal way of life they offered both intercessional and thanks giving prayers. For example, Jacob prayed and praised God when he found out that his son Joseph had not died. Gen; 45:28
3. Blessings; Patriarchs blessed their sons in the name of their God. For example, Abraham blessed Isaac, who blessed Jacob and Jacob blessed his 12 sons and the two sons of Joseph.
4. Had a personal experience with God; They also shared a personal experience with their God. God called and talked to Abraham directly, Jacob was given the name Israel by God while Moses experienced God's presence in the burning bush.
5. Based on faith and obedience; Patriarchs showed great faith in their God and their faith was practical. For example, Abraham had accepted to offer his only son as a sacrifice to God.

6. Made their God known to other people; They made their God known to those who lived with them and those under their care. For example, Jacob made God known to his sons who seemed to be ruthless, Abraham made his God to be known by the Pharaoh of Egypt.
7. God's association with them; The God of Israel on some occasions associated Himself with Israel's Patriarchs. For example, during the call of Moses, God addressed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
8. Promises from God; The patriarchal religion was full of promises from God which were ever fulfilled. For example, God made promises to Abraham like giving him a son which was fulfilled, God promised David that his son was to succeed him which came true.
9. It was an interceding faith; The religion included interceding for other sinful people who were to undergo God's punishment. For example, Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah and Moses interceded for the Israelites when God had sent poisonous snakes due to their wickedness.
10. Clan and family solidarity; Their religion was characterized by a strong clan solidarity. Their names suggested a close relationship between the clan and God.
11. Gave their God names; They referred to their God with different names and their understanding of had to do with power, strength and supremacy. Names like El shadai (God of mountains) Elohim (God almighty) were used when referring to God.
12. Made covenants with God; Israel and its founders made covenants with their God which were binding and breaking them meant punishment from God. Such covenants include Abrahamic covenant, Sinaitic covenant and Davidic covenant.
13. Circumcision was a religious ritual; They carried out circumcision as a ritual of identification with their God and a sign of loyalty to Him.
14. Built alters for worship/sacrifices; The religion involved setting up of alters in places chosen by their God up on which they offered sacrifices as a way of worshipping God. For example, when Abraham reached Bethel he built an alter and offered a sacrifice to God.
15. Special religious institutions; At a later stage, this religion involved special people put aside to lead the cult of worship. These included priests, Judges and prophets.
16. Required repentance through fasting; The Patriarchal religion was based on reconciliation with God through fasting as a sign of repentance.

## **Questions**

**Justify the view that Israel's patriarchs were religious**

**Discuss the main features of the religion of Abraham and his descendants**

**Analyze the main features of Christian religion today**

**Compare the religion of the Patriarchs with the Christian religion**

## **THE BOOK OF EXODUS**

The word Exodus means departure/ going out in the multitude. It comes from the Greek word “Exodus.” In the Biblical context refers to the mass movement of the children of Israel from Egypt where they were slaves to Canaan the Promised Land.

This land was promised to their ancestor Abraham, who was a friend to God.

The Exodus event rests upon God’s power over his creation and natural forces as well as his unending/ undying love for mankind. In this case God used Moses as an instrument through whom his power could be demonstrated.

Exodus 2:1-10 talks about the birth and the planned faith of Moses. He was a Hebrew boy from the tribe of Levi who was born in Egypt.

The name Moses means saved from water i.e. after Moses was born, he was hidden in a basket by the mother at the Banks of River Nile and this was to save him from being killed by the Egyptian soldiers.

From his hide out, Moses was discovered by the pharaoh’s daughter and brought to the palace where he became an adopted child. He grew up under the pharaoh’s care and once able to understand both the Egyptian and Israelites cultures. It’s because he was an Israelite by birth.

He was educated under the Egyptian system and later he came to know how his people the Hebrews were being mistreated. Because of this knowledge and the love Moses had for his people he killed a task master in charge of Labour and consequently fled for fear of being killed in revenge.

He took refuge in the median desert where he was accepted by Jethro who was a priest later on he was given Zipporah in marriage and therefore became a son in law to Jethro and while he was there he became a shepherd of father in law.

## **CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE BIRTH OF MOSES**

1. The Hebrews had been conscripted to hard and forced Labour. They were meant to work overtime involving laying bricks through the day, collecting other building materials and erecting the building itself.
2. The Hebrew were being starved. They were given very little or no food at all and they weren't allowed to complain. Consequently, many of them died.
3. The population of the Hebrews was growing at a much faster rate and had become so strong. This threatened pharaoh who feared that the Hebrews could at onetime join the immigrant group and fight them or escape from the country.
4. The immigrant Hyksos had just been over thrown and replaced by a house of rulers known as the pharaoh. This means that Moses was born at a time of political transition when the pharaoh was just trying to consolidate his authority over the Egyptians, Hyksos and the Hebrews.
5. Moses was born at the time when the pharaoh had ordered for the killing of all the male Hebrew baby boys. The midwives had to kill the male children at birth and the Egyptian soldiers had the responsibility of checking the Hebrews house to ensure that any baby boy was killed.
6. Moses was born at the time when the Hebrews had lost hope in survival. They knew that there was no one to rescue them from their slavery following the death of their brother Joseph.
7. Moses was born at the time when the Egyptian had a general anti-semitic feeling towards the Israelites i.e. the Egyptians hated the Hebrews and this explains why Moses had to kill the Egyptian slave master.
8. There was economic prosperity among the Egyptian and poverty among the Hebrews. The Hebrews had nothing for themselves but had to supply enough Labour towards the building of the pharaoh's cities.

### **THE BIRTH OF MOSES**

- Amidst the Israelites suffering, Moses was born to a woman Jochebed and the man Amram Ex. 6:20. He was to change history and to lead the Israelites to the promised land,
- To this end when he was born, God saved him from death that Pharaoh had ordered for all the Hebrew boys.
- His mother put him in the basket and hid among the papyrus reeds along river Nile where Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him as his own son.
- Moses was brought up at the court of the king where he learnt how laws were made and how the nation was ruled.
- Despite the fact that Moses grew up from the king's palace, he knew himself as a Hebrew and not an Egyptian for he was brought up by his own Jewish mother who was hired by the Pharaoh's daughter.



- To this end one day Moses saw an Egyptian master beating an Israelite, he killed the Egyptian. On another occasion he found Jews fighting and separated them but one of them disclosed that Moses a day before had killed an Egyptian.
- When he knew that what he had done was known, he escaped from Egypt to Median desert in the Sinai Peninsula.
- While in Midian, Moses married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro. He also worked as a shepherd for his father in law.
- What should be noted is that Moses careful education in Pharaoh's home, his knowledge on how to organize worship, his relationship with Jethro the priest of Midian were all preparations planned by God to make Moses the liberator, law maker and religious leader of Israel.

### **HOW WAS MOSES' BACK GROUND A PREPARATION FOR HIS FUTURE ROLE**

Looking at the events in the life of Moses one realizes that they were all preparations for the future role Moses had to play in Israel;

1. **Moses' strategic place of birth was to help him prepare for the work;** He was born in Egypt and got familiar to the ecological, geographical conditions and the language of the Egyptians all which were important for the success of his mission.
2. **Moses' time of birth was also for his future work;** He was born in a period when the Israelites had been declared slaves. He grew up witnessing how the Egyptians were oppressing his fellow Jews which in future made Moses to understand the need to liberate them when he was called by God.
3. **Moses was rescued from death by Pharaoh's daughter because he had a divine mission to execute;** For fear of being killed Moses' mother put him in the Basket and hid him at the Banks of river Nile where the daughter of Pharaoh found him and took him to the palace where he grew up as a prince.
4. **Moses was put under his own mother's care thus growing up as a Hebrew;** At the palace Moses' mother was hired to take care of him something which helped Moses to grow up with the history of his people exposed to the Jewish culture and history to prepare him for the work of liberating them.
5. **Moses acquired leadership skills from the palace;** Having grown up from the palace, Moses associated with the Jewish leaders which made him acquire leadership skills and this helped him to lead the Israelites during the exodus.
6. **His association with the Egyptian priests and Jethro the priest in Midian was to form him in the priestly work;** This helped Moses to learn rituals of worship, how to build alters for sacrifice and all this was to help him in his work as a priest during the exodus.
7. **Moses was exposed to Egyptian civilization/education;** This helped Moses to learn how to read and write, how to record historical events and organize administrative files. This civilization helped Moses to write down the law as given to him by God.

8. **Moses was also exposed to the Egyptian judicial system and the set of laws;** This kind of exposure was to help him act as a judge and a law maker among the Israelites during the exodus event.
9. **Moses was also born in the priestly clan of Levi;** This back ground made him fit to be called by God for a divine service and lead others in the cult of worship during the exodus event.
10. **Moses' birth as a fine child healthy and not a weakling;** This was planned by God for God knew that for Moses to be successful in his work he had to be of good health which would help him lead others out of Egypt.
11. **The killing of an Egyptian by Moses was also a preparation of his future role;** This Made Moses fear to stay in Egypt hence taking refuge in Midian in the home of Jethro where God met him and talked to him.
12. **Moses' work as a shepherd helped him to learn how to manage big numbers;** The shepherd experience helped Moses to become courageous, get used to hard experiences like fighting fierce animals which enabled him to face Pharaoh without fear.
13. **Moses' harsh desert experiences and his rescue encounter with desert robbers prepared him for the work he was going to do;** It was from this experience that Moses was able to rescue the people of God from the hands of their oppressors in Egypt.
14. **The burning bush experience Moses encountered was the final preparation for the work;** While looking after the flock of his father in law, Moses experienced the burning bush from which God empowered him and gave him authority to lead his people out of Egypt.

#### **THE CALL OF MOSES (EXODUS 3:1 following)**

- While Moses was taking care/ grazing his father-in-laws flock at the foot of Mount Sinai (Horeb), he received a divine call from God.
- This was in form of a burning bush which was not consuming (consumed). This signified the presence of God, his holiness and divine power. That is to say, fire in OT symbolized God's presence.
- The burning captured the attention of Moses because it was burnt but not consumed; he therefore decided to move closer to see what was happening. This meant that Moses was curious and inquisitive about his surroundings.
- As he moved closer, he heard a voice calling his name twice from the burning bush. I.e. Moses.
- The voice commanded him not to come closer because the ground on which Moses was standing was holly.
- Besides, the voice instructed Moses to remove his saddles because he was standing on a holly ground. This signified the holiness of God and his divine presence.
- God revealed to Moses that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this signified that he is a historical God who is interested in the history of his people.

- Then God revealed the intention of calling him and this signified that God calls for a purpose.
- God is quoted saying, “I have seen the suffering of my people, I have heard them crying out...” This presents God as being the God of justice.
- At this point God commanded Moses to go to Egypt and rescue his people, the Israelites from the bondage of slavery, signifying that God is a liberator.
- Moses objected to God’s command to go back to Egypt expressing his inability to perform the task. This revealed human weakness on part of Moses.
- Moses complained that he was no body to go and confront pharaoh about the release of the Israelites out of Egypt. This also signified fear in context of human weakness.
- God however insisted saying that he was going to assist Moses to liberate the Israelites. This signified that God is determined.
- Despite this, Moses raised the 2<sup>nd</sup> objection by asking for the name of the one behind the liberation of the Israelites.
- God disclosed his name saying, “I am who I am”, this signified that he was God of seasons, sovereign, very active, powerful God, God of the past, present and the future.
- Moses seemed not to be convinced and consequently advanced the 3<sup>rd</sup> objection that the Israelites will not believe in him.
- In response, God gave him a miraculous stick which would turn into a snake when dropped to the ground and turn into a stick if it was picked from the ground. This showed God’s power.
- More so God asked Moses to put his hand inside his robe, it came out when diseased leprosy. The purpose of this miracle was to instill in Moses. He was becoming stubborn besides he was given courage and confidence.
- However, Moses remained unsatisfied and advanced a 4<sup>th</sup> objection saying that he was not a good speaker (eloquent) since he was stammering in his speech and therefore he could not convince both the Egyptians and Israelites.
- Consequently, God became annoyed with Moses and provided him with a spokesman his brother Aaron.
- Moses finally accepted to go with Aaron to begin the work of liberating God’s people.

### **WHY DID GOD CALL MOSES?**

1. God wanted Moses to and liberate his people who were suffering from slavery under the Egyptians.
2. God wanted to show that he cared and he had concern for the plight of his people who were insulted in Egypt.
3. God wanted to show his universal nature, that is to say, he was in control of all nations including the oppressed Israelites.
4. He wanted to show that, he was God of justice that is why he judged the Egyptian for mistreating his people.

5. God wanted to fulfill his promise he had made to Abraham who was the ancestor of the enslaved Israelites. He had promised Abraham that his descendants would be stranger in a foreign land and that he would rescue them after.
6. God called Moses because he wanted to continue with his salvation plan which he had started with Abraham.
7. God wanted to demonstrate his power through Moses over the earthly gods including those of Egyptians.
8. God wanted to prove that he could call any one irrespective of their background in order to meet his salvation plan.
9. God wanted to show that he was interested in the history of the people of God. That is to say, God of present, past and of the future.
10. God was interested in making the Israelites his chosen race (a great nation).
11. He aimed at showing that, he had chosen Israel long before they were born during this encounter with Abraham.
12. God wanted to make Moses an important person in the history of Israel.
13. God called Moses because he was interested in showing his supremacy and sovereignty over his people and pharaoh.
14. He wanted to extent his love to mankind.
15. He wanted to bridge the gap between himself and mankind which was created by the fall of man.

#### **MOSES' OBJECTION TO THE TASK GIVEN TO HIM**

- When revealed his intension to Moses to go and release the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, he responded negatively. He feared and gave excuses including the following;
- Moses argued that he was too inferior to begin a dialogue with the pharaoh of Egypt who was the most important figure in the country.
- Moses was a criminal in Egypt because he had killed an Egyptian in charge of forced Labour and felt that going back to Egypt it would result to his arrest probably because of his killing.
- Besides, Moses had also been rejected by his own fellow Israelites. This rejection had its route from the criminal offence Moses had committed by killing the Egyptian slave master.
- Moses also complained that he himself and the Israelites did not know the name of the being behind the liberation process and as such he expected the Israelites to demand for the name of that being. To this, God revealed his name saying "I am who I am" and gave Moses an extra ordinary power to perform miracles by the use of his stick (Exodus 4:1-9)
- Moses later complained that he was not eloquent enough to convince the Israelites and the pharaoh about the liberation process. To this God assured Moses that his brother Aaron would be his spokesman (Exodus 4:10-17)

#### **Why was Moses objecting to go back to Egypt?**

1. Moses resisted/ was reluctant because he did not want to abandon the flock of his father-in-law Jethro.
2. He wanted to be assured of God's protection first before he could accept to go.
3. Moses thought it would require a strong army which he was lacking.
4. He was reluctant because he was fearing to go and meet Pharaoh who could kill him.
5. Moses feared to go alone, the reason he accepted when the Lord gave his brother Aaron to keep him.
6. He was reluctant because he feared to be arrested and killed in Egypt where he had killed/committed murder.
7. Moses was a poor speaker, slow and hesitant so he was resisting because he knew he lacked the ability to convince anybody.
8. Moses had no proof that he was being sent by God, therefore he had to resist.
9. Moses had stayed at the Pharaoh's palace and knew how tough the king was and so he was fearing to face him.
10. Moses hesitated because he wanted to know the name of God so that he could use it as defense and to explain to the people/Israelites in case they asked for it.
11. Moses had never had any encounter with God, it became so hard for him to accept instantly.
12. Moses resisted because he did not want to abandon the flock of his father-in-law.

#### **THE MAIN FEATURES/ CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BURNING BUSH INCIDENCE**

1. The burning bush incidence refers to the encounter Moses had with God during his calling. It occurred at the foot of mountain Sinai as he was looking after the sheep of his father in law Jethro (Exodus 3:1 following). This event was characterized by the following;
2. God was physically present. In this case God appeared in the form of fire.
3. In this event God's name is revealed as being quoted "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:13-14)
4. This event was characterized by God revealing his identity as being God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:15-16)
5. In this event God called Moses' name twice. This was because God wanted Moses to be urgently aware of his presence (Exodus 3:4)
6. This event was marked by God giving instructions to Moses to go back to Egypt and deliver the Israelites from their slavery (Exodus 3:10)
7. In this event Moses first objected the task God gave him. In this case Moses gave various reasons to justify his inability to deliver the Israelites from their Egyptian slavery including being too inferior to the pharaoh and not eloquent enough to convince the Israelites and the pharaoh (Exodus 3:11-13)
8. The burning bush event was characterized by God showing his holiness. In this case God instructed Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on a holly ground (Exodus 3:5-6)
9. In this event God gave Moses extra ordinary powers to perform miracles by the use of his stick which had to turn into a snake. This was intended to show Israelites and the Egyptian

pharaoh the power of the being behind the liberation process of the Israelites (Exodus 4:1-6, 7:8-13)

10. The burning bush incidence was characterized by God giving assurance to Moses. In this case God made it clear to Moses that the Israelites would listen to him. And the Egyptians would also give him respect. (Exodus 3:18-22)
11. God's love for his people was revealed through the burning bush incidence. God is quoted as saying "... I have seen how my people are being mistreated ... I have heard them cry out..." (Exodus 3:10)
12. This incidence was characterized by God getting annoyed/ hunger. This came after Moses had continuously objected God's instruction of going back to Egypt (Exodus 4:14-17)
13. In this incidence God gave Moses a helper who was his own brother Aaron (Exodus 4:14-17)

#### **Analyse Moses' response to God's call?**

- Moses went closer to the burning bush.
- Moses answered God's call, yes here I am God.
- Moses covered his face because he was afraid of looking at the Lord
- Moses feared that the Israelites were not going to believe in him.
- Moses said that he was nobody to act as a liberator.
- Moses inquired to know God's name.
- Moses threw the walking stick down and it turned into a snake.
- Moses ran away from the snake
- Moses picked it by the tail and it became a stick again.
- Moses put his hand in the robe and it developed leprosy.
- Moses put it back and it became normal again.
- Moses requested God that he sends another person.
- Moses complained that he was not a good speaker.
- He eventually accepted God's call and took on the task.
- Moses was surprised to see the burning bush but was not being consumed by fire.
- Moses removed his sandals as he was commanded by God.
- Moses fell down /knelt down.

#### **REASONS FOR MOSES' RESPONSE TO GOD' CALL**

**Moses responded in two different ways, that is to say; He objected at first and later he accepted.**

**His objection to God's call was because of the following.**

1. Moses had earlier on committed a crime of killing a slave and by the time of his call he was in exile for the safety of his life and could have feared to go back.
2. Moses considered himself inferior to go back to Egypt approach pharaoh; he therefore thought that pharaoh would not accept.

3. As a human being, Moses feared for being arrested. Moses was aware that the Egyptian government under pharaoh was looking for him to answer for the murder charges he had committed.
4. God's revelation to Moses was mysterious. God appeared to Moses in form of a burning bush which was hard for a human mind to acknowledge, this also made him object.
5. Moses objected to God's call because he wanted to know the name of God so that he could enter into a deeper relationship with him. Moses thought that objecting God's call would make him come close to God.
6. Since the voice came from the burning bush which was not being consumed, this is why he demanded to know the name of God who was calling them.
7. Moses was living in a polytheistic community therefore he was uncertain of the God who was calling him.
8. God's revelation to mankind had taken long about 400 years without being witnessed. Therefore, it was difficult for Moses to believe in God even when he identified himself as God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac it remained hard for him.
9. Moses was aware of the military strength of the Egyptian army, he therefore feared to face them as a single person.
10. Moses was aware of the stubbornness of the Egyptian king pharaoh and this made him think that it would be difficult to convince him to accept to release the slaves (Israelites) God's people.
11. He objected because he knew the Israelites were not going to believe in him, he was an ordinary person and a sinner. Therefore, according to the Israelites God could not send him.
12. Moses objected because he had a belief that pharaoh would not release the Israelites because they were providing him cheap labor.

**HOWEVER; Moses later accepted God's call. He was therefore positive because of the following reasons;**

13. Moses realized that God was getting annoyed with his continuous objection to his call and therefore he had to accept.
14. Moses eventually realized that God was determined to use him whatever excuse he would give; he could therefore not resist God's will.
15. Moses was also convinced because of the miraculous stick which would turn into a snake when dropped down and then into a stick if picked up from the ground.
16. Moses believed that God would give him power to convince pharaoh and release the Israelites.
17. He was also convinced that God was going to make the Israelites believe in him as God's servant sent by God to liberate his people the Israelites.

18. Moses finally accepted because he was given a spokesman by names of Aaron whom he thought that will simplify his work by convincing the Egyptian king to release God's people.
19. Moses later accepted after realizing that the God who was calling him was the God of his ancestors Abraham, Jacob and Isaac when God said that "I am who I am".
20. To some scholars Moses was a nationalistic who had patriotic feelings for his people as justified by his act of killing an Egyptian slave whom he had found fighting with an Israelite.

**Examine the impact of Moses' response to God's call on the people of Israel.**

- God revealed himself to Moses and to the people of Israel.
- It uplifted the faith of the people of Israel
- It showed that God was still concerned about the people of Israel after suffering for many years.
- The people of Israel entered into a covenant with God at Mt. Sinai.
- The people were liberated from Egypt where they had been for over 400 years.
- It united the people of Israel under one leadership.
- The people of Israel were given their land of Canaan which God had promised to their ancestor Abraham.
- Monotheism was reflected among the people of Israel.
- It made the people of Israel to make a long journey from Goshen to Canaan.it demonstrated God's unique love for the people of Israel of all people in the universe.
- It made houses of the Israelites be protected by God especially during the Passover.
- The people of Israel got their independence from Egypt and they were saved from slavery.
- It helped the people of Israel to establish their culture and customs characterized by sacrifices etc.
- It made the people of Israel to get laws and regulations which were given to them during the Exodus.
- It fulfilled God's promises to Abraham that the people of Israel were to be liberated from Egypt.
- The Mt. o which God appeared to Moses became a great historical place up to date.
- It revealed God's nature that's his holiness.
- Moses got power to perform miracles which uplifted the faith of the people of Israel.
- It transformed Moses from being a shepherd into a leader.
- It revealed God's name to the people of Israel.
- It made Israel become a theocratic nation of God.
- Through Moses' response, Israel became a chosen nation of God.
- It led to the development of prophet hood in Israel
- It led to the establishment of priesthood in Israel.



- It led to the defeat of Pharaoh's arrogance and triumph of Israel.
- It made the people know Yahweh as a historical God of Israel.
- It showed people that God can call upon anybody regardless of the background.
- It revealed the mighty power of God of Israel to the people.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BURNING BUSH INCIDENT TO THE PEOPLE OF (ISRAELITES) HISTORY**

1. The burning bush event completely changed the life of Moses. Moses who had been a shepherd became the leader of the Israelites.
2. Through this event God's power or nature is revealed. In this case God appeared in the form of a burning bush but strange enough the bush was not eaten up by fire.
3. Israel became an elected or priestly nation of God through the burning bush incidence. This was because it became a gate way through that the Israelites came to worship their God (Yahweh)
4. God's love for the Israelites is manifested through this event in his own words as he was quoted as saying". I have seen the suffering of my people. I have heard them cry out." this means that God hates to see people suffering and it was because of this that God decided to rescue the Israelites from bondage of slavery.
5. Through the burning bush incidence, God was a personal God. In this case God identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, to them it showed that God was always willing to meet their needs.
6. God's promises to Abraham was fulfilled through the burning bush incidence (Exodus 15:12) God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land and that they would be set free.
7. This event proved to the Israelites that the God who appeared to Abraham was the same God behind their liberation meaning that the God was the God of their fore fathers and therefore historical God to them.
8. The Israelites came to realize God's omnipotence and pre-existence of God and through the burning bush incidence. In this case God revealed his name to Moses saying "I am who I am" this could have probably meant that his origin wasn't defined, he is self-existent and that everything on earth is under his control.
9. The burning bush incidence showed how God could manifest himself in various ways. God appeared to Moses in the form of fire and a voice. To the Israelites this means that they had to get ready to God's revelation to them that was not limited.
10. God reconciled with the foreign Israelites. The Israelites had blundered after the disappearance of their fore fathers and Moses himself was a fugitive at the time of the incident and helped to increase the Israelites faith in God.
11. The burning bush event marked the liberation movement process of Israelites from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. This was because through this incidence God revealed his plan of delivering the Israelites from slavery as he said "... and so I have come down to

rescue them from the Egyptians.” now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of this country (Exodus 3:10-8)

12. This event marked the beginning of struggle between the evil and divine forces in the history of the Israelites and God eventually showing his powers over his creation. In this case the divine powers which were manifested to Moses defeated the evil forces/ powers manifested through the pharaoh (Exodus 7:14 following), (11:1 following) and (12:29 following)
13. Through this burning bush event, the Israelites came to realize that their liberation from the Egyptian slavery was the workmanship God. In this case God’s effort was paid off when the Israelites were finally set free from the bondage of slavery.
14. The burning bush incident changes the status of Moses from being an outlaw to being an influencing life in the Egyptian politics and eventually it marked the beginning of the political history of Israel.

**b) How important was the call of Moses to the people of Israel?**

- It led to the rebirth of Israel as a nation because their nationality had disappeared while in Egypt.
- It caused the rebirth of Israelites religion hence worshipping one God (monotheism).
- It enabled the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian slavery.
- It showed the workmanship of God. It proved the fact that the formation of Israel was through God’s activity.
- It led to the repossession of the promised land of Canaan by the Israelites
- Moses’ call led to the revival of the Israelites cultures which had been neglected while in Egypt for example circumcision and Sabbath.
- Moses’ call caused the Israelites to be elected as a chosen nation (divine) to spread God’s word to the universe.
- It led to the Israelites to believe that God fulfils his promises. E.g. he fulfilled his promises to Abraham.
- It made God enter into covenant relationship with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai which became a foundation for their living.
- It led to the creation of celebrations/feasts like Passover that reminded them of God’s saving power on them.
- Moses’ call made the Israelites to be made God’s special people.
- Moses’ call became the basis of the Israelite life and culture e.g. it led to the existence of the Jewish religious days like Tabernacle.
- Moses’ call led to the Israelites’ freedom from bondage. God rescued his people from slavery under the leadership of Moses.
- God’s presence among the Israelites was reinstated by Moses’ call much as suffering had caused them to forget God’s covenant with Abraham.
- It led to the establishment of the prophetic institution in Israel that helped to maintain covenant faith and relationship.

- It helped the Israelites get united under Moses' leadership.
- It showed the people that God can call upon anybody regardless of one's background just as God called Moses whose history was not so good.
- It changed Moses' status from a shepherd to a leader of God's people.
- Instituted priesthood in Israel.
- Showed God's love for his people.

**(b) What lessons can church leaders today learn from the call of Moses?**

- Church leaders should respond positively to God's call without hesitation church leaders should be faithful to God and their fellow men.
- Church leaders should be concerned for those who are suffering.
- They should live a righteous life as God's servants.
- They should serve only one God and condemn idol worship in society.
- They should listen to the voice of God and respond accordingly.
- They should respect holy places of worship as Moses respected the holy Mt. for it was holy.
- They should volunteer to do missionary activities where they are sent by God.
- They should participate in the liberation of others.
- They should live a humble life like Moses did.
- Church leaders should show love to all people like Moses did to the twelve tribes.
- They should work for the unity of the church.
- They should promote justice in the societies they serve.

**JUDGEMENT AND DELIVERANCE (Exodus 5:1 following and 6: following)**

When Moses approached the pharaoh about the release of the Israelites, he did not acknowledge God's authority in Moses. The request rather intensified the slavery conditions instead of liberty being granted.

Because of the above new development, the Hebrews turned against Moses their leader who then became frustrated.

The pharaoh's hardened heart made God to begin showing his authority over his creation. He did this by striking Egypt with the Nile primary plagues (disasters).

In that case the pharaoh and his magicians tried to counter fit but they were unable to control these disasters and in the end they became powerless to overcome the situation. These plagues include the following;

The Nile which was the heart of the Egyptian economy turned into blood when Moses stroke the surface of the water using his stick. This polluted the water, killed the fish and other animals and eventually left a bad smell. Other than this the water became bad both to human and animal consumption (Exodus 7:14-24)

Seven days later, frogs driven from the Nile bank by the bad smell jumped out to seek for shelter in the Egyptian houses.

Following the above, mosquitoes and flies infested the all area and this made people to suffer even the more.

Both animal and human diseases cropped out. This could have been caused by the presence of frogs and insects among people.

Later on Hailstone and thunderstorm destroyed the crops in the Egyptian gardens/ fields and even their animals. (Exodus 9:13-15)

Egypt was also invaded by locusts which destroyed all the remaining crops and any given plant around and this made people to suffer from starvation (Exodus 10:1 following)

A strong storm from the Ethiopian highlands stripped Egypt naked of any green stuff and for three days the sun was blocked by a thick darkness and no body went out of the houses.

Despite of the above disasters the pharaoh continued to harden his heart and even worsened the working conditions of the Israelites. God also continued to worsen the intensity of the disasters and it was from here that God's victory was highlighted.

### **DEATH OF THE FIRST BORN AND THE PASSOVER FEAST (EXODUS 11: Following and 12:1 following)**

The word Passover means to “protect” or to “spare”. In the biblical context it refers to a time when the angles of God “protected”, spared, passed over or jumped over the first born of Israelites when the last disaster hit Egypt where all their first born sons of the Egyptian and their animals died.

The Passover came after the 9<sup>th</sup> refusal of the pharaoh to release the Israelites to go to the land promised to their grandfather Abraham. This refusal annoyed God who then instructed Moses to announce the death of all their first born sons of the Egyptians and their animals. This was to demonstrate God's might power.

### **HOW MOSES INSTRUCTED THE ISRAELITES TO CELEBRATE THE PASSOVER**

As preparation for journey God instructed Moses and Aaron to command the Israelites to prepare and offer sacrifices. They were to celebrate the Passover feast which marked the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. These instructions included the following;

1. The Israelites were to choose an animal on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month.
2. Each family was to choose either a goat or a lamb which must have been one (1) year old without any defect/ deformation and a male one.
3. The animals were to be slaughtered on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month during the evening hours.
4. The blood of the slaughtered animals was to be smeared on the door posts or beams and on the frames above the house in which the meat was to be eaten. This was to distinguish the Israelites houses from that of the Egyptians. This means that any house which did not have the mark of the blood had to fall a victim of the angle's destruction.
5. Then the meat of the animal was to be roasted and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made without yeast.
6. The bitter herbs signified the bitter experience of slavery Egypt and suffering ahead of the Israelites in the wilderness to the Promised Land. The unleavened bread signified lack of time to allow the making of the leavened bread.

7. Everything was to be eaten less wasting anything of the animal slaughtered.
8. The bones of the animals were not to be broken. This meant that the covenant God was going to make with the Israelites was not to be broken.
9. The Passover meal was supposed to be eaten the whole night until the meat was finished.
10. If a family was small, such a family was to share the meat with the next door. This was to show the unity expected among the Israelites.
11. If there was any leftover it was supposed to be burnt off before morning.
12. The Israelites were to eat dressed ready for the journey with sandals on their feet, walking sticks at hand while eating the Passover meal.
13. The Passover feast was only to be celebrated by the Jews and foreigners were not allowed unless they were circumcised and adopted into the Jewish cultures.
14. The Israelites were to spend that night indoors and this was meant to safeguard them from the deadly plague which would hit Egypt at that very night.
15. This day was to become the first day of the first months of the first year of their calendar.
  - At night a deadly plague hit Egypt where the deathly angles of the Lord killed the first born of both human beings and animals of the Egyptians. In this case the angles passed over the Israelites houses after seeing the blood on the door posts and went to the Egyptian houses.
  - This last plague finally broke the pharaoh's arrogance and the Egyptian gods and their magicians remained/ became powerless. There was a cry in the whole of Egypt because each family had lost a first born.
  - Following the above the pharaoh quickly sent for Moses and Aaron and told them to take away their people. Moses then called the people together and instructed them to leave immediately and this was the beginning of the Israelites liberation which eventually marked the end of their slavery in Egypt and their movement to the Promised Land through the wilderness.

#### **SIGNIFICANCY/ IMPORTANCE OF PASSOVER TO THE JEWS**

1. The Passover marked the formation of the Jewish theocratic nation (a nation headed by God).
2. The Passover confirmed Moses as the leader of the Exodus chosen by God. This is because through Moses had been struggling to release the Israelites and it was during this plague that he succeeded that eventually made both the Israelites and Egyptians to know him as the leader of the exodus.
3. The Passover feast separated the Israelites from the Egyptians. In this case the blood of the sacrificed animals which the Israelites put at their posts saved them from God's destruction and the Egyptians who didn't have it suffered the disaster.
4. Through the Passover celebration God's divine power was revealed both to the Israelites and Egyptians. In this case God's divine power broke the arrogance of the pharaoh and the Egyptian magicians.
5. The Passover became a big historical event that was to be celebrated annually by the Jews to remember their deliverance from slavery.

6. The Passover meal joined the Israelites to God and created unity among themselves. In other words, as the Israelites came together in their celebration, the spirit of brotherhood that was shattered (broken by slavery) was promoted.
7. The Passover fulfilled the promises made to Abraham by God. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be mistreated in a foreign land under slavery and a punishment to the offenders at a later stage (Exodus 15:13-14). This was eventually fulfilled when the Egyptians were finally punished during the Passover meal as the Israelites celebrated the beginning of their liberty.
8. Through the Passover, the Israelites became the chosen people of God. This is based on the fact that it was only those circumcised who were to eat the meal.
9. The Passover marked the end of Jewish exile and slavery like in Egypt and marked the beginning of their deliverance.
10. It marked the beginning of Jewish religious year. The Jews became monotheistic community, in this case the Jews kept on remembering their deliverance from slavery through the Passover that became a tradition.
11. It marked the day when the Israelites first born were protected from the deadly plague.
12. Through the Passover, the Israelites came to realize God's love towards them. Even the later generation got to know of his love through the Passover celebration that was annually.
13. The Passover signified the power of faith and obedience. Through their faith and obedience, the Israelites were eventually set free.
14. The event broke the arrogance of pharaoh who had behaved like a god and refused to set the people free. This episode made him come out of his adamancy by setting them free.
15. The Passover showed the Israelites the power of faith and obedience. The instructions given to them were to be followed strictly for their survival.

#### **NEW TESTAMENT VIEW ABOUT THE PASSOVER (UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASSOVER)**

1. At the time of the feast the Passover had become a tradition and celebration among the Jews. It was a feast to make the Jews remember the suffering of their ancestors in Egypt.
2. Christ recognized and observed this feast e.g. at the age of 12 he went to Jerusalem with his parents to celebrate the Passover feast (Luke 2:14 following). Also during his ministry together with his disciples went to celebrate the feast in Jerusalem.
3. From the above examples it means that Christ had a positive attitude about the Passover. But unfortunately the Jews had misinterpreted and commercialized the Passover feast. This is why Christ in Mark 11:15 following had to drive out money changers and those who were buying and selling animals in the temple.
4. In the cleansing of the temple Christ wanted to give a new meaning to the Passover celebration and show its holiness he therefore interpreted the Passover feast to mean the following;

5. Christ transformed the feast into a new covenant relationship to mean the new Israelites - Christians who are to remember their deliverance from the slavery of sin. Therefore, this means that Christ replaces the old covenant lamb who brings a new relationship between man and God.
6. The death of Christ on the cross is presented as a sacrifice like the death of the animals whose blood was smeared on the door posts of the Jews which saved them from the angel's destruction and marked the beginning of their liberty or freedom.
7. The death of Christ also came during the Passover (last supper with his disciples). This implies that he is the replacement of the sacrificial lamb bringing salvation to mankind.
8. Christ interpreted his last supper as the ritual of the Passover where he called the bread his body and the wine his blood. With this, his followers had to eat and drink for their salvation just as the Israelites had to eat the Passover meal before their liberation.
9. The blood of the sacrificial lamb united all the Israelites while in Egypt celebrating the Passover. Similarly, the blood of Christ and his body unites all Christians making his family.
10. Jesus commanded his disciples and followers to always do the same in memory of what he had done during the Passover celebrations.
11. Christ as a sacrificed lamb was crucified once and for all on the cross and the new life gets on its climax on Easter day celebration. This means that the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of a new life in spirit. Similarly, after the Passover, the Jews set out for a new life of freedom.
12. Jesus' bones on the cross were not broken at all as it was with the Passover lamb of the exile in Egypt.
13. For Christians Christ becomes the leader of believers replacing Moses. Christians are therefore called upon to live according to the new Passover which has made them free from being enslaved by their sin.
14. The crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ became an opening way for Christians to the Promised Land which is heaven. Similarly, after the celebration of the Passover, the Jews set out their journey to the Promised Land which was Canaan.

#### **RELEVANCE OF THE PASSOVER TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

1. Christians should be faithful to Christ and show obedience to him for having saved them from their slavery of sins just as the Jews had faith in their leader Moses.
2. Christians should always celebrate the Eucharist as instructed by Christ himself just as the Israelites had to celebrate the Passover.
3. There is a need for Christians to enter into a close relationship with God through Christ who saved them from being enslaved by their sins.
4. Christians should take the crucifixion, death and the resurrection of Christ as an opening gateway to the Promised Land, which is heaven.
5. Christians should be united to each other through the blood and body of Christ.

6. Christians should live holly lives so as to obtain the salvation Christ brought through shading his blood on the cross that washed away their sin.
7. Christians should celebrate Good Friday i.e. the day Christ died that marked the beginning of their deliverance from the slavery of sins.
8. Christians should keep the new covenant which Christ started by shading his blood at Calvary.
9. Christians also celebrate Easter day that marked the beginning of a new life in spirit.
10. Christians should give material support to the church that forms the family of Christ for it to grow.
11. Christians should depend on God through his only son Christ for their survival just as the Israelites depended on God through Moses for their deliverance.
12. Christians ought to accept God's call in the service of others. Christ as well as Moses accepted God's call to serve others.

## **COMPARISION BETWEEN THE ISRAELITE PASSOVER AND THE CHRISTIAN EASTER**

### **SIMILARITIES**

1. Both are annual events.
2. In both sacrifices are central that is the lamb in the Jewish Passover and Jesus Christ in the Easter.
3. In both there is remembrance; On the Passover there is remembrance of suffering and victory and on Easter they remember Jesus' death and resurrection.
4. In both there is movement from slavery to freedom.
5. Both are historical events.
6. Both are central points to the belief and worship of Judaism and Christianity.
7. They both point to God's saving power.
8. In both festivals there was a command to remember the occasion.
9. In both God uses individuals to intervene for him that is Moses and Jesus.

### **DIFFERENCES**

1. Whereas the Jewish Passover was a physical victory, Easter is a spiritual victory that is the defeat of sin and death.
2. Moses the human being was the central figure in the Jewish Passover while Jesus Christ who was divine was the central figure in Easter.
3. The Jewish Passover was for only the Jews while the Christian Passover was universal.
4. The blood of the Jewish Passover was to help the Angel of God to identify the Israelite houses from the Egyptians while the blood of Jesus was for the salvation of sinners.
5. In the Jewish Passover Moses ordered for the sacrifice of a one-year-old male lamb or goat while in the Christian Passover Jesus himself became a sacrificial lamb.
6. In the Passover the Israelites remembered their liberation from the bondage of suffering while in the Christian Easter the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for salvation of man's sin.



7. Whereas the Passover event marked the movement to the promised land, Christian Easter marked the movement to God's kingdom.

## **THE EXODUS – THE JOURNEY TO CANAAN**

- After the Israelites had left Egypt, they began to struggle down to the Sinai Peninsula. However, the pharaoh and his army made a final attempt to recapture them. This was because the pharaoh realized that he was losing the manual Labour necessary for his building programs.
- Despite God's promise to protect the Jews, they still panicked, they had feared the armed forces because they themselves weren't armed. Because of this and the red sea a head of them they became harsh on Moses questioning him as to why he led them out of Egypt.
- Moses then prayed to God who then instructed him to lift up his stick and hold it over the sea which then divided its self into two creating a dry path and the Jews past through. As the Egyptians followed, Moses held out his stick over the sea again and the water drove back drowning the Egyptians. This marked the beginning of the Jewish wondering in the wilderness.
- **In the wilderness the Jews faced a number of problems including;**
- The Israelites suffered from lack of water particularly in SHUR where they had to move for 3 days looking for it and to make it worse, the water found was again bitter. Because of this they complained to Moses who then prayed to God and God responded by instructing Moses to strike a rock once with his stick and water came out for the people to drink (Exodus 15:22 following) and (Exodus 17:1 following)
- The Israelites lacked food especially in the desert of sin which was between ELIM and Sinai. However, God later provided food in the form of manna and quails when Moses prayed following the complaint he had received (Exodus 16:1 following)
- The desert conditions which was characterized by hot temperature was too harsh to the Israelites.
- The Israelites were attacked by hostile tribes in particular the Amalekites attacked the Israelites while camping at Rephidim (Exodus 17:8-16)
- The Israelites had conflicts and quarrels among themselves. It broke the unity they had entered into the Passover celebration.
- The Israelites suffered from long distance they could move during day and night with little time to rest. They wondered in the wilderness for 40years before settling in the Promised Land.
- The Israelites backslide, at the foot of mountain Sinai; they made a golden calf to represent God when Moses had gone up the mountain to meet him.
- The Israelites rebelled against the leadership of Moses e.g. Korah the son of Izhar from the Levite clan staged a rebellion because of the feeling that Moses was misleading God's people.

### **THE SINAITIC COVENANT/ MOSAIC (Exodus 19-23)**

- The Israelites after leaving Rephidim on the first day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the desert of Sinai they set a camp at the foot of a mountain. Moses then went up the mountain to meet God during that God initiated a covenant.
- This covenant was intended to bring the people closer to God. God also wanted the Israelites to recognize and realize that he was their father. During this covenant, God gave some commands that later came to be the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) that the Israelites were to obey.

### **HOW GOD COMMANDED MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE MAKING OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT (Exodus 19: following)**

1. God through Moses first reminded the Israelites of how he carried them out of slavery in Egypt, protected them and brought them to the holly mountain.
2. God called on the Israelites to be obedient to his covenant if they were to remain his children.
3. On coming down the mountain, Moses gathered the elders and told them God's demand and all the people agreed at once.
4. The Israelites had to purify themselves for worship they were to bath and wash their clothes in order to meet the holly God.
5. The Israelites had to gather on the third day waiting for God to come down where all the people would be able to see him physically.
6. A boundary had to be drawn around the mountain and no one was to cross that boundary. Whoever could cross, had to die.
7. They were told even not to touch/ reach the foot of the mountain in order to survive from God's wrath.
8. The Israelites were to abstain from sexual intercourse. These formed part of the purification process.
9. The Israelites had to go up the mountain after the trumpet was blown. On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day mountain Sinai was covered by a thick cloud and then thunder and lightning that was later followed by a loud trumpet blast. This made all the people to tremble with fear.
10. Moses had to talk to God and the Israelites again after God's appearance. In deed after the trumpet God spoke to Moses instructing the Israelites to go up the mountain to that Moses objected on the ground that the mountain was holly and therefore the sinful Israelites couldn't climb.
11. God then instructed Moses to take Aaron up the mountain but to leave all the priests behind.
12. The Israelites had to build an Alter at the foot of the mountain where they could sacrifice their animals as they worship God.
13. Moses then built an Alter and set up 12 stones one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

14. The people burnt sacrifices to the Lord. A half of the blood was put in the bowls and the other half was thrown at the Alter.
15. Moses then took the book of the covenant in that God had written his laws and he read it aloud to the people who then promised to obey.
16. To seal the covenant God had made with the people, Moses took the blood in the bowls and threw them onto the people.
17. God also gave commandments/ laws in order to guide the Jews. There were also some laws concerning the treatment of slaves. God thereafter promised to remain their father if they would also remain his people.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT**

1. The Sinaitic covenant was made between two unequal parties or the superior and the inferior beings. In this case God is the Supreme Being and the Israelites the inferior being.
2. Sinaitic covenant involved the use of a mediator. In this case Moses acted as a link between God and the Israelites.
3. God talked to Moses and referred to what He had done for the Israelites.
4. He asked the people if they would accept to be God's people and the people accepted to be ruled by God.
5. The people had to purify themselves by washing their clothes and abstaining from sexual relations.
6. A boundary was made around the mountain so that nobody could cross to the holy mountain.
7. The Sinaitic covenant was characterized by God showing his holiness. The Israelites even including the priests had to purify themselves before meeting God.
8. God was physically present in the Sinaitic covenant. God manifested himself in the form of thunder, smoke, lightening and a blast of trumpet.
9. The Lord's appearance made the Israelites to tremble with fear for they had experienced the mighty power of God.
10. God gave his identity in the Sinaitic covenant. He identified himself as the God who liberated the Israelites in Egypt, protected them in the wilderness and brought them to the foot of mountain Sinai.
11. In the Sinaitic covenant God gave some conditions to the Israelites i.e. the Israelites had to obey God if they were to be called his children following the commandments.
12. The Sinaitic covenant was characterized by the symbolic representation of the parties involved. In this case Moses built an Alter to represent God and to set up 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes in Israel.
13. Cattle, sheep and goats were sacrificed. Both fellowship and burnt sacrifices were offered to God on this Alter.
14. Blood was collected and put in bowls, some of the blood was poured on God's Alter and the other half was sprinkled on the people.

15. The Sinaitic covenant was characterized by the giving of commandments. God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to guard the relationship between him and the Israelites and the relationship among the Israelites themselves.
16. The book of the law was read and all the people promised to do everything that had been written in the law of God.

### **OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT**

1. Following the Sinaitic covenant both parties (God and the Israelites) had some obligations and responsibilities to fulfill as discussed below;
2. The Israelites were to obey and be loyal to God, they were to put God at the center of their daily activities at the signing of their commitment to the covenant made.
3. The Israelites had an obligation of passing on their covenant faith to the children i.e. they had to teach their children and bring them up properly by giving good examples basing on the covenant faith.
4. The Israelites were to make other nations to know about the divine grace and the promises of God. Right from the time of Abraham, God had been promising to make Israel a great nation and as such Israel was a chosen nation which was to serve as an example and a holy priest to other nations.
5. The Israelites had obligations to remain holy just as their father God was. Therefore, this means that they were to avoid any situation that would lead them into sinning.
6. The Israelites had the obligation of living as a theocratic nation. In other words, their economic, social, political and religious way of living had to be determined by the laws of God.
7. The Israelites had an obligation to keep their part of the covenant by obeying all the laws. In other words, the covenant laws/ Decalogue were absolute and the Israelites were simply obliged to respect them.
8. The Israelites were to serve God and their fellowmen faithfully. In other words, the laws given were to help them in their service of man and God.

### **On the other hand, the Sinaitic covenant also had some responsibilities including the following**

1. God was responsible for the welfare of the Israelites. He had to save them from their enemies and he was to take care of them, give them what to eat and to drink.
2. God had to keep his promises and give the Israelites the land of Canaan which he had promised to Abraham their grandfather. Right from the Israelites escape from Egypt, God is seen determined to fulfill his promise.
3. God had the responsibility of protecting and guiding the Israelites, the laws God gave to the Israelites were to guide them in their man to man and man to God relationship. The first four commandments are absolute and deal with man to God relationship and the other six deal with man to man relationship.

4. On the other hand, the Israelites were to thank God for delivering them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. Therefore, they were to celebrate the Passover feast in remembrance of his mighty act.
5. The Israelites had the responsibility of serving as priests. They were the chosen nation and were therefore to serve God and minister to others.
6. The Israelites were to love their neighbors as the Lord loved them. In this case they were to be a caring community and to show mercy to others particularly the poor and the disadvantaged.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT TO THE ISRAELITES**

1. The Sinaitic covenant revealed God's power to the Israelites, when God appeared in the form of the thunder lightning and smoke all the Israelites trembled with fear.
2. It signified God's divine choice. God can choose an insignificant individual/ people for a purpose. In this case God chose Israel as a nation to give light to other nations.
3. It fulfilled the promises made to the Israelites through their grandfather Abraham. They became special and great people that God had promised Abraham and this also marked the beginning of their blessing.
4. The Israelites received a code of conduct through the Sinaitic covenant. God gave them some laws to guide them in their man to God and man to man relationship. Therefore, this means that God is a guide to the Israelites.
5. The Sinaitic covenant portrayed and confirmed God's love for the Israelites. Even when the Israelites had been turning away from God because of constant and everlasting love initiated a covenant relationship in order to bring them back to him.
6. The Sinaitic covenant revealed God's character as a jealous God. He doesn't want people to worship other gods but only him. This showed the absoluteness or oneness of God.
7. The Sinaitic covenant revealed the omnipresence of God. God is present everywhere even on mountains. God appeared to his people in a thick cloud and smoke etc. that covered the whole mountain.
8. The Sinaitic covenant established God's kingship over the Israelites. During the covenant, God promised to be the father of the newly born nation.
9. The Sinaitic covenant sealed the election of the Israelites as God's people. Right from the time of their liberation in Egypt. God through Moses had always reminded them of his divine choice but this wasn't confirmed until they met God at the foot of mountain Sinai.
10. The Sinaitic covenant signified and confirmed God as the initiator of everything. God had initiated the deliverance of Israelites from Egypt and he is also seen initiating the covenant relationship with the people he had chosen.
11. The Sinaitic covenant became the basis of teaching among the later generation in Israel. The prophets including Nathan, Elijah, Amos and Isaiah who later condemned the behaviors of the Israelites did so in defense of the covenant demands.

12. The Sinaitic covenant created unity among the Jews, they felt that they were the chosen people of God and therefore had to stay together as one. This created the spirit of nationalism and an eye opener to the Israelites about the land of Canaan characterized by a lot of evils. This explains why they were given some guidelines intended to help them from sinning.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY**

1. Christians need to respect God as a powerful being having control over the affairs of the world. God's appearance to the Israelites in the form of smoke, thunder and lightning made them to tremble with fear.
2. Christians should respond with faith and obedience to God's call which is divine and meant for anybody.
3. Christians ought to worship only one God. This is the only way through which Christians can be called children of God.
4. Christians should let their lives be guided by God. This calls for obeying God's laws.
5. Christians should be ready to meet God anywhere. This means that Christians should at all times expect to be with God.
6. Christians should live in God's everlasting and constant love for them and should extend this love to others.
7. Christians should give material support to their churches, it could be in form of offertory to help the church grow.
8. Christians should always repent of their sins before meeting God. The Israelites had to purify themselves before the Sinaitic covenant.
9. Christians should always be exemplary to others like the Israelites in their community. They should therefore positively influence others towards believing in God.
10. Christians ought to be united as they relate to each other and with God. This calls upon the Christians to realize and recognize the oneness of God and therefore live together as one.
11. Christians should preach the good news about the kingdom of God in other words they should extend the salvation benefits to all people.
12. Christians ought to be holy just as their father is. This means that they should avoid any situation which can lead them into sinning.
13. Christians should reconcile and forgive one another as they try to build the kingdom of God.

### **COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ABRAHAMIC AND SINAITIC COVENANT**

#### **Similarities**

1. Both the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants were initiated by God himself. In other words, in both covenants, God was the brain behind the sinning of the
2. Both covenants were important steps in God's salvation plans for mankind.
3. Both the Sinaitic and the Abrahamic covenant were between unequal parties. In this case God is superior or supreme and man is inferior.

4. God was physically present in both the Abrahamic and Sinitic covenant. In this case God appeared in the form of a smoking pot and flaming bush during the Abrahamic covenant and appeared in the form of smoke, thunder and lightning in the Sinitic covenant.
5. In both, alters were built as a way of worshiping and showing obedience to God.
6. In both covenants, sacrifices were offered. In other words, animals were slaughtered as a sign of embracing.
7. Both covenants involved promises, blessings and privileges. In the Abrahamic Covenant God promised Abraham a great nation and a child among others and in the Sinitic Covenant God promised to be the father of the Israelites.
8. Both the Abrahamic and Sinitic covenant reflected God's love, mercy, care and concern for mankind.
9. Both covenants were sealed with animal blood.
10. Both the Abrahamic and Sinitic covenant involved movements. Abraham was made to leave his native land and go into the land he was going to be shown. In the Sinitic covenant the Israelites were meant to move to the Promised Land which is Canaan.
11. In both covenants man's part was to obey. Faith and obedience were very important in these two covenants.
12. In both covenants disobedience would cause disaster.

### **Differences**

1. The Sinitic covenant involved some conditions while the Abrahamic covenant was free from conditions. In the Sinitic covenant the Israelites had to obey God if they were to remain his children. This is a missing element in the Abrahamic covenant.
2. Whereas the Sinitic covenant involved the use of a mediator, the Abrahamic covenant was face to face. In this case Moses acted as a link between God and the Israelites in the Sinitic covenant but Abraham came into a direct contact with God.
3. The Sinitic covenant involved purification of the inferior party but this is a missing element in the Abrahamic covenant. Abraham associated with God the way he was.
4. Where the Sinitic covenant was multi-lateral and Abrahamic covenant was bilateral i.e. Sinitic covenant was between God and many people (Israelites) while Abrahamic covenant was between God and Abraham.
5. The Abrahamic covenant involved changes in names i.e. Abram became Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah while the Israelites remained with their original names.
6. The Abrahamic covenant involved undertaking the ritual of circumcision while in the Sinitic covenant the people were already circumcised.
7. In the Sinitic covenant the inferior party was in transit. The Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land Canaan while in Abrahamic covenant Abraham had to begin his journey after the covenant.

8. The Abrahamic covenant contained some universal element. Abraham was to be source of blessing to all nations while the Sinitic covenant was specifically addressed a particular group of people Israelites.
9. The Abrahamic covenant was the beginning of God making an agreement with mankind while the Sinitic covenant was the fulfillment of the promises made in the Abrahamic covenant.
10. In the Sinitic covenant laws were given while the Abrahamic covenant was only through faith and obedience.
11. In the Sinitic covenant there was collection and sprinkling of blood to the people while in the Abrahamic covenant blood was left to flow.
12. The Abrahamic covenant took a short period of time while the Sinitic covenant took a long period of time.
13. The two covenants are made at different times and in different geographical places. Abrahamic in Canaan while Sinitic covenant at Sinai.
14. In the Sinitic covenant a boundary was put to separate the people from the holy God while the Abrahamic covenant was open bounded.
15. Where as in Abrahamic Covenant God appeared in a flashing torch, in the Sinitic Covenant He appeared through thunder and lightning.

#### **THE DECALOGUE (Exodus 20:1 – 70)**

- The word Decalogue refers to the Ten Commandments that God gave the Israelites through Moses as the mediator.
- Since the Israelites community was formed of various categories of people with different behaviors, it was difficult for the people to live peacefully. Therefore, God found it necessary to reduce the rebelliousness of the people in order to form a humble and civilized society by giving the Israelites a constitution in form of a Decalogue to guide them.
- The laws consisted of religious liturgical and social regulation. Exodus 20:1-70 contains the summary and climax of God's agreement with his people.
- The Ten Commandments set up a basic ethical norm which was applicable to everybody in the Israelites community. The laws are found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- The laws are categorized into two groups i.e. man to God relationship (first four/ 4) mean while the remaining six/6 concern the relationship between man and man.
- There are also two types of laws found in the Decalogue i.e. the conditional laws, the Israelites had to obey God if they were to remain his children.
- The laws were to be followed and accepted by all the Israelites. The laws showed God's concern for Israelites as a nation. In these laws God set out standards governing family relationship and respect of human life among others.

#### **INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMANDMENTS**



- a. God in the first place wants the Israelites to realize that he is the God their Lord who brought them out of Egypt where they were slaves. This means that God is a loving God and a fearing Lord.
- b. Exodus 20:3 brings out the uniqueness and oneness of God and in this case it revealed God's character. God doesn't want his people to worship any other god but him alone. This means that God is a jealous God since he tolerates no rival and punishes those who hate him.
- c. In Exodus 20:7 God doesn't want people to use his name for evil purposes like selfish ambitions. Therefore, he is seen condemning People swearing. This means that God is a holly God and not associated with evil act.
- d. Exodus 20:8 -11 stresses the importance of Sabbath as a holly day which needs to be observed. Work is to be done in 6days and therefore rests on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. This law reflects back the creation story in Genesis where God himself rested after finishing his creation activities. This means that the Sabbath should be a holly day set aside for worship and glorification of God's name.
- e. Exodus 20:12 affirms the journey of life through the channel of human parents, who are to be honored. Those who respect their parents are to live longer. This means that respecting parents is respecting God who gave blessings and the controller and source of life.
- f. In Exodus 20:13 God prohibits man from taking away human life i.e. "Do not commit murder". This means that God is the only one who can give and take away life from people. This also reflects on the assignment given to man in Gen 1:28 where man is to work and subdue the world, fill it and make it a better living place. Therefore, man is required to preserve human life rather than destroying it.
- g. Exodus 20:14 demands respect for the God is given function of sex through which life is to be passed on from one generation to another. Man is not to misuse sex by committing adultery therefore this calls for faithfulness among people and respect for human body as temples of God on earth.
- h. In Exodus 20:15, God wants to see people living in good relationship and therefore calls for respect for someone's property. Stealing is presented as a sign of selfishness and lack of love for fellow man.
- i. This means that people should always trust in God's provision and be patient in whatever they have. It also stresses the importance of work in Gen 1 and 2 where man is supposed to work and subdue the world.
- j. In Exodus 20:17 greediness of any form is condemned. In this case lack of satisfaction and lack of faith in God's provision put self-interests above everything which makes people to convert to their neighbor's property including wives, slaves, cattle, houses etc.
- k. It is important to note that these commandments were given to guide the Israelites to show then what's good and bad.

## **ROLE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN ISRAEL COMMUNITY**

1. The commandments functioned to show Israel's sinfulness so as to repent.
2. They helped them to realize their union with God in the covenant they had made.
3. The laws helped them to live in agreement with God. They were the guidelines on how the Israelites were to live with their God and one another.
4. They served to show the acceptable behavior i.e. a moral code within the community of the people of God.
5. These Commandments helped the Israelites to have a sense of self control. For example, the Commandment that refused them to covet their neighbor's wives or property.
6. The laws also helped them to have respect of one another so as to maintain harmony in their community. For example, the law of not bearing false witness.
7. The law made the Israelites to have respect for life and humanity as well. For example, the law that controlled them from killing.
8. These Commandments made them realize God's specific consideration for Israel as a divinely elected nation.
9. They also exposed the true nature of Israel's God that is God as a holy God and helped them to live in respect with this requirement.
10. The Commandments showed the uniqueness of God's people. They indicated that they were a special people in relationship with God.
11. These laws were guides to the Israelites in keeping interpersonal relationships. By following the Decalogue, they related to each other in a proper conduct.
12. Through observing the Decalogue, the Israelites realized the importance of their God in their nation. God would bless all those who lived by them with great wealth.
13. The Ten Commandments were absolute laws showing how God's name was inseparable from reality.
14. The Commandments showed God's concern for the children of Israel. They indicated God's love, care and mercy for his people.
15. The Decalogue as a supreme law of God promoted unity in Israel because the whole community was guided by the same law.

### **HOW CHRIST INTERPRETED THE DECALOGUE**

1. When Christ began his ministry, some people particularly the Pharisees and the scribes (law makers/ teachers of the law). These people time and again criticized him because they believed he was a law breaker.
2. Because of this belief and feeling they rejected Christ with his disciples collecting some grains from the garden on the Sabbath day and this marked the beginning of Christ's teaching about the Ten Commandments as discussed below;
3. Christ emphasized that he had not come to destroy the law but to make the law come true, give it more meaning and to make the teachings of the prophets come true. Therefore, this means that Christ is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law.

4. Christ also emphasized that whoever destroys even the least important of the commandments destroys even the other laws. In other words, the breach of one law is equivalent to the breach of all. (Mathew 5:19)
5. Christ stresses that whoever obeys the laws and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven (Mathew 5:19).
6. However according to Christ, faith is more important than the law in what God requires. He points out that its faith that will make an individual to enter the heavenly kingdom but not obedience to the law.
7. Christ as the son of man who gave the laws respected the law e.g. he honored and respected his parents when he asked John to take care of his mother (John 19:26).
8. Christ recognized the temple as a house of God and prayer. Because of this defended the temple when he cleans it by overturning the tables of many changers (Mark 11:15-18).
9. Christ summarized the laws into two. He points out that the greatest law is the love of God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest is the love of one's neighbor as much as one's self. (Mark 12:28-31)
10. Christ also restated some of the laws and looked at it from the grass root. In this case he points out that the Sabbath was made for man but not man for Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Therefore, is of the view that doing something good on the Sabbath is good.
11. Christ points out the need to fasting to have its right place and purpose. This is when the disciples had refused to fast together with the Pharisees (Mark 18:20 -22)
12. In his teaching about murder Christ emphasized that it's not only killing alone which makes one to commit sin but even the evil thoughts and anger against someone is as dangerous as the act of killing. (Mathew 5:21 -23)
13. According to Christ looking at a woman with desires is as dangerous as committing adultery (Mathew 5:27 -30).
14. According to Christ, the Mosaic Law was re-strengthened by emphasizing its purpose when he said "It was said but now I say..." (Mathew 5:43 -44)
15. The law according to Christ wasn't sufficient otherwise he would have not come (Mathew 11:25 -30)
16. Jesus stressed reconciliation in case of any problem instead of revenge. For example, on loving your neighbor and hating one's enemy, he called for loving of enemies too.
17. He sent the man whom he healed of leprosy to the priests so as to perform the prescribed mosaic rituals. This meant he was in respect with the mosaic laws as well.
18. To the rich young man Christ affirmed the importance of the law in salvation but requested that one should live beyond the law by sacrificing what he has for God's kingdom. Mk; 10: 18-22.

### **ROLE OF MOSES IN THE EXODUS EVENT**

Moses who received his call from God through the burning bush incident was later commissioned by God himself to go and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. He played some

roles in the story of Exodus as a political leader, a priest and a prophet, mediator, law giver, a judge and liberator.

1. Moses after being commissioned by God went direct to the pharaoh and faced him with a lot of courage to talk on behalf of the Israelites and their release from slavery.
2. Moses led the Israelites in the battle field. Among others Moses prayed to God when the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites.
3. Moses risked his life and killed the Egyptian slave master. This showed the love Moses had for his people who were suffering.
4. As a political leader, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, throughout the wilderness defeating all hostile tribes.
5. Moses as a military leader recruited people in military services. This was in his attempt to defend the sovereignty of the Israelites (Numbers 1:24).
6. Moses played the role of a covenant mediator. He acted as a link between God and the Israelites at the foot of mountain Sinai. In this case, after meeting God, he instructed the Israelites among other things to purify themselves and communicated back to God people's response.
7. As a judge, Moses settled disputes over various issues in order to keep harmony. Among others at Mizpah Moses arranged a camp where he settled people's differences/misunderstandings (Exodus 18:13)
8. Moses played the role of an author. He is believed to have been the writer of the first five books of the Old Testament. (Pentateuch).
9. As a priest, Moses offered sacrifices on behalf of the Israelites like that recorded at the foot of mountain Sinai.
10. As an interceder Moses also pleaded to God on behalf of the Israelites. At one time when the Israelites made a golden calf, Moses pleaded to God on their behalf and saved them from death.
11. Moses had extraordinary powers and he performed miracles on behalf of God. Among others his stick turned into a snake, divided the red sea into two.
12. As a priest, Moses called the Israelites back to God e.g. when the Israelites made a Golden calf at the foot of mountain Sinai to be worshiped. Moses was disgusted and he asked the people to turn back to their own God and prayed to God to have mercy upon them.
13. Moses encouraged the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation among the Israelites. He showed them the need to live together as one person.
14. Moses also had the role of appointing leaders. Among others he appointed judges to help him in the settlement of disputes among the Israelites (Exodus 18:24 -26)
15. Moses as a religious leader had to see that all conditions of the law had to be fulfilled by the Israelites. He was therefore the custodian of the Sinaitic covenant.
16. Moses foretold what could happen in future and indeed whatever he said came to be fulfilled like the Passover and the plague among others that eventually broke the pharaoh's arrogance. Therefore, he acted as a prophet.

17. Moses received led the Israelites to mountain Sinai where they made a covenant relationship.
18. Moses received the covenant law on behalf of the Israelites. In this case God gave him the Ten Commandments after which he read them aloud to the people. This therefore means that Moses was a law giver.
19. He was the author of Israel's national days. Through Moses the Sabbath respected and other important days like the Passover day and the Day of Atonement were instituted as of Israel's holy days by Moses.
20. Moses also revived monotheism the religion of Israel's fore fathers which had been forgotten by the Israelites in Egypt and he is believed to have been the founder of Judaism a religion which exists up to date.

### **COMPARISON BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND MOSES**

#### **SIMILARITIES/ CHRIST AS THE NEW MOSES**

A critical look at the life of Christ would reveal a lot of similarities with that of Moses. This is why some scholars have referred to him as the new Moses. Among others the following should be considered to justify Christ as the new Moses;

1. Christ just like Moses was born during political crisis. In this case, Christ was born when King Herod had ordered for the killing of all the baby boys among the Jews and so was the case with Moses who was also born at the time the pharaoh of Egypt had ordered for the same.
2. Both Jesus and Moses were hidden immediately after their birth. Moses was hidden in the basket by his mother at the banks of river Nile in Egypt to save him from being killed following the order of the pharaoh. Similarly, Christ was also hidden in Egypt when King Herod ordered the killing of all the baby boys (Mathew 2:13-15)
3. Christ and Moses as well delivered people from bondage of their suffering. Christ delivered mankind from the bondage of sins and Moses delivered the Israelites from the bondage of slavery.
4. Both Moses and Christ started their missions when they were already old or mature enough. Christ started his work when he was already 30 years old.
5. Christ just like Moses performed miracles. Among others Christ changed water into wine. In the same way Moses performed miracles including his stick becoming a snake.
6. Both Christ and Moses came into existence during political oppressions. For the case of Moses, the Israelites were under the colonial rule of the Egyptians and Christ appeared when the Jews were under the colonial rule of the Romans and sentimental feelings of the Pharisees.
7. They both acted as leaders to groups of people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to begin their journey to the Promised Land Canaan. With Christ, the Christians are on their journey to heaven.

8. Both Moses and Christ spent 40days in the wilderness. Moses had his 40days up the mountain and Christ was in the desert for 40days being tempted by the devil (Exodus 24:18) and (Mark 1:12)
9. Christ just like Moses was a great teacher and advisor of the people on matters relating to religion and morality.
10. Both Christ and Moses interceded on behalf of the people they were serving before God. Before his death, Christ who was already on the cross prayed to God to forgive those who crucified him Luke 23:34. In the same way Moses prayed to God to forgive the Israelites after they had the Golden calf and worship.
11. Christ just like Moses gave some food to the people they were serving. Moses prayed to God when the Israelites were hungry and God provided them with food in the form of manna and quails. Jesus fed the 4000 and 5000 people at different intervals (Mark 6:30 following, 8:1 –following) and Exodus 16:1 –following)
12. Both Christ and Moses used blood to seal the relationship between man and God. Moses used the blood of the sacrificed lambs to seal the Sinaitic covenant and Christ used his own blood by dying on the cross to bring back man to God.
13. Both were concerned with God's law. Christ during his ministry recognized the Mosaic Law and referred to himself as the fulfillment of the law and that he had come to bring perfection to it.
14. Both Christ and Moses were prophets. In Mark 6:1 -6 Christ is presented as a prophet even during his day with the Israelites, whatever Moses talked came to be fulfilled. E.g. the plague which broke the pharaoh's arrogance.
15. Both were commissioned before the beginning of their public ministry. Moses was commissioned in the burning bush incident while Jesus during his Baptism.
16. Just as Moses founded the Old Israel, Christ founded the new Israel. This means that the two led the foundation for chosen people of God.
17. Both Christ and Moses showed great concern for the people they were serving and even went ahead to suffer for them.
18. Both were born in the Jewish communities and during the time when the Jews were under foreign rule.
19. Both went back to their places of birth when the kings who had ordered for their death had died.

### **DIFFERENCES**

**However, the two individuals aren't entirely the same. A lot of differences exists between them as discussed below;**

1. Christ was God's son who was conceived by the Holy Spirit while Moses was a product of human relationship.

2. The mission of Christ was foretold to the people he was coming to serve (Isaiah 7:1 – following) this is contrary to the mission of Moses which remained obscure to the Israelites until he appeared.
3. The death of Moses was out of mistake done but to Christ even before his coming it was clear that he had to die. He died innocently.
4. When Moses died he was buried by God himself while Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimethea and Nicodemus.
5. The resurrection of Christ makes him different from Moses who died and never came back to life physically.
6. Whereas Jesus Christ did isolate himself with politics of his people, Moses among other roles was deep rooted in the politics of his people.
7. Whereas Moses seemed to have been accepted and respected by people, Christ was publically persecuted by the people he was serving.
8. God was pleased with the work of Christ during his ministry while at some given moment God had to get annoyed with what Moses was doing.
9. Moses led Israel to material world while Jesus leads his people to spiritual world.
10. Moses led his people out of suffering from human hand while Jesus leads his people out of suffering from sin.
11. Moses got married during his ministry while Jesus lived a celibate life throughout his life time.
12. Before his call Moses was a law breaker, he had killed an Egyptian while Jesus from the very beginning was righteous.
13. Moses was born in the foreign land that is the land of Egypt while Jesus was born in the ancestral land.
14. Moses was stopped from entering the Promised Land by God while Jesus went to heaven where he leads all his followers.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE EXODUS EVENT TO ISRAELITES**

The Exodus which was the massive movement of the Jews under the leadership of Moses from Egypt where they were slaves became the most significant event in their history as discussed;

1. The Exodus event marked the end of the Israelites slavery life in Egypt and therefore the beginning of their freedom as they moved out of Egypt.
2. The Exodus event led to the birth of Israelites as a nation. In this case Israel became united under the leadership of Moses.
3. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites became monotheistic. They realized the oneness of God and abandoned the worship of other gods including those of the Egyptians.
4. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites came to realize that they were special and the chosen race of God as God was always on their side and they were therefore to serve him as holly priest and be exemplary to other nations.

5. The Israelites realized God's constant love and everlasting for them. God showed them love even when they were breaking away from him and went ahead to make a covenant relationship with them.
6. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites came to know of God's providence for them. God provided them with everything possible including leaders, food and water among others.
7. The Exodus event revealed God's character to the Israelites. In this case God is seen as a God who hates injustice, exploitation, oppression and he is a jealous God.
8. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites came to realize that God can choose anyone for a purpose irrespective of one's background. Moses was chosen as the leader of Exodus without considering that he had killed an Egyptian and therefore a criminal.
9. The Israelites came to realize that God is powerful and sovereign. God has power over nature, death and the earthly kings among others.
10. The Exodus event became a basis of the Israelites life and culture. In other words, it led to the existence of the Jewish religious days, festivals and rituals like the Passover which was celebrated annually and the feast of unleavened bread and tabernacles.
11. The Exodus event gave birth to the prophetic institution in Israel. Prophecy that began with Moses eventually became the way of life among the later generations in Israelites.
12. The Exodus event led to instituting of some of the Jewish cultures like circumcision of all baby boys.
13. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites received a code of conduct. God gave those laws in the form of the Ten Commandments at the foot of mountain Sinai and this became the basis of their constitution throughout their history.
14. The Exodus event fulfilled God's promises to the Israelites through Abraham. God had promised Abraham a great nation and many descendants among others. Therefore, through the Exodus event the Israelites came to know their origin as the descendants of Abraham.
15. Through the event, the Israelites came to realize that salvation is an act of God but not man. Indeed, God delivered them from their slavery conditions in Egypt made them special people and guided them among others.
16. Through the Exodus event, the Israelites became united as they realized that they were God's chosen people. It therefore laid a strong foundation of the unity of the Israelites enjoyed during and after settling in the Promised Land.
17. The Israelites came to realize God as their protector and a guide to them. God protected them in the wilderness against hostile tribes like the Amalekites and even guided them by giving them the Ten Commandments.
18. Through the exodus event the Israel recognized herself as the first born son of God. God was providing almost everything as a father does to the son.
19. This event made the Israelites to acquire their own land. At the climax of the exodus the Israelites were able to settle in the land promised to their fore fathers.
20. This event showed that God was of justice and hated injustices. This was shown in the punishments He gave to the Egyptians who had oppressed God's people.



21. It made the Israelites realize that everyone was under the law of God when God punished Moses for having broken His instruction.
22. The event also showed God's omnipresence. God moved with his people guided them through the wilderness up to the "promised land".

### **HOW THE EXODUS EVENT DETERMINED ISRAEL'S FUTURE LIFE?**

The exodus led to the birth of Israel as a nation and it was instrumental in shaping their religious, political and social life as it is today.

1. Israel being a nation of God and theocratic in nature originated from the exodus.
2. The exodus event united the Israelites who were living in separate entities as one people and remained one as a nation.
3. It reminded them to live as true descendants of Abraham.
4. The event made the Israelites to live as free people who had been rescued by God from slavery.
5. Through the exodus the Israelites got land of their own and were able to adopt a sedentary life.
6. The Israelites religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals observed in Canaan originated from the exodus event. These were the Passover, feast of weeks, Sacrifices and circumcision.
7. New cultures and special Israel's days like the Sabbath and Day of Atonement which characterized Israel's life started during the exodus.
8. Monotheism and later Judaism a religion followed by Israel was re instituted by Moses during the exodus event.
9. Laws given by Moses during the exodus became the basis of Israel's life and were used by Israelites to promote order in their community.
10. Their religious life was also based on the covenant they made with God during the exodus.
11. The institution of priests and judges which was concerned with Israel's religious practices was established during the exodus. Exodus 18:13-27
12. God's miraculous acts among the Jews also had routes from the exodus.
13. Their understanding of God as their father and His love for them started in exodus.
14. The Israelites lived as unique people protected by God. This was promised to them during the exodus.
15. It was from the exodus that the Israelites received God's blessings which had to be maintained in their life time.
16. The essentials of obedience are rooted in the exodus event.
17. Israel's diet that is food to be eaten by the Israelites was determined during the exodus event.
18. The relationship they had with their neighbors was also determined in the exodus event.

19. The dangers of rebellion and the way were punished or cursed were spelt out in the exodus.
20. Israel's animals for sacrifice and places for sacrifice were also determined during the exodus event.
21. Their relationship with the slaves and the way they were to be treated was stipulated during exodus.
22. The manner in which they treated those with skin diseases and how such people were cleansed was determined during the exodus.

### **RELEVANCES OF THE EXODUS EVENT TO MODERN CHRISTIANS**

1. Christians should live under God's everlasting and constant love. God cared for his people in the wilderness even when they were breaking away. Today God cares for his people even when they aren't faithful. The giving of his only son Jesus Christ to die for us revealed his love for his people.
2. Christians should also live under God's protection. God can protect people against their enemies since he is powerful just as he protected the Israelites against their enemies like the Amalekites.
3. Christians should ask for what they need from God. God can provide to his people everything including food and water, the way he did to the Israelites while in the wilderness. Christians today who are faced with famine should therefore trust in God's provision.
4. From the Exodus event Christians ought to accept God's call because God calls people for a purpose. God called Moses to go and serve the Israelites the people he had chosen hence Christians should therefore be ready to accept God's call, the way Moses accepted.
5. From the Exodus event, Christians ought to recognize the presence of God in their lives. God appeared to the Israelites at the foot of the mountain and to Moses while looking after the sheep of his father in law Jethro.
6. Christians should be ready to meet God anywhere at any time with courage just like Moses met God in the burning bush.
7. Christians ought to worship only one God because the exodus shows Him as absolute and a God who is jealousy.
8. Christians ought to pray to God whenever they are in problems the way Moses prayed before crossing the red sea and when the Israelites wanted food among others.
9. Christians ought to have trust in God because God fulfills his promises. The promises that God made to Abraham were fulfilled through the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and their eventual liberation among others and hence
10. Christians ought to show love to others because God hates injustices and he is a jealousy God.
11. Christians ought to have love for God trust in him and to show a complete submission. During the Exodus event, God entered into a personal covenant relationship with his people Israelites.

12. They should promote unity among themselves Just like Moses through God's command united the 12 tribes of Israel.
13. They should depend on God for everything. Moses made the Israelites to depend on God's provisions during the exodus.
14. They should thank God for electing them as special people. For the Israelites were the elect of God and through this process Christians too became God's own people.
15. They should prepare themselves for a new Canaan (Heaven) This should be done by living a righteous life.
16. They should remain a theocratic society That is a society ruled by God Himself just as the Israelites were expected to live as a theocratic nation.
17. They should be ready to enter a covenant with God and keep this covenant which was made with them through Christ.
18. They should act as priests by preaching the Gospel. The exodus event witnessed the institution of the priestly vocation by God.
19. They should be obedient to God and expect blessings from Him.
20. They should ensure Justice prevails in society. God sent Moses to liberate the Israelites from the injustices committed against them by the Egyptians.
21. Christians should follow all laws of God. The Israelites were required to live by the commandments God gave them through Moses.
22. They should maintain Holiness in their lives for they are relating with the holy God of Israel. The Israelites were required to cleanse themselves before meeting their God.

### **THE TREATMENT OF SLAVES EX. 21:1-11**

Slavery of any kind was widely spread throughout the nations of the ancient middle east and was accepted as normal in their social structure.

People could choose to be sold to slavery or poverty could make a man and his house holds to become slaves.

To this end God through Moses gave the following regulations regarding the treatment of slaves in the Israelite community;

1. Masters were to be considerate, they were to remember that they were once all slaves in Egypt.
2. The Israelites were not to enslave each other. However, if one bought a Hebrew slave, he was to serve for six years and then on the seventh year could be freed if he so wished less any payment.
3. If the slave came unmarried, he was to leave alone but if he was married he was to leave with his wife.
4. If a slave and wife produced children during time of slavery, the children belonged to a master and they were to remain behind.

5. If a slave was given a wife by the master and they produced children, both the wife and children belonged to the master. Thus on leaving the slave was to leave alone.
6. If the slave still loved to stay with his master, wife and his children, he had a right to remain as a slave forever.
7. A slave who wanted to remain with the master forever would be taken to the place of worship and made to stand against the door post where the master would pierce his ear to make him a permanent slave.
8. If a man sold his daughter as a slave, she was not supposed to regain her liberty like the male slaves. This meant that female slaves would permanently stay with their masters.
9. If the bought Female slave had not pleased the master, he would sell her back to the father.
10. The master had no right to sell this concubine to the foreigners because it would be unfair treatment.
11. A slave girl bought for a master's son was to be treated like a daughter.
12. If the master of the slave girl took up another wife, he was not supposed to reduce the food and clothing of the first.
13. In case of failure to fulfill the above duties to her, a master was required to free her without payment.
14. If a master got a stick and beat up his slave and the slave dies on the spot, the master was to be punished.
15. If a master hit his slave in the eye and put it out, he was to free the slave as payment for the eye.

### **THE SANCTUARY AND THE COVENANT ARK. EX. 25:1-22**

In verses 1-8 Moses is commanded by God to tell the Israelites to make a sacred tent in which the sacred box was to be kept.

From 22:10ff we have detailed instructions about the making of the ark or covenant box.

The ark/covenant box contained God's word and it symbolized God's presence with his people in the world. The making of the ark is given in details as below;

1. God commanded Moses to tell the Israelites to set aside a contribution for Him. Moses was to accept the contribution from every man who was willing to give it.
2. This contribution was to be in form of gold, silver and bronze, fine linen, blue purple and red wool, cloth made of goat's hair, ram's skin dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood and oil.
3. They were also told to build a Sanctuary(tent) for the lord which furnishings and patterns were to be shown by God.
4. The box was to be made out of Acacia wood 2.5 cubits long, 1.5 cubits wide and 1.5 cubits high.

5. Inside as well as outside the ark, it was supposed overlaid/plated with gold and a gold molding was to be made around it.
6. They were to cast four gold rings for the ark/box and fix them to its four supports(legs). Two rings on one side and two on the other.
7. They were also to make shafts of Acacia wood plated with gold and then insert the shafts into the rings of the sides of the ark/box and were not to be removed.
8. Inside the ark/box they were to place the testimony (the two stone tablets) that God was to give them.
9. They were further to make a throne of mercy or a cover of pure gold 2.5(110cm) cubits long and 1.5 cubits wide (66cm).
10. At the end of the throne of mercy or cover, they were to make two Cherubim/ winged creatures of hammered gold.
11. The first Cherubim was to be made at one end and the second at the other end of the cover.
12. The Cherubim were to have their wings spread upwards the throne of mercy/cover. The throne of mercy was to be placed on top of the ark.
13. The Cherubim were to face each other looking towards the throne of mercy(cover). The throne of mercy was to be placed on top of the ark.
14. In the ark the Lord was to meet them and from above the cover and between the winged creatures that are on the ark of the testimony, God would give the Israelites all his commands.

### **IMPORTAANCE OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AMONG THE JEWS**

- It was a place where God's word dwelt.
- It manifested God's presence among his people in Israel.
- It emphasized Israel's theocracy.
- It was the source of blessing among the people of Israel. The priest was required to go near the covenant box and receive blessings from God then in turn he would bless the people.
- It was a symbol of security and protection from God in Israel.
- The box maintained holiness among the Israelites that is why those who approached it had to be holy or face God's wrath.
- Inside the ark God's commandments were kept and given to the people.
- It was a point of God's election and call of people to serve him. From the covenant box God revealed Himself to those he wanted to associate with. For example, Samuel received his call while he had slept near this box.
- The ark was the source of Israel's military victories. The Israelites would carry this ark to the battle field so that God would give them victory.
- The place where the ark was kept became Israel's focal point for prayer and worship.

## **THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS**

The book of Leviticus mainly deals with God's holiness and the way in which his people were to worship and live so as to maintain the relationship with him.

It is therefore against this background that God gave the Israelites some laws and regulations to follow.

The book brings out the role of priests in Israel as they moved to settle in the Promised Land. In particular, it spells out the roles of priests regarding the administration of sacrifices.

In the administration of sacrifices, the house of Levi was chosen for priestly duties among the twelve tribes of Israel.

The offering of sacrifices was meant to help the people of Israel to live a holy life like their God Yahweh.

### **SACRIFICES**

Sacrifices are material offerings given to supernatural beings including God and spirits of gods.

For the case of Israel's religion, the sacrifices that were given involved agricultural products, animals and birds. Animals given included a bull, a cow, calf, lamb, sheep etc. And the birds given included doves, pigeons etc.

Israelites' sacrifices involved shedding of blood because of slaughtering some animals like goats and sheep among others which were considered to be sacred (holy) to be given to their holy God.

However, sacrifices among the Israelites also involve some crops like the grain corn turned into flour and sometimes cooked food.

The priests were responsible for offering sacrifices. They had to ensure that altars were built for this purpose. In this case the altars were built using 12 uncut stones each representing a tribe in Israel.

The animals and birds given as sacrifices had to be without any defect and deformation; this signified the holiness of God. Offering of poor quality animals was therefore an abuse to God.

## **TYPES OF SACRIFICES**

### **BURNT/ HOLOCUST offerings [Leviticus 1:3-17]**

This offering involved the whole animal or the sacrificed item being given to God by burning it, the worshipper therefore did not take part in sharing the sacrificed meal as everything was given to God

The sacrifice symbolized the allegiance of the Israelites to their God. It was usually performed when big offences had been committed.

It was therefore performed as a way of atonement (repentance) aimed at preventing future calamities.

The sacrifice was performed by a priest who required the offender to bring an animal which could be one of his cattle, a goat, and a sheep.

The offender had to put his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal as he confessed his sins.

The fire on the altar of the burnt offering had to be kept burning throughout the night.

### **Sin/confessional offering (Leviticus 4:1- 5, 6:24- 30).**

This type of offering was intended to take away peoples sins and therefore ask for forgiveness. It's also referred to as the purification offering, offerings for un intentional sins/ the guilt offering.

In this type of offering, the pigeon, a dove or any accepted animal e.g. "bull, calf or a sheep" had to be slaughtered on the North side of the altar and the blood sprinkled on the altar by the priest.

The sin offering was performed if an individual didn't intend to commit a sin. **Such cases among others include the following;**

If someone was officially summoned to give evidence in the court but did not give the information about something he or she had seen or had heard.

If someone touches anything ritually un clean e.g. a dead animal which could have had a natural death.

If someone touches anything of human origin that was unclean.

If someone makes a careless vows (promises) no matter what it was about but which eventually created guilt

### **THE GRAIN OFFERING/ 2:1-16 AND 6; 14-23.**

This involved the offering of purely agricultural products in form of cereals. It was accompanied with other types of sacrifices.

In this offering, a handful of mixed flour with oil could be presented by the priest on behalf of the people or an individual.

The flour was burnt along with some form of incense and the aroma or good scent was believed to reach God.

The flour had to be eaten without yeast; this was conducted in the court yard of the tent. This offering was intended for blessing the people with good harvests, in other words it acted as a thanks giving to God for the good harvest and good life, sharing the agricultural products with God.

### **Incense offering**

This involved offering objects with very good smell. The people had to make a sweet smell before God to glorify his name as supreme.

The Israelites believed that as the object was being burnt, the sweet smell would escape into heaven. This offering was also intended to show the respect the people had towards God.

### **FELLOWSHIP OFFERING/COMMUNITY OFFERING**

In this type of offering part of the sacrificial meat/ food was given to God while the rest was eaten by the people. The priest on behalf of the Israelites would give the best part of the meat to God through burning to show his supremacy and holiness.

Any balance of the meat/ leftovers had to be eaten up within three days beyond which it would be impure and could therefore defile the holiness of the people.

This sacrifice was intended to bring unity among the people and a re-union with their God.

### **PEACE OFFERING**

This was given as they would be requesting God to give them military victory in wars, peace, security and stability. This was normally given by the priest of the whole community.

### **Tithe offering**

In this type of offering, people could give tenth of each and every thing they had. It was intended to give back God's dues and therefore not to cheat him.

### **The ritual of ordination**

This was an offertory during the consecration of priests and kings. It was a procedure to sanctify the individuals for the service of God.



The animals were therefore slaughtered as a way of purifying the priests and kings before they could begin the service of God.

### **IMPORTANCES OF SACRIFICES AMONG ISRAELITES**

1. Sacrifices helped to purify the people of Israel. People who were ritually unclean had to give in some animals as sacrifices in order to attain purity. For, example at the foot of Mount Sinai, the Israelites offered sacrifices as they prepared themselves for the covenant.
2. Sacrifices were offered to give thanks to God. In particular, the people had to give thanks to God for the life and the property God had given them. Hannah offered sacrifices to Yahweh to thank him for blessing her with a son whom she named Samuel.
3. Sacrifices were offered to repent off sins and seek forgiveness from God. This was done in an effort to reconcile with the holy God. For example, King David who had committed a double sin of adultery and murder offered a sacrifice to the Lord and indeed his sins were forgiven.
4. The Israelites sacrifices showed respect to God and glorification to him. The Israelites believed that Yahweh was above them and earthly gods and therefore deserved respect because of this they had to burn incense for God.
5. Among the Israelites, sacrifices were avenues of seeking God's blessing especially in their gardens and in wars. In this case, the Israelites had to offer sacrifices before going to war in order to evoke victory.
6. Sacrifices were also a form of communication with God. The Israelites had to keep in touch with Yahweh who delivered them from their suffering guided them and gave them the Promised Land. This was achieved through offering sacrifices among other ways like prayers.
7. Sacrifices among the Israelites were used to mark important historical events in their lives. Events like the Passover which was celebrated annually among others were accompanied by offering sacrifices to commemorate God's might act during the Exodus.
8. The Israelites offered sacrifices to give back God's due by giving tithe. They regarded God to be the giver of everything. God as the owner of all the worldly things.
9. The Israelites offered sacrifices to award off calamities or dangers. If the community felt guilty for any given reason, the people had to offer sacrifices in order to appease God, aimed at averting the calamities that could have befallen the community.
10. The sacrifices helped to unite the Israelites as they shared the sacrificial meal, they came to live together as one and realize the importance of each other.
11. Sacrifices helped to strengthen the Israelites relationship with each other. This was the case with fellowship offering.
12. Through sacrifices, the Israelites dedicated their lives, lives of their animals and crops to God.
13. The Israelites offered sacrifices to cleanse their places of worship such as the alters and temples among others which had to be kept pure at all times.
14. Sacrifices were important procedures in the crowning of a new king and the ordination of priest. Sacrifices gave such people legal authority to begin performing their duties.

15. Sacrifices according to the Israelites helped to restore the lost image of God in them which was usually caused by sinning. In such cases they had to slaughter animals or give a sacrifice of any form to God with the aim of bringing back the image of God.
16. Sacrifices formed the basis of worshiping among the Israelites. In other words, sacrifices became avenues of people expressing their inner commitment to Yahweh.
17. The Israelites offered sacrifices to promote peaceful living in their community. This was especially after sensing danger.
18. Sacrifices were offered so that God could grant victory to the Israelites in their military campaigns/ encounters. King Saul offered sacrifices before going into the war with the Amalekites so that God could give them much needed victory
19. Through sacrifices the people of Israel were able to maintain and recognize God's holiness and his righteousness. It was therefore a way of showing respect to the Lord, king David had to offer sacrifices as he was transferring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem from the Philistines.
20. Sacrifices helped the Israelites to enter a communion with each other and with their God. Sacrifices were offered during dedication of something to God. For example, King Solomon offered sacrifices during the temple dedication; Hannah also offered a sacrifice when she was dedicating her son Samuel for the service of God.
21. Sacrifices were of importance for the survival of the priests, some parts of the sacrificed meal were eaten by the priests.
22. Sacrifices demonstrated the love the people of Israel had for their God and that which God had for them.

### **CASES WHERE SACRIFICES COULD NOT BE ACCEPTED/ THE ABUSE OF SACRIFICES**

In these books of old testament offering sacrifices was an important aspect of human life to keep in touch with God, Cain and Abel started it all, followed by Abraham and the later generations of Israel.

However, time and gain the people abused those sacrifices and as such God could not accept them. Such cases among the Israelites include the following;

1. Sacrificing of skeletal animals and keeping the fatty ones for human consumption like the sons of Eli, 1<sup>st</sup> (Samuel 2:12 -17)
2. Sacrifices presented by wrong people or non-priest. For, example when King Saul offered a sacrifice before the Israelites went for war. This was a violator of the law regarding sacrifices because he assumed the priestly duties and such, God could not accept the offering (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 13:9-10)

3. Offering sacrifices in wrong places like the case of King Manasseh who offered a wrong place. In this case could perform such rituals in places different from the Alters and the temples which were specifically meant for this purpose.
4. Offering sacrifices for formality. In other words, giving sacrifices for the sake of fulfilling the obligation. This didn't reflect the inner commitment of the people but rather an outward show.
5. Offering stolen sacrifices. This contravenes the covenant faith rearing that the individuals were impure.
6. Offering sacrifices to Yahweh and other pagan gods like the Canaanite at the same time. This was doing doubled standard and therefore
7. Offering sacrifices while ignoring the needy people like the poor, the sick and the orphans among others.
8. Sacrificing animals with defects and deformation. This was a way of despising Yahweh.
9. Offering empty and aimless sacrifices. In this case, the people offered sacrifices when their hearts were far away from Yahweh (Amos 5:21- 27)
10. Offering sacrifices after eating the parts that are supposed to be sacrificed to God. For example, the fatty parts and those contained blood.
11. The Israelites with time started to offer human beings a practice they copied from the Canaanites. For example, King Ahaz offered his son as a sacrifice to the Assyrian gods, King Manasseh offered his own son as a burnt sacrifice/offering to God.
12. Priests made sacrifices as a means of acquiring wealth other than reconciling the sinners to their God.
13. Priests who offered sacrifices had been contaminated by sin and because they were unholy even their sacrifices could not be accepted.
14. During Amos' time the people and their priests started sacrificing hurriedly in order to go back to their work.
15. Offering sacrifices with false belief that God would be contented and pleased with the sacrifices in spite of the people's evil ways of living.
16. At that time sacrifices composed empty songs and some were noisy which despised the holy God of Israel.
17. Some were sacrificing extravagantly while showing off like during the time of king Solomon many animals were sacrificed during the dedication of the Temple ceremony.
18. Sometimes the Israelites defiled places of sacrifices by involving in sexual immorality at the altar.
19. Some sacrifices were offered out of selfishness and greediness. For, example the sons of Eli showed greed when dealing with people's sacrifices; Cain was also selfish when he offered the worst part of his harvest to God.
20. Some of the sacrifices offered by the Israelites involved extravagance. For, example King Solomon's sacrifice during the temple dedication was an act off.
21. There was discrimination during the time of offering sacrifices; priests would favour the rich people's sacrifices at the expense of the poor.

22. Some of the Israelites could present stolen or grabbed sacrifices to God. This was common during the time of Amos when the rich could grab the poor's property and present them as sacrifices to God. This is why such sacrifices were rejected.
23. Some of the Israelites offered sacrifices and they still continued with their sinful nature, they had believed that Yahweh will be satisfied and forgive them by mere giving him sacrifices. This was hypocrisy which Amos condemned.
24. The Israelites lacked love amongst themselves in the process of offering sacrifices, they were therefore lying to themselves that they were God's chosen people.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS;**

- 1. To what extent did sacrifices in Old Testament fulfill their purposes?**
- 2. Justify the circumstances under which some sacrifices were rejected.**
- 3. Why were the prophets critical of the Israelites sacrifices?**

### **SACRIFICES IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA**

Sacrifices constitute to one of the commonest acts of worship among the African people. It involved giving of material things to gods, spirits and living dead or any other being considered to be spiritual.

Sacrifices were therefore one of the ways of approaching God and other spiritual beings by man besides prayers and others.

### **Occasions that called for sacrifices among the Africans include the following;**

- Circumcision
- Weddings
- Harvest time
- Planting time
- During wars/ wartime
- Famine
- Birth
- Funeral rights
- Failure for rain

### **IMPORTANCE OF SACRIFICES IN THE AFRICAN TRADITION SOCIETY**

**Like the Israelites, the Africans offered sacrifices for various reasons among which the following should be considered.**

1. Sacrifice was an act and occasion of making and reviewing contact between God and man and between spirits with man.

2. Sacrifice was a symbol of fellowship and recognition that the departed was still members with their human family and therefore a token of respect and remembrance of the meat had to be put in a place of worship especially the shrine.
3. Africans offered sacrifices in order to appease the ancestral spirits as a way of venerating. It was intended to avoid punishments or curses from these beings that were believed to possess special powers.
4. The Akamba and Kikuyu would give sacrifices to ward off future misfortune or suffering that would have otherwise befallen them. This was particularly making it possible for the future calamities to occur.
5. Sacrifices among the Africans was an act to express gratitude and joy to God. This particularly came after a blessing of any sort like good harvest and victory in wars. In other words, to offer sacrifices was simply to say thank you for the blessings.
6. In relation to above, Africans would give sacrifices to their God to solicit for victory in life particularly in a military venture. Among the Banyoro and Baganda the people consulted God through Kibuuka responsible for war by giving sacrifices.
7. Sacrifices among the Africans was a means of reconciling conflicts in a community. Among the Acholi people, the blood for the sacrificial animal was believed to amend the already broken blood relationship.
8. The traditional Africans sacrifices were offered as a means of worshiping the supreme God to show that he is superior to the human beings.
9. Africans used to give sacrifices for the wellbeing of the people. The Akan and Ashanti people of Africa could build altars in their homesteads that of offering of food stuffs especially events in human life like marriage and child birth.
10. They were used to mark and remember the important occasions like introduction ceremonies
11. Sacrifices helped Africans to show their gratitude to their gods particularly after a given blessing like child birth and good harvests.
12. Sacrifices played a role of purification among the Africans, that is to say; one was cleansed off after committing a great sin like incest by giving a sacrifice.
13. Sacrifices were used as a means of worshiping God, in societies like Buganda; they had shrines behind their main houses locally known as “Amasabo”. They would throw in food and pour in some alcohol. It was believed that it was wrong to rejoice alone without fellowshiping with their gods.
14. Sacrifices helped in promoting the welfare of the people/wellbeing of the people. For, example among the Asante of West Africa the sacrificed meat was eaten after sharing with their gods.
15. They were used as a means of asking for blessings from their gods. For, example the Baganda used to offer sacrifices before any economic venture, the hunters sacrificed to god through Ddungu a mediator responsible for hunters.

16. Africans also used sacrifices to offer in order to ask for fertility not only of crops but also of human beings. They would give sacrifices to God to give them children as a sign of prosperity.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD AMONG THE ISRAELITES**

- In simple terms a priest was a person who was consecrated or claimed to the service of God.
- The priests were and are still believed to connect people to God. The priest among the Israelites like today would wear long robes which were different from what other people would put on. This was to enable the people to identify the priest.
- Until the end of Samuel's reign in Israel, priesthood combined divine priestly function with theocratic leadership. They therefore had a good influence on the political life of the people.
- Priesthood was also hereditary. In other words, it was handed on from father to son.
- Numbers 3:2-11 the men from the tribe of Levi were chosen to assist Aaron and his sons in the work of serving God.
- The priests were to be supported by the rest of the community so that they would not be diverted from their total dedication to the service of God.

## **THE ROLE OF PRIESTS**

1. The priests were to perform the function of mediation between the people and God. This mediation was prosperous and in that case the priest had to do it on his behalf and on behalf of the Israelites.
2. The priest would also offer sacrifices even when the least in the community were excluded but only the part located to him (Right Hind leg).
3. The priests were to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary. They had to keep it clean and ensure that they were preserved for holy purposes like praying and offering sacrifices.
4. The priest was to show and maintain justice among the Israelites; he had to display fairness especially when handling sacrifices when he wasn't expected to be greedy by carrying away meat for all people.
5. As messengers of God, Priests were supposed to teach the law of God to the people.
6. They were responsible for reading the law of God at the feast of tabernacle every seventh year.
7. They also served as judges acting as a kind of Supreme Court in Israel Deut. 17: 8-13.
8. They were responsible for keeping the Ark of the Covenant and they carried this Ark of the Covenant in times of war.
9. Priests anointed other Jewish leaders like Kings of Israel.
10. The priest had a duty of carefully choosing one of his sons to assist him to perform his duties this was in the event of sickness or old age.
11. The priest was expected to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the entire Israel community. In this case he had to conduct fellowship offering where the best parts were burnt for God and the rest shared by the community.

12. The priest was expected to pray to God on behalf of the Israelites. This was especially in times of difficulties like wars, epidemics which include drought and famine.
13. The priest was expected to evoke God's blessing on the people. This was through prayers and offering sacrifices to God.
14. The priest was to prevent any individual who was in a state of legal impurity from eating sacrifices. Such an individual wasn't even meant to go the sanctuary through the guidance of the priest.
15. The priest had the duty of reminding the Israelites about the covenant laws and their relationship with Yahweh.

### **REGULATIONS GOVERNING PRIESTHOOD**

1. A priest was set aside and consecrated to the service of God.
2. He was meant to mediate between people and God.
3. The Priest slaughtered the animal offered by people and performed the ritual of burning the sacrifice on the Alter.
4. He also accepted the agricultural products offered such as corn, flour and then burnt them on the Alter.
5. He wore special clothes and his day to day life required avoiding of all contact with what was unholy.
6. He was supposed to be supported by the rest of the community so that he would not be diverted from his consecration to the Lord's service.
7. The priesthood was to be hereditary from father to son.
8. Numbers 3:2-11 the men from the tribe of Levi were chosen to assist Aaron and his sons in the work of serving God.
9. Levites were to be responsible for the case of the sanctuary and were not supposed to drink wine.
10. The priests were expected to live holy lives. They were therefore expected to repent off their sins after realizing that they had committed one.
11. The priest was also to eat part of the sacrificial meat. These included the hind right leg and the breast. The other parts of the sacrifices were to be eaten by the Israelites.
12. The priest was expected to observe a high moral standard. In other words, he was to show an exemplary conduct in order to influence others into doing the same. In particular, he had to be humble and righteous.

### **THE ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS AS PRIESTS LEV;8:1FF**

1. Moses had Aaron and his sons washed with water to symbolize their purification by God.
2. Aaron was clothed in holy garments i.e the shirt. Arob around his waist, the ephod, the the breast piece and a turban on his head.
3. Moses further went ahead by anointing whatever pertaining to the tent and everything with in was anointed.
4. Aaron was also anointed and declared to become the head of the priests.
5. Moses brought the sons of Aaron forward and were clothed as the lord commanded.

6. Moses brought a young bull for sin offering then Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.
7. Blood was smeared on the four horns of the alter to cleanse it from involuntary and even unknown contact with unclean animals and objects.
8. Moses brought the ram for the burnt offering then Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.
9. Its blood was sprinkled on all four sides of the alter. A burnt offering was offered which smell was pleasing to the lord.
10. The second ram was brought which was the ordination of priests and Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.
11. Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar and spinkled them on Aaron and his sons and on their clothes.
12. Moses ordered Aaron and his sons to take meat to the entrance of the tent boil and it with the bread that was in the basket of ordination offering.
13. Aaron and his sons were told not to leave the entrance of the tent for seven days until their ordination rites are completed.

#### **THE FIRST SACRIFICE AARON OFFERED TO GOD. (Lev: 9:14)**

1. God commanded Moses to instruct Aaron to offer sacrifices on behalf of the Israelites. This signified the divine role of priests
2. Aaron had just been ordained and there4 this was his first offering as a priest.
3. Moses was to preside over the sacrifices in other words he had to fore see Aaron offering this 1<sup>st</sup> sacrifice to God as a priest.
4. Moses instructed Aaron to take with him a young bull and a ram without any defects and offer them to the lord for cleansing the people of Israel.
5. The sons of Aaron had to be present together with the people of Israel to witness the offering of the sacrifices.
6. The Israelites were required to bring a male goat for sin offering, a one-year-old calf and a one-year-old lamb without any defects for burnt offering and a bull for the fellowship offering.
7. They had to offer a sacrifice accompanying it with grain offering mixed with olive oil. Aaron had to offer these sacrifices at the altar. They were intended to remove his own sin and the sins of the people.
8. Aaron slaughtered a young bull for his own sin. His sons got blood and smeared it on all the corners of the alter, and then poured out the rest at the base of the alter. This signified purification of the alter.
9. The fatty parts were given to God by having them burnt completely including kidneys and the part of the liver, the meat and the skin of the bull were later taken and burnt outside the camp.
10. The priest ate some of the sacrificed meat these included the breasts and the right hind leg.



11. Aaron presented the people's offering and took a hand full of flour and burnt it. This was after mixing it with olive oil.
  12. When Aaron had finished all the sacrifices, he raised his hands over the people and blessed them, and then stepped down.
  13. Moses and Aaron went into the tent of the lord's presence 4 a short while.
  14. When they came out, they blessed the people again. Then the dazzling light of the lord's presence appeared to all the people and this signified God's presence.
  15. Suddenly the lord sent fire which consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts of the offer. This signified acceptance of God's sacrifices.
- QN; "Comment on the 1<sup>st</sup> sacrifice that Aaron offered".

### **JESUS AS A HIGH PRIEST**

- A. Jesus brought the good news of salvation into the world. It was through him that everyone would be saved.
- B. Jesus served in the heavenly made temple of God which was greater and perfect than the manmade temple.
- C. Jesus was a universal priest. He also served human kind irrespective of different backgrounds.
- D. Jesus had a direct r/ship with God his father, and himself was God while Aaron was simply a mediator.
- E. Jesus would cleanse both the body and the spirit while Aaron would cleanse only the body.
- F. Jesus offered himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross while Aaron offered animals on the altar.
- G. Jesus had powers to forgive people's sins, e.g. the woman who committed adultery while 4 Aaron the work forgiving people's sins was left 4 God.
- H. Jesus had powers to perform miracles. This was to make people believe in the father's kingdom.
- I. Jesus closely associated with sinners while 4 Aaron's case, he had to be kept away from the community.
- J. Jesus' followers had to be fed on Jesus' body and blood 4 own salvation but 4 Aaron, they had to feed on through sacrificed meal.
- K. Jesus was more concerned with the spiritual life of his people and 4 the case of Aaron; he was concerned with physical appearance.

L. Jesus was sent from heaven by God himself to save the entire humanity from their sins.

M. Jesus used his own blood to shed away people's sins.

### **THE DIETARY LAWS/ FOOD PROHIBITION/ LEGAL PURITY**

- These deity laws were given the Israelites to help keep them holy like their God. Some animals, birds and insects were therefore considered unclean and unworthy for human consumption. (Leviticus 11:1- following)
- There was a deep belief that eating of the prohibited food would cause harm and therefore make someone unclean in the spiritual sense and separate the individual from God (Deity laws Leviticus 11:1 – following)
- In all this chapter deals with what would be referred to as a purity code governing the Israelites rituals as explained below;
  1. In 11:2 any land animal with divided hooves and those that chew cud were worthy to be eaten as they were considered holy e.g. cows, goats, sheep etc.
  2. However, animals like camels, pigs and rabbits which have divided hooves but don't chew cud weren't to be eaten. They were considered unclean and the people weren't even allowed to touch their bodies.
  3. If anyone touched the carcasses of the prohibited animals, such an individual had to undergo the ritual of cleansing.
  4. The prohibited animals were also not presented during sacrifice as they were considered unholy and therefore not fit for God and his people.
  5. Any kind of water creature in particular the fish with fins and scales may be eaten. However, those without fins and scales were considered unclean and therefore not to be consumed. (Leviticus 11:9)
  6. In Leviticus 11:13 -19 some birds weren't to be eaten. These birds including eagles, bats, ostriches, owls were considered unclean because they feed on the flesh of others and even on human beings.
  7. However, birds e.g. doves, pigeons and other domestic birds were considered clean and therefore fit for human consumption.
  8. In Leviticus 11:20 -23 all winged insects are considered unclean except those that hop and have 3 pairs of legs and body parts. They include grasshoppers and locusts.
  9. However, all other small beings that have wings but also crawl were considered unclean and were therefore not to be eaten.
  10. In Leviticus 11:29 -30 all reptiles weren't to be eaten. They included lizards, moles, mice. Whoever would touch them or their dead bodies would be considered unclean until the evening hours.
  11. Animals which died a natural death were also considered as unclean and therefore not fit for human consumption. If anyone would touch the bodies of such animals or eat it, such individuals had to wash his clothing but would still remain unclean until the evening.
  12. Any of the small animals that move on the ground whether they crawl or walk on four legs or have many legs were prohibited such animals like millipedes, spiders were unclean.

## **WHY DID GOD GIVE THE ISRAELITES FOOD REGULATIONS?**

1. They were given to maintain ritual purity among the Israelites as a community of God.
2. They were given to control and govern the lives of the Israelites.
3. Food laws were given to maintain holiness among the people of God as they worshipped their God.
4. Food laws would prevent the Israelites from separating with their God whom they had accepted to serve.
5. To have a good relationship with their God because touching these foods would create a gap between Israel and her God.
6. Food regulations were to maintain Israel as a theocratic nation that is a nation divinely elected and ruled by God.
7. They were given to prevent religious syncretism among the Israelites because such foods were given as sacrifices to the Canaanites gods.
8. To maintain cleanliness in Israel as touching such foods would make someone to be cut off from society because he was unclean.
9. They could not eat crawling animals or those that move on paws for they were unclean and could cause defilement.
10. These food regulations were also given to maintain good hygiene and help Israel live healthy. For example, they were forbidden to eat animals that faced a natural death.
11. These regulations were intended to separate the Israelites as a people of God from the pagans who were using them as food.
12. The Israelites would not eat animals with many legs because they were seen as unholy and would make one unclean.
13. They were given to make Israel have the spirit of self-control so as to approach their God in holiness.
14. They were also given to inform the Jews of which animals are suitable for them to eat and those that are not.
15. These regulations intended to show the Israelites the effects of touching even on these animals. It would make them unclean and hence a call for ritual cleansing.
16. They intended to identify the right animals and birds for Israelites sacrifices.
17. These regulations were intended to define and promote the Israelites cultures as a special people of God.
18. Some of these animals were being used in worship by pagan nations. Hence God never wanted his people to use similar animals because superstition and magic surrounded their usage.

## **HOW CHRIST INTERPRETED THE DIETRY LAWS (Mark 7:11- 14)**

- I. Christ interpreted the deity laws after some religious leaders came all the way to Jerusalem wishing to test him by asking why his disciples were using unclean hands while eating.
- II. Christ therefore used this opportunity to teach his followers about what makes the person unclean hence;
- III. He begun by challenging the Pharisees for their over emphasize on the ritual of cleansing at the expense of melting human needs and worshipping God. (Mark 70-8)
- IV. Christ points out that nothing that goes into a person from the outside can make him ritually unclean. (Mark 7:15)
- V. Related to above, he emphasizes that it's what comes out of a person that makes him unclean.
- VI. Christ further emphasizes that it's not what goes into a stomach that makes one unclean but what goes into the heart. This is because the spirit of God dwells on one's heart not the stomach.
- VII. Christ thereafter declared all types of food fit for human consumption but after prayers.
- VIII. To Christ, what makes a person ritually unclean are the evil desires coming deep from one's heart that leads the individual to do immoral things like robbing, killing, raping.
- IX. Christ emphasizes that God does not make a person ritually unclean but rather his relationship with God and fellow man.
- X. Jesus noted that some of the laws regulating food were out of hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
- XI. Jesus noted that what matters in one's morality is faith but not following the laws.
- XII. Paul teaches about the freedom of human conscious which allows all types of food to be eaten. (1<sup>st</sup> cor 8:1-13)
- XIII. Paul makes it clear that food offered to idols has no arm on individuals since an idol is something that does not exist.
- XIV. However, Paul gives a warning that if the eating of some food is likely to weaken the faith of a weaken brother, then it's better to leave the food for the sake of his brother.
- XV. Like Jesus, St. Paul shows that such foods pass through the stomach of a believer and passes out at the end of the digestion process.

**Qn. Analyze Jesus' teaching on food prohibition of what makes a person ritually unclean.**

**Qn. How were food prohibitions a form of approach to God?**

**Qn. Examine the understanding of food prohibition in the New Testament.**

## **THE PURIFICATION PROCESS OF THE LEPER**

### **LEV 14:1-19**

- Among the Israelites dreadful diseases which were seemingly bad to look at were known as the lepers and the victims were known as the lepers.
  - The victims of leprosy were separated from the rest of the community and the worship of God. It was done to avoid victims contaminating others.
  - The Israelites considered such a person to be impure and therefore could only be restored to purity and the rest of community after cleansing.
  - The people also believed that leprosy could attack an individual as a result of sinning.
  - The leper was required to wear a bell around his neck. This was made to easily identify the victim such that the rest could avoid associating with him/her.
  - According to the law, nobody was supposed to touch the patient because one could easily be contaminated.
  - The lepers were also not allowed to go to places of worship because of their physical impurity.
1. The priest was the only one who could recommend treatment and give some counseling to the lepers.
  2. On the day of purification, the leper was to be taken to the priest who had to take him outside the camp for close examination. This signified the presentation of the individual before God.
  3. The ritual of cleansing was to last for seven days with special rites being performed each day.
  4. The leper was required to bring two clean birds for the ritual together with cedar wood. (Leviticus 14:4)
  5. One of the birds was able to be killed over a clay bowls containing fresh spring water and the blood mixed with it. This signified the person's impurity had been presented to God for cleansing.
  6. The mixture of blood and water had to be sprinkled onto the victim seven times. This signified the washing away of the sins committed.
  7. The other bird had to be dipped the remaining mixture of blood and water and left to fly away. This symbolized the healing of the evil spirit that had caused the disease and liberation of the leper.
  8. The cleansed leper was thereafter required to wash his clothes and shave off all the hair and take a bath. This signified becoming pure or clean.
  9. The cleansed leper had to enter the camp but had to live outside the camp/ tent for another 7days. This was intended to protect him from being contaminated again by his own tent.
  10. However, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day the leper was required to shave his head, beards, eyebrows and the rest of his body.
  11. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day, the leper was required to bring two male lambs and one female lamb which were one-year-old without defects accompanying it with 3kgs of flour mixed with olive oil.

12. Then the priest would take the person and his offering to the entrance of the tent of Lord's presence.
13. Then the priest shall take one-third liters of olive oil to be offered as a repayment offering. He would kill the lamb in places where the animals for burnt and sin offerings are killed.
14. The priest shall take some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of the one who was to be declared ritually clean.
15. After presenting the person's offering the priest would declare him clean and he would be allowed to join the rest of the community members.

### **JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL IMPURITY (MK: 1:40ff)**

Jesus was born in a Jewish community where the law of purification was strongly upheld. Therefore, as a Jew, he had to follow these laws. However, he held different views and behaved contrary to what the Jews expected.

1. Jesus treated the lepers with pity and mercy, for he felt that a man was over suffering and helpless about his situation.
2. Jesus showed love and compassion to the leper man. He therefore tried to show that such people needed care.
3. Jesus had no fear of the leper as he closely associated with him allowing the leper man to move nearer to him.
4. Jesus went ahead and healed a leper man. This was just by giving a mere command for the leper man to be clean.
5. However, Jesus instructed the man not to tell anyone about what had happened but to go straight and present himself to the priest for examination.
6. Jesus emphasized that people having such diseases needed more comfort and it was therefore useless to have them isolated
7. Jesus maintained that the skin disease was a mere sickness which had no connection with one's sinful nature.
8. The Jews labeled Christ rebellious because of associating with the lepers. He however challenged and told them that it was those who were sick that needed a doctor.
9. To Christ, mere sickness like leprosy doesn't mean that one's a sinner. He therefore calls upon people not to regard such people as social and religious out cast/ misfit.
10. According to Christ, separating such people from the community is useless, he showed love to the leper man and emphasized that such people needed comfort.
11. Jesus observed that physical impurity/ appearance of the skin of an individual had nothing to do with one's spiritual life.

12. Jesus showed that what was needed for one to be purified was the belief and acceptance of the name of God. In other words it required one's faith.
13. Jesus went ahead and associated closely with the sinners for example; the woman caught in adultery and Levi the outcast.
14. Jesus advised his followers to help sinners get back to God. He declared that his coming was to help the sinners and set free from their bondage of sin.
15. Christ emphasized that evil forces had no place in the heavenly kingdom as depicted in the act of curing the leper man.

### **THE RELEVANCE OF JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS A LEPER TO CHRISTIANS.**

- Christians ought to give comfort to those who are suffering, like Jesus called upon the suffering Jews to do the same.
- Christians should show pity and mercy on the people suffering from diseases like Jesus who sympathized with the leper.
- Christians should show love to those in pain like Jesus who loved the leper to the extent of curing him.
- Christians should acknowledge that everything is possible with Jesus. For he was able to cure the leper by giving a mere command.
- Christians should help the sinners to turn back to God by leading them to repentance.
- They should present their problems to God through prayers like the leper who turned to Jesus for help.
- Christians should preach the Good News of salvation to those who are experiencing problems like Jesus did to the leper
- They should leave the work of judging others to God alone.
- They should treat the sick equally like the rest of the community
- Christians should give courage to those having pain so that they may not feel so lonely.
- Christians ought to teach the hope of resurrection to patients that is to be inherited from Christ.
- Christians ought to associate with all people including those who are considered as sinners. They should therefore make such people realize the importance of being close to God.
- Christians should always seek hope in their daily life through Christ. This means that they should always pray if they are to be successful in their activities.

### **THE SACREDNESS OF BLOOD (Leviticus 17:10- following)**

1. This chapter emphasizes the importance of blood among the Israelites as discussed below;
2. Among the Hebrews, blood was sacred/ holy and was used as a symbol of purification.

3. Blood was regarded as life and one without it was believed to die. In other words, all lives stem from blood and it was for this reason that the Israelites prohibited people from drinking blood and not even eating meat containing blood.
4. Blood among the Israelites was necessary for atonement (repentance). They believed that sins would subject the sinner to death and the life of the sinner could only be restored by the blood of an animal used to appease God who is the source of life.
5. The Israelites looked at the consumption of blood as interference with the right of God the source of life. They believed God's intension of life.
6. To the Hebrews blood was used to sanctify and purify anybody who was regarded to be a sinner. Blood had to be sprinkled onto the sinner that he or she could become holy again.
7. An animal that died a natural death couldn't be eaten because it was assumed that the blood had remained in it. If anybody ate such an animal, he would be considered unclean and therefore had to purify himself to drive away the guilt.
8. According to the Hebrew laws, the blood of animals killed had to be drained off before it could be cooked for human consumption.
9. Blood among the Hebrews was used to link man with God. To this, the people could first sprinkle the blood of any animal sacrificed on to the alter and later on to the people.
10. Because of the holiness of blood, nobody other than the high priest was expected to handle any issue related to it. Even the priest had to use blood only for the sanctification, purification and atonement.

#### **NEW TESTAMENT VIEW ABOUT BLOOD**

- According to New Testament blood remained something holy but with a different meaning.
- The New Testament stresses human life because animals and human beings are creatures of God but animals were given to human beings as food. Therefore, killing an animal isn't an offence against man.
- Christ is presented as a sacrificial animal who shade his own blood for the purification and liberation of man from his sinful nature.
- The sacredness of blood also implies that a sinner has to repent and return to God through the blood shade by Christ.
- By shading his blood, Christ brought a new life for any repentant sinner and believing in him means having life in its fullness without perishing.
- During the last super, Christ referred to the wine as his own blood poured out for many after praying. He called upon his followers to take it in memory of the wonders he had done in human life (Mark 14:24)
- The blood of Christ is used as a seal of the new covenant between man and God for salvation of all.
- In all, the blood of Christ is presented as having washed away man's sins. This means that man regained his holiness through Christ pouring out his blood.

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**



- Blood formed one of the most important aspects of African traditional religion and was therefore regarded to be holy.
- Africans used blood from animals to reconcile people with misunderstandings especially relatives.
- Blood in traditional Africa was used to signify one's commitment or royalty in life especially in keeping an agreement. To prove their commitment, the Africans could make blood pacts which were meant to be kept if one would/ was to avoid suffering.
- The traditional Africans used blood to appease the spirits of the living dead which they believed could have been made annoyed by human behavior.
- In African traditional society, blood formed part of human meal as long as the first outflow was poured on the ground for the living dead.
- Blood in African traditional society was for purification especially when something had gone wrong. In particular, when a taboo like incest had been broken.
- In African traditional society, blood was used to keep in touch with the living dead. Blood from animals, chicken or human beings was poured down to show the people's recognition of the living dead as being part of human community.
- Blood was used to seek blessings in the people's daily activities like cultivation and also occasional activities including wars.

#### **Holiness as presented in the book of Leviticus.**

1. In Lev. God was holy and so the sinful people had to organize themselves to approach Him.
2. The theme of holiness therefore didn't refer to God alone but everything related to Him.
3. People who were selected by God to serve Him became holy themselves.
4. God's words were seen permanently as Holy by his community.
5. The Israelites were to worship God in Holiness and purity without offending Him.
6. The place where men/ women met with the presence of God were set apart as Holy.
7. Sacrifices and offerings were to be presented to God in a holy way.
8. The Ark which was to be kept in the tabernacle was to be taken as holy because God's word was kept there.
9. Holy sacrifices and offerings were to be presented to God in adoration, gratitude and confession of sin.
10. Directions were given for the cleansing of what was seen as unclean and therefore unholy in community life.
11. Blood of any living creature was seen as Holy and not to be eaten therefore.
12. Priests were set aside and consecrated to the service of God to mediate between God and mankind.
13. Also priests were given a special role by offering sacrifices on the altar on behalf of the people.
14. Priests wore special clothes and their day to day life required avoidance of all contact with what was unholy.

15. The priests were given the responsibility of distinguishing between Holy and unholy, clean and unclean
16. To become holy, you had to undergo a process of purification
17. The tent of the Lord's presence and later the temple were seen as holy places.

### **CONDITIONS WHICH DEFILED ONE'S HOLINESS AMONG THE ISRAELITES**

- Anybody who consumed any of the prohibited food or food considered being unclean like animals without divided hooves and any kind of reptiles among others defiled one's holiness among the Israelites.
- Eating of animals which don't chew cud would also defile such an individual's holiness.
- Eating of any birds that feed on the flesh of others and human being defiled one's purity.
- If an individual ate any insect with more than 3 pairs of legs and body parts or that which could not hop, such an individual was unclean.
- Touching the body of the prohibited animals would make an individual unclean.
- Touching and eating any animals which could have died on its own defiled one's holiness.
- A woman in her monthly period was considered unclean. Such a woman wasn't expected to associate with others freely.
- After a woman has just given birth, she was considered unclean. If she gave birth to a boy, she would be unclean for 7 days and after the circumcision of the boy she would again be unclean for 33 more days. If she had given birth to a daughter, she would be unclean for the first 14 days and later more 66 days. (Leviticus 12:1-following)
- A man who had a bodily discharge from the penis or wet dreams was unclean. Nobody was allowed to touch his bed or seat where such a man had sat on.
- Having sexual relations with relatives i.e. incest would defile one's holiness and was strongly forbidden (Leviticus 18:1- following)
- Sexual relations with an animal would make such an individual unclean.
- Sexual relations between a man and a man would make them both unclean.
- Having sexual intercourse with a woman during her monthly periods was considered unholiness and would therefore make them ritually unclean.
- Among the Israelites anybody with a skin disease (leper) was considered unclean. Such an individual was separated from others to avoid contaminating them. (Leviticus 14:1-following)
- Touching of human corpses would make a person or individual unclean such a person had to undergo the ritual of purification.
- Worshipping idols would also defile one's holiness as it was strongly forbidden in the covenant laws.
- Among the Israelites anyone who worked on the Sabbath day defiled his/her holiness. Such a day was preserved for the worshipping of God and resting from the daily activities.

- To the Israelites marrying foreigners would defile their holiness. They were the chosen people and were therefore to be holy like their father and also they were also forbidden from having any sexual relations with other nations.

**Ways in which Christians observe holiness today.**

- By/ through accepting Jesus as one's personal saviour.
- By repenting their sins
- By attending Sunday prayers
- By living exemplary lives
- By observing church rules
- By receiving the sacrament of Eucharist/ Holy communion
- By observing and celebrating church feasts e.g. Easter
- By having personal prayers e.g. reciting rosary,
- By praising and worshiping
- By seeking reconciliation in moments of conflicts.
- By respecting and putting on sacred objects e.g. rosary, crucifix etc.
- By observing the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience in religious communities
- By being faithful to matrimonial vows
- Accepting God's call to be religious leaders
- By remaining faithful to God and being trustworthy
- By extending God's love to others
- By preaching God's word