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Summarized CRE Notes Form 1

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Meaning of Christian Religious Education

Christian

The word comes from Greek word “Christos” which means someone who has been chosen to follow Christ. Therefore, a Christian is a follower of Christ.

Religion

It is the service and worship of God through approved systems of beliefs, practices and patterns of behavior.

Education

Is the systematic training/instruction of pupils especially/mainly in schools and colleges.

Therefore, Christian Religious Education (CRE) is the;

- a) Systematic study of religious beliefs and practices based in the life and teaching of Jesus.
- b) Study of God’s revelations to people through personal experiences, his creation, the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ and the word of God.

Reasons for studying Christian Religious Education

1. By studying CRE, a learner gets to know God’s power, character and how God reveals

himself to humankind.

2. CRE helps learners to know God's will for humankind and how He expects us to live.
 - This will help learners to develop faith in God.
3. Helps learners to acquire spiritual insight which is used in making appropriate decisions on how to handle issues that face them in life e.g. drug abuse, incest, corruption, and homosexuality.
4. The subject helps the learner to acquire basic principles/rules that guide a person to develop morally, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
5. Helps learners become more aware of their internal / inner state and this creates self awareness, leading to the development of self-respect, self-worth and identity.
6. Helps the learner to understand and to respect the differences among people in the society.
7. It also helps the learner to tolerate one another and appreciate one another consequently relating well with others and even resolve differences.
8. The study of CRE promotes national unity.
 - We get to understand that God created all people regardless of gender, race, and religion.
9. On a boarder sense, it promotes international consciousness.
 - This comes as a result of the awareness that all human beings were created by the same God.
10. It provides an important background for entry into careers and ambitions e.g. law, clergy, CRE teaching, and administration.
11. By studying the subject one knows more about the Bible and the personalities in it.
12. Helps to explain certain mysteries in life e.g. origin of mankind, why people die, and the destiny of human beings.
13. Helps the learner to appreciate/understand the environment as the creation of God and the need to conserve/ preserve/care for it.
14. It equips the learner with appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge which are important for economic development.
 - Such virtues include handwork, diligence, honesty, tolerance, and respect among others.
15. C.R.E. contributes to the national goals of education e.g. patriotism, nationalism.

THE BIBLE

What is the Bible?

- The word Bible is derived from the Greek word, “Biblia”, which means a book.
- The Bible is accepted by Christians worldwide as the word of God.
- Is also referred to as the Holy Bible, The Promise, or The Holy Scriptures.

Why the Bible is referred to as the word of God (Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:16, Rev 22:18)

The Bible can be said to be the word of God because of the following reasons

1. Through it God speaks to human beings through his son, Jesus Christ.(Heb 1:1-2)
2. All scripture was inspired by God .(2 Timothy 3:16)
3. The human authors/writes were under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
4. The Bible deals with God’s revelations to human beings and their responses.
5. The Bible contains the true message of God for our daily living.
6. God himself wrote the Ten Commandments.
7. All the scripture is quite useful in training/teaching, rebuking and correcting human beings so as to make them righteous.
8. There is a striking consistency in thought and development/movement in the Biblical themes because all authors were inspired by one God.
9. What is written actually happens. It is fulfilled and never changed.
10. It contains words spoken by God Himself like, “Thus, says the Lord.....”
11. It clearly explains the nature/quality of God to us, for example,
 - God is powerful – omnipotent.
 - God is all-knowing – omniscient.
 - God is everywhere – omnipresent.

12. Attempts to destroy the Bible have failed.
13. It reveals Jesus Christ as the Word of God.
14. The information in the Bible was revealed to the authors through dreams, visions and natural phenomena.

The Bible as a library

Sponsored

The following are some of the reasons why the Bible is considered as a form of a library.

1. The Bible is a collection of 66 books.
2. The Bible was written using different literary styles e.g. poetic, prayers.
3. The different books were written by different authors from different backgrounds.
4. The books were written at different times in history over along span of time.
5. The books in the Bible are arranged in order from the Old Testament to the New Testament.
6. The books were written in different places.
7. The books of the Bible cater for different audience e.g. priests, women, men etc.
8. The books are arranged according to different subjects for example: books of law, books of history, wisdom writings, among others.

Human Authors (2 Peter 1:20-21)

1. God used various human authors to write His message which is found in the different books of the Bible.
2. Some of the authors were kings, scribes, apostles and disciples.
3. The writers lived at different times in history from the time of Moses to the Gospels.
4. The nature of the content written was influenced by the historical, political and religious factors of the time.
5. All the writers of the Bible were Jews except Luke who was a Gentile.

6. All books of the O.T. were written in Palestine except Ezekiel and Deutero- Isaiah which were written in exile.

7. The N.T. books were written in many parts of the Roman Empire.

The literary forms used in the writing of the Bible

1. Poetry-e.g. Job.
2. Prayers-e.g. Psalms.
3. Wise sayings-e.g Proverbs.
4. Philosophical essays-e.g. Ecclesiastes.
5. Prophetic Speeches-e.g. Jeremiah.
6. Love Songs-e.g. Song of Solomon.
7. Religious Epics-e.g.Kings.
8. Legislative Texts-e.g. Leviticus.
9. Epistles/ letters-e.g. Corinthians.
10. Gospels-e.g. Luke's Gospel.

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is divided into two main sections i.e.

(a) The Old Testament.

(b) The New Testament.

- The word 'Testament' means covenant, agreement or promise.
- The Old Testament has 39 books while the New Testament has 27.
- The Roman Catholic Church Bible contains other books known as apocrypha books.
- Apocrypha is a Greek word which means hidden/secret writings. They are also referred to as Deutero-canonical books.

These include:

- Tobit.
- Judith.
- Ecclesiasticus.
- Baruch.
- 1 Maccabees.
- 2 Maccabees.
- Book of Wisdom.
- 1 Esdras.
- 2 Esdras

The books of the Bible can be grouped into different disciplines, these are;

- Law
- History
- Poetry
- Prophecy
- Biography

Note;

- Canonical books are books accepted by all Christians as Holy Scriptures.
- They make up the canon of the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- The word 'Canon' in Greek means;
 - Rule
 - Standard
 - Guidance

DIVISIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The books of the Old Testament are divided into four main categories and these are:

(i) Law books

These are the first 5 books of the Bible that are believed to have been written by Moses. These are:

- a. Genesis.
- b. Exodus.
- c. Leviticus.
- d. Numbers.
- e. Deuteronomy.

They are also referred to as the Torah or Pentateuch or Mosaic Law.

(ii) Historical Books

They are 12 Historical books and they record the history of the Israelites from the time they entered Canaan and settled until after the Babylonian exile. These are:-

- a) Joshua.
- b) Judges.
- c) Ruth.
- d) 1st and 2nd Samuel.
- e) 1st and 2nd Kings.
- f) 1st and 2nd Chronicles.
- g) Ezra.
- h) Nehemiah.
- i) Esther.

(iii) Poetic books

- They are 5 and contain words of wisdom.

- They are poetic in nature and these are:-

- a) Job.
 - b) Psalms.
 - c) Proverbs.
 - d) Ecclesiastes.
 - e) Songs of Songs.
- (iv) Prophetic books

They contain the prophecies of the people of Israel. They are further sub-divided into two i.e.

(a) Major Prophets

They are referred to as Major Prophets because their messages cover a longer historical period and are 5 in number i.e.

- a) Isaiah.
- b) Jeremiah.
- c) Lamentations.
- d) Ezekiel.
- e) Daniel.

(b). Minor Prophets

The messages of this prophets cover a shorter historical period

They are twelve i.e.

- a) Hosea
- b) Nahum
- c) Joel
- d) Habakkuk

- e) Amos
- f) Zephaniah
- g) Obadiah
- h) Haggai
- i) Jonah
- j) Zechariah
- k) Micah
- l) Malachi

Note: The following are the books of the Bible referred to as the writings;

- (i) Job
- (ii) Psalms
- (iii) Proverbs
- (iv) Ecclesiaste
- (v) The Song of Solomon/ Song of Songs

DIVISIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is divided into 5 major categories. These are:-

- (i) Biographical Books
 - They are referred to as Gospels.
 - These Gospels were written by the disciples of Jesus Christ.
 - They tell the life story and ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - They are 4 in number i.e.
 - a) Mathew.
 - b) Mark.
 - c) Luke.
 - d) John.
 - The first three books in the New Testament are also referred to as the synoptic Gospels.
- (ii) Historical Books
 - It outlines the history and development of the church after Jesus' ascension.
 - It is one book namely:
 - Acts
 - The author is Luke.
 - It deals with the history of the early church after the ascension of Christ.

(iii) Pauline Epistles

These are 13 letters written by Paul to the congregation and individuals to address certain problems that arose among them.

They are:

- a) Romans
- b) Colossians
- c) 1st and 2nd Corinthians
- d) 1st and 2nd Thessalonians
- e) Galatians
- f) 1st and 2nd Timothy
- g) Ephesians
- h) Titus
- i) Philippians
- j) Philemon.

(iv) General Epistles

These letters are not addressed to specific churches or individuals but to all Christians to encourage them.

Are eight namely:-

- a) Hebrews.
- b) James.
- c) 1st and 2nd Peter.
- d) 1st, 2nd and 3rd John.
- e) Jude.

(v) Prophetic books

There is only one book i.e. Revelation.

It presents God's will for the future.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE FROM ORIGINAL LANGUAGES TO THE PRESENT LOCAL LANGUAGES

The word translate means:

- To change something written/spoken form from one language to another without changing the original meaning.
- The following is the development of Bible Translation from its original language to the present:

(i) The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and a few parts in Aramaic

- The original (70) translators (Septuaginta) did the first translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew into Greek.

- This translation was known as the Septuagint.

(ii) The second translation around 4th Century was spearheaded by a Christian scholar called Jerome.

- This translation was called vulgate.
- The translation was used up until the 16th century

(iii) In the 16th Century; after the reformation (Religious changes in Europe by Protestants who wanted to break apart from catholic teachings), many countries translated the Bible into their own languages e.g.

- Translation of the Bible into English (King James Version).
- Translation of the Bible into German (by Martin Luther).

(iv) During the missionary era, the Bible had to be translated into the languages of people being evangelized.

- The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804 to coordinate all the translation functions.

(v) In East Africa, Johann Ludwig Krapf translated the New Testament into Kiswahili.

(vi) The first translation of the complete Bible into some African language in East Africa was into Luganda in 1896

(vii) In Kenya, the Bible has been translated into the following African languages;

- Kikuyu – 1951.
- Kamba – 1956.
- Dholuo – 1963.
- Kalenjin – 1968.
- Luhya - 1957.

Versions of the Bible used in Kenya Today

Some of the versions used in Kenya today include;

- a. The Revised Standard Version.
- b. The Good News Bible.
- c. The Jerusalem Bible.
- d. The New International Version.
- e. The New King James Version.
- f. The Living Bible.
- g. The Gideon Bible.
- h. The Common Bible.
- i. The African Bible.
- j. The New American Bible.

The effects of the translation of the Bible into African languages

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1. Africans could now read the Bible in a language of their own and understood it better.
2. Communication was improved and more Africans accepted the gospel message.
3. Christianity became a more native religion and Africans began to participate actively in preaching the gospel.
4. Africans became more critical on certain issues like equality and leadership and demanded for better treatment.
5. Africans re-discovered their cultural identity, which the missionaries were trying to undermine e.g. Polygamy and use of African names.
6. It led to increased demand for formal education by Africans and therefore more schools were constructed.
7. The enlightened Africans who would not accept the condemnation of their culture formed the independent churches and schools.
8. It also promoted revival movement and Africans took up leadership positions in such revival movements.
9. It led to the development of African languages as the Bible was used as a learning resource.
10. Led to the establishment of Bible Translation Society, which employed Africans.
11. It also led to the establishment of printing presses to assist in the high demand for and the distribution of the Bibles
12. Led to the development of the spirit of the ecumenism. E.g. many churches came together to translate the Bible.
13. Contributed to the development of African theology; research and study were conducted in African Religions.
14. African people became more aware/enlightened and confident of their own dignity and rights before God. This contributed to the struggle for independence from the colonial rule.

Areas/ places where the bible is used in Kenya today

1. In the courts of law.
2. In schools and colleges.
3. In state house/ during state functions.

4. In churches.
5. During crusades.
6. At home for personal use.
7. In parliament.
8. At home for personal use.
9. In parliament and
10. In hospitals.

Ways in which Christians use the bible to spread the gospel

1. Used in instructing new converts.
2. Used during preaching/teaching by priests/pastors.
3. Used in the teaching of C.R.E in schools and colleges.
4. Used as a reference book in disseminating information./in search of knowledge.
5. Used in writing Christian songs and hymns.
6. Used in administering oaths.
7. Used in writing Christian literature.
8. Reading it out to fellow Christians.

Reasons why Christians use the bible in worship

1. It is the word of God.
2. It makes them identify with God/Jesus as well as enhancing their unity.
3. To recite prayers from it e.g. the Lord's Prayer.
4. It has guidelines and rituals e.g. the Lord's Supper and marriage.
5. It is a source of belief about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and the church.
6. It outlines church leadership, e.g. roles of pastors, evangelists and deacons.

7. It is a source of Christian customs, e.g. giving of offerings, dedication of children and celebration of Eucharist.
8. It is a source of miracles/ healing and other blessings.
9. To strengthen their faith and hope in God.

Reasons why Christians find it difficult to read the Bible

1. Lack of discipline and commitment to read the Bible.
2. Being too busy with work.
3. Availability of several entertainments e.g. movies or newspapers that take most of people's time/ worldly pleasures.
4. Most people don't see the importance of reading the Bible frequently.
5. People find it difficult to understand the Bible.
6. Some churches don't provide guidelines on how to read the Bible.
7. Most people believe that pastors and church leaders are the only ones who are supposed to read the Bible.
8. Some people are semi-illiterate.
9. Some people don't have the scriptures in the language they understand

CREATION AND THE FALL OF HUMAN KIND

CREATION AND THE FALL OF HUMAN KIND

First Account of creation

Genesis 1-2:3

Introduction:

1. God was the only/sole creator and he created by a simple utterance, "Let there be.....,"
2. Creation

3. In the beginning, the universe was formless and chaotic. This became the beginning of God's creative action.
4. It was done in six days as follows;

Day One: Light and Darkness.

Day Two: Sky.

Day Three: land, sea and vegetation.

Day Four: Sun, moon and stars.

Day Five: Birds and sea creatures.

Day Six: Animals and human beings in His image.

Day Seven: God rested.

NOTE: The first account is God centered and describe God as the sole/only creator.

After each work of creation, God emphasize the goodness of his creation and always ends with; "and Gods saw that it was good....."

He created out of nothing by his command.

Second Account of Creation

Gen 2:4 – 25

It is a man centered story and everything is created to serve the needs of man.

- The earth is described as waterless and uncultivated desert.
- God made man from clay or dust and put the breath of life in him.
- God planted a garden called Eden in the East where he put man to cultivate and guard it.
- God made fruit tree to produce food and in the middle of the garden, he put the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- God created animals and asked man to name them.
- He commanded man to eat all the fruits except fruits from the tree of knowledge of what is good and evil.
- A river flowed through and watered the garden.
- The river then split into four rivers:-

1. Pishon
2. Euphrates
3. Gihon
4. Tigris

- God then discovered that man was lonely and made him fall into deep sleep and created a woman out of his ribs as a companion and helper.
- He initiated marriage because he is a caring and loving God.

The meaning of Biblical Accounts of creation

1. God worked as a spirit e.g. in the beginning the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
2. God created the universe all alone. He is the sole creator.
3. He created by word of mouth and out of nothing and substance.
4. He created human beings in his own image and likeness.

5. God put man in charge of the creation and man is to take care of it.(Gen 1:26, 28)
6. After each work of creation, God emphasizes on the goodness of creation and always ends with “And God saw that it was good”.
7. God gave people/human beings understanding, namely; of good and evil and man had to make a choice.
8. The dignity of a woman is emphasized. She is portrayed as a companion to man and both are equal before God and are also complementary.
9. God is depicted as a God of order.
10. He created the earth with a plan e.g. He created light first to be used by human beings.
11. The seventh day is set aside by God as a holiday or sacred for rest and worship.

Comparison between the two accounts of creation

Similarities

1. In both, God is portrayed as the only sole creator.
2. In both, man is portrayed as a special creature; Man was created in God’s image and likeness and there was nothing else created in that way.
3. Both outline the creation of the living and non-living things i.e. heaven, man, plants and animals etc.
4. In both, Man shares in life with God. God breathed life into man’s nostrils and created him in his own image.
5. In both cases, the earth was empty, formless.
6. In both cases, Man is given special privileges and responsibilities and is to multiply and fill the earth.
7. In both stories, God existed before creation.
8. In both mankind is created into full sexuality (male and female).

Differences

1. The creation of the firmament, the sun, the moon, stars, fish and creeping animals is only mentioned in the first story.
2. The planting of the Garden of Eden and the making of the river is only mentioned in the second story.
3. The creation in the first account is out of nothing (word) but out of substance in the second account e.g. the creation of man.
4. In the first account, creation took place for six days and God rested on the seventh day (Sabbath) while there is no mention of duration and the Sabbath day in the second story.
5. The first account is God-centered i.e. God is pictured as the one doing the work of creation while the second account is man-centered i.e. man is created first and the rest of the creatures are then made to serve the needs of man.
6. Marriage is meant for procreation in the first account (Genesis 1:38) while it is meant for companionship in the second story. (Genesis 2:23 – 24)
7. In the first account man was created last but in the second account man is created first.
8. In the second story there is mention of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil which is not mentioned in the first account.

9. In the first account God affirms the goodness of all that he created but this is lacking in the second account.
10. The privileges and responsibilities given to man are more emphasized in the first account. (Genesis 1:26 – 30)
11. In the second account human beings are forbidden to eat the fruits of the tree in the middle but in the second, they can eat all plants yielding seeds and none is forbidden.

Attributes of God from the Biblical Creation Accounts

Genesis 1 and 2

Attribute refers to the characteristic/ nature / quality or attribute of someone.

The two creation accounts bring out the following qualities of God;

1. He is the only God.
2. God is moral and is concerned with the behavior of human kind.
3. He is the sole creator and created out of nothing/substance.
4. He is a God of order, a planner and organizer of the universe e.g. He created in stages.
5. He is good and the source of goodness and real happiness. (Genesis 1:10).
6. He is a personal God and likes having a loving relationship with him.
7. He is all-powerful-omnipotent e.g. He created out of a word.
8. He is a spirit and Omni-present or is spiritually present everywhere.

- In the beginning the spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:2).

1. God is self-existent. He was there from the beginning.
2. He is the source of life.

- He breathed life into man's nostrils.

1. God is all knowing/ omniscient.
2. God is immortal (cannot die) /eternal.
3. God is a worker. His creativity is described as work.
4. God is the provider/sustainer of the universe.

- He provides life, food and companionship to mankind.

1. God is Holy.

- He consecrated the 7th day and made it Holy and set it aside for rest and worship.

1. God deserves, honour, respect and obedience from human beings.
2. God is the author of human sexuality.

- He created man and woman and made them equal.

Responsibilities given to human beings at creation

1. To procreate/ multiply.
2. To cultivate the land and guard it.
3. To name the living creatures.
4. To eat from all plants.
5. Not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
6. To rule/ be in charge/ have dominion over other creatures.
7. To marry and procreate/ multiply.
8. To care for the environment.
9. To obey God.

Relationship between human beings and the environment from the creation stories

1. Both human beings and the environment were created by God/ have a common origin.
2. Human beings are superior to all other creatures.
3. Human beings should take care of the environment/ conserve/ preserve it.
4. Human beings have authority over the rest of creation.
5. Human beings should enjoy/ use God's creation/ rest of creation was made for human beings.
6. All creation is very good/ human beings should treat the rest of creation with reverence/ respect.
7. Human beings and the environment are interdependent/ owe their existence to each other.
8. Human beings and the rest of God's creation have a common destiny.

The teachings about human beings from the Biblical creation accounts

1. Human beings are created in the image/ likeness of God.
2. They have the breath of life from God.
3. They have the authority/ dominion over God's creation.
4. They communicate/ fellowship with God.
5. They are special/ the greatest of God's creation.
6. They have the ability to think/ reason/ make choices/ decisions in their lives.
7. They are blessed by God.
8. They have been given special place to stay/ Garden of Eden.
9. Human beings are to use other creation/ plants for their benefits.
10. They are to take care of the creation and till the land/ work.
11. Human beings are to procreate/ multiply through marriage.
12. Man and woman are to complement/ provide companionship for each other.
13. Human beings are God's creation i.e. both man and woman.
14. The woman is created out of the man's rib.

Teachings about marriage from the biblical stories of creation

GEN. 1:26-29; 2:18-25

- Marriage is monogamous.
- Marriage is between a man and a woman.

- It is a permanent union/ no divorce/ it is a covenant.
- Marriage is for procreation.
- It is a continuation of God's work of creation.
- Husband and wife should not be ashamed of one another.
- Man and woman are to complement each other/ help each other/ are equal.
- Marriage is for companionship.
- Marriage is for love/ mutual relationship.
- Marriage is sacred/ is ordained by God.

Ways in which Christians continue with God's work of creation

- Through procreation.
- By planting trees/ crops/ afforestation.
- Through generation of electricity.
- By helping the needy.
- Through provision of medical care.
- Through advancement of science and technology.
- Through discovery and space exploration.
- Through provision of education and training.
- By establishing income generating projects in rural areas.
- Through cleaning of the environment.
- Through building and construction.
- Through growth and development of industries.
- By conserving and managing wildlife.

Reasons as to why man is considered the most special creation of God

- He was created in God's image and likeness.
- He has the will to choose between good and evil.
- God gave him the breath of life/ share in the life of God.
- He can worship/ fellowship.
- He can reason/ is rational.
- He was given control over the earth.
- He is a caretaker of God's creation.
- All creation is for his benefit.
- Consultations were made before his creation.
- He was told to procreate/ co-creator.
- He was created with a mate/ social being.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN VIEW OF CREATION

- This refers to the traditional African ideas about creation.
- The African creation stories are different from one community to another and myths are used to explain them.
- A myth can be defined as a story that explains the origin of something, some customs and practices.

- It has a deeper meaning and even tries to explain the origin of a community.

Common ideas in Traditional African views of creation

1. African communities acknowledge God as the creator of the universe.
2. God is the sustainer of his creation for example, He provides for human beings.
3. God is the only creator and created the earth independently.
4. God's work of creation is continuous and he does so through humankind e.g. through pro-creation.
5. It is God who set up human customs and traditions which humankind should follow.
6. Man was created with a mate. The woman is supposed to be his companion and helper.
7. The creation of man was after the rest of the creation.
8. To sustain him, plants and animals were created for food.

Similarities between the traditional African myths and the Biblical accounts of creation

1. In both, God pre-existed the creation of the universe.
2. In both cases, God is portrayed as the creator of the universe and man and He did it independently/alone.
3. In both, God had a plan of creation; He did it in an orderly way.
4. In both cases, man has a close relationship with God although Man is not the same with him.
5. In both, Man occupies a special place in God's creation.
6. In both, this good relationship remained until man disobeyed God/ broke the rules set for him and the consequences of the disobedience were punishment.
7. In both cases, man was created in order to complete God's plan e.g. through pro-creation and maintaining the environment.
8. In both cases, man has a duty/obligation to worship or have fellowship with God and be obedient e.g. in the Bible God set aside a day for worship while African communities worshipped God in many ways e.g. through prayers, sacrifices e.t.c.
9. In both cases, God created man first and at a certain point created a woman as a companion. Therefore God is the one who institutionalized marriage.
10. In both cases, man was supposed to live forever until a misfortune happened and death was introduced into the world.
11. In both, creation is a continuous process and man is a pro-creator with God through procreation and taking care of the environment.
12. In both cases some attributes / characteristics of God are common e.g. He is the provider, a moral God, sole/ only creator.
13. In both cases God gave mankind skills and gifts e.g. skill of cultivation and land respectively.

Differences between the traditional African myths of origin and the Biblical creation stories/African myths

1. In the African myths, God uses materials like clay, water and plants to create while in the first account God creates out of nothing

2. Some African myths do not specify where man came from while in the Biblical stories God created man and gave him the breath of life.
3. In some African myths the earth was created at one go while in the Biblical stories the earth was created in stages.
4. In the African myths an external object/ animal causes the separation of God and man e.g. snake while in the Biblical story man is blamed for the separation.
5. In the African myths the woman is portrayed as inferior or subordinate to man while in the Bible man and woman are shown to be equal.

Teachings from the Biblical creation Accounts

We learn the following lessons from the Biblical stories of creation:

1. Human beings are given the mandate /power to subdue the earth.
 - This means that human beings have been given the ability to transform the world for their benefit through Science and Technology.
2. Human beings were given the power to name plants and animal.
3. Human beings were given the command to care for the environment and therefore, man has to act responsibly.
 - It is therefore wrong for man to misuse the environment.
4. Human beings are social beings.
 - Male and female were created for companionship.
 - Neither is complete without the other. So they should treat one another with mutual respect for they are both equal in Gods eyes.
5. Work and leisure are Gods gifts to human kind.
 - Human beings are expected to work in order to obtain their basic needs and to transform the world.
 - This is because, work was ordained by God. Work is also related to leisure.
 - Therefore the setting aside of the seventh day. It is a day of rest/recreation and worship.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

What is sin?

Sin is the intentional, willful or knowledgeable violation of a norm.

It is a thought, word or action which is shameful or harmful to oneself, others or to God.

It destroys the relationship between human beings and even God.

Causes of sin (*Genesis 3-11*)

1. Rebellion against God as human beings aspired to be like God.
2. Greed for power as human beings try to usurp the power which belongs to God alone.
3. Lack of knowledge of God.
4. Lack of trust in God's providence.
5. Failure to obey God by eating the forbidden fruit.
6. Lack of satisfaction.
7. Temptation by the devil.
8. Selfishness.
9. Wicked ambitions.
10. Human weakness.
11. Stubbornness.

The consequences of sin (*Genesis 3, 4, 6 – 9*)

As soon as the human beings disobeyed God by eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, the following consequences or results are seen; some of which were immediate and others long term. These include:

1. Human beings were alienated/ separated from God.
 2. Their friendship with Him changed to fear. (Genesis 3:8)
 3. What had been innocent and good became shameful.
 4. Adam and Eve were now ashamed of their nakedness, something they had not felt before they sinned against God. (Gen 3:10-14)
 5. Pain will be part of human experience “.....I will greatly multiply your pain in child bearing.....” Gen 3:16
 6. The Good relationship between God and human beings got ruined.
 7. The Lord God sent them out of the Garden of Eden. (Gen 3:23 – 24)
 8. The perfect relationship between man and woman is damaged.
- Their relationship becomes one of hostility
1. The Lord said to the woman...., “you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him,”..... (Genesis 3:23 – 24)
 2. People have to toil and struggle to meet their needs,”you will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything” (Gen 3:17 – 19)
 3. The earth itself is under a curse,”cursed is the ground because of you,”.... (Genesis 3:17)
 4. The relationship between human beings and the land which they were created from become mortal enemies each struggling to take life from the others until the ground finally regains victory. (Genesis 3:19)
 5. There arose enmity between man and wild animals (Genesis 3:15)
 6. Death sentence is passed upon all the people... “You will return to the ground....” “You are dust....” (Gen 3:19) (Roman 5:12) (1 Corinthians 8:19 – 23)
 7. Murderous feelings began to get into peoples hearts e.g. Cain killed Abel, his young brother (Gen 4:8)
 8. Human beings changed and became prone to sin “....the wickedness of man was great on earth.... Imagination and thought of his heart is evil continually”. (Gen 6:5 – 6)

9. The life span of human beings was reduced Genesis 5 “..... I will not allow people to live forever...” “...they will not live beyond 120 years....”
10. Global violence and forbidden marriages which led God to declare global destruction. (Genesis 6:1 – 9, 18)
11. God felt regret and remorse having created human beings human i.e. sin awakened God’s anger. (Genesis 6:6 – 7)
12. God confused human language after the flood “.... Let us go down and mix their language so that they will not understand one another....” (Genesis 11:7)

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION OF MANKIND

The need for salvation of humankind started after Adam and Eve committed the first sin. God’s plan of salvation can be outlined as follows:

- Man was given punishment instead of total destruction by God/ God still gave Adam and Eve a chance to survive.
- God initiated the making of the covenant with Noah/ Abraham. (Gen. 6, 12:1-9, 15:1-20).
- God sent prophets to guide His people.
- God made a covenant with the Israelites on Mount Sinai under the leadership of Moses. (Ex. 19, 20, 24).
- Prophet Jeremiah/ Ezekiel foresaw a new covenant to be written on men’s hearts when the old covenant failed.
- God looked for Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them means to obtain food/clothes when they were naked.
- He gave Adam and Eve a chance to punish Satan/ serpent by crushing its head.
- The teaching of messianic expectations by Prophet Nathan to David.
- God’s salvation was ultimately realized through Jesus Christ who restored fellowship between human beings and God.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN CONCEPT OF EVIL

- It is an offense against another person of the community or it is an offense against God, the spirits or ancestors.
- African communities are aware of the existence of evil in the society and the existence of evil in the society and they try to avoid it.
- African communities believed that God is good and did not create evil.
- There are many ideas concerning the origin and nature of evil.

The following are some of the beliefs about the origin of evil;

1. Many African communities believed they could be malicious/malevolent spirits.
2. Such spirits could be having a grudge against the living who probably failed to pour libation and to give offering.
3. Evil people e.g. wizards, witches, sorcerers who are able to tap mystical powers and use if for evil. They therefore cause harm to the living
4. Breaking of taboos, this result in becoming ritually unclean.

5. Curses by parents and other older relatives e.g. uncles, grandparents, aunts etc.
6. This occurs because when one offends them e.g. through insults, neglect and disobedience.
7. Breaking of oaths/ a solemn promise.
8. Oaths were usually made in order to seal an argument or to defend one against malicious accusations.
9. Bad omen.
10. Certain acts, words or things which are believed to have the effect of causing harm.

Similarities and differences between traditional African view of evil and biblical concept of sin *Similarities*

1. In both cases, God is the Supreme Being and is good. He is not the author of evil/sin.
2. Both believe that sin/evil arises from human beings disobedience and greed.
3. Both agree that sin causes a lot of human suffering.
4. In both cases, evil may result from failing in a social/spiritual obligation
5. In both cases, evil and sin results in human beings being separated from God
6. In both cases, God is the guardian of morality, law and order
7. In both cases, God is the guardian of morality, law and order.
8. In both it destroys relationships among human beings.
9. Both create a situation of fear and mistrust among members.
10. In both cases, the ultimate result of both is death.
11. 10. Both evil and sin can result to destruction of God' creation through natural calamities such as drought.
12. In both cases, evil and sin can be avoided through righteous living.
13. In both cases, there are spiritual powers associated with them.
14. In both cases, result in punishment by God.

Differences

1. African communities believed that the spirits of the dead are the cause of evil but not so in the bible.
2. Some African communities believed that evil is an independent or isolated power employed by human beings to cause harm. But it is not so in the Bible.
3. The Bible believes that sinners will have eternal punishment but Africans believe that punishment is only in the present world.
4. Biblically people are sinners as descendants of Adam and Eve i.e. sin is passed on from one generation to another. This is not the case in African society.
5. Although sin has separated humankind from God, Biblically there is a plan of salvation/ redemption, however, there is no such plan in African system.

Ways of dealing with evil does in traditional African communities

1. Imposing heavy fines.

2. Performing cleansing rituals.
3. Killing of the evil doers.
4. Cursing of the evil doer.
5. Administering of oaths on suspects.
6. Wearing of protective charms.
7. Ex-communicating the evil doers from the community.
8. Ridiculing them through songs.
9. Denying them leadership positions.

Ways in which the church today disciplines errant members

- They are denied the Holy Communion/ other sacraments for some time.
- They are suspended from the church.
- They are denied leadership positions in the church.
- They are denied some services of the church.
- They are reprimanded by leaders of the church and told to repent their sins.
- They are forced to repent in public about their wrong doings.
- They are given stern warnings.
- They are charged a fine.
- Some churches assign the certain chores to perform as punishment.
- Some churches withdraw certain privileges from the culprits e.g. pastors are defrocked.
- Church leaders are transferred from one station to another.

How the church helps to bring back members who have fallen from faith

- By visiting them/ inviting them to their homes.
- By being patient/ forgiving them.
- By evangelizing them/preaching to them/ teaching them.
- By guiding and counseling them/ referring them to experts according to their needs.
- Praying for them.
- By inviting them back to church.
- By encouraging them to repent/ confess.
- By offering them material needs/aid.

FAITH AND GOD'S PROMISES: ABRAHAM

12/10/2015

[Comments](#)

FAITH AND GOD'S PROMISES: ABRAHAM

Background to the call of Abraham

Gen 11:24 – 32.

- Abraham was the son of Terah who lived in the city of Ur.

- Abraham was an Amorite/ a Semitic tribe who occupied the fertile crescent of the Middle East.
- Abraham's father migrated to Haran with his family.
- Their religion was polytheistic.
- Sacrifices were made to gods including human sacrifices. After the death of Terah, Abraham was left in charge of the family.
- Abraham was married to Sarai but they had no child.
- Abraham lived with Lot, his nephew, a nomadic and pastoral way of life.
- Abraham was called by God to leave Haran to go to Canaan.
- He was 75 years when he left Haran for Canaan.

The call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-9)

- God called Abraham in Haran after the death of his father.
- He commanded Abraham who was 75 years old then to leave his family to an unknown land.
- During the call, God made the following promises to him:
 1. A great nation.
 2. Many blessings.
 3. A great name.
 4. A source of blessings.
 5. Blessing to those who bless him.
 6. Curse to those who curse him.
- Abraham obeyed and set off for the unknown land with his wife, nephew Lot, servants and his flock.
- In Canaan God appeared to him at Bethel and Sechem where he was shown the land that would belong to his descendants.
- Abraham built two altars at the two places and worshipped God.

Lessons learnt about God from the call of Abraham

1. God demands obedience from those He calls.
2. He is a faithful God.
3. He rewards those who obey Him.
4. God is a source of blessings.
5. He reveals Himself to humankind.
6. He punishes evil.

Lessons Christians learn from the call of Abraham

1. Christians should obey God.
2. They should have practical faith in their lives.
3. They should ask for blessings from God.
4. They should be ready to face challenging situations as a fact of their faith.

5. They should honour God when rewarded/ blessed.
6. They should be prepared to be used by God for His purpose.

Definition of the term faith in God

Faith

It means having complete trust in something or in someone.

It is a strong belief and unquestionable confidence. (Heb 11:1 – 6)

Faith persuades us to believe in what we have not yet seen and enables us to act on it.

Importance of Faith in Christian life today

1. Enables Christians to overcome temptations.
2. Gives Christians strength and courage in their lives.
3. Inspires Christians to do the will of God.
4. Enables Christians to fellowship with one another.
5. Makes Christians to lead a prayerful life.
6. Promotes unity and oneness among the Christians.
7. Enables Christians to preach the word of God.
8. Enables them to do wonders and miracles.
9. Leads to growth and development of the Church.
10. Makes Christians live righteous lives.
11. Enables Christians transform the lives of others as role models.
12. Enables them to know the truth and insight about God.
13. Enables them to praise and glorify God.
14. Makes Christians hope for the Kingdom of God as a reality.

Abraham's acts of faith in God

Gen 12:1 – 9, 15:1 – 6, 17:23-24 21:1-7, 22:11 – 19

Abraham is referred to as the father of faith.

He demonstrated his faith in God in the following ways:

1. He was willing to leave his motherland and go to a strange land.
2. Abraham readily believed all promises God made to him.
3. By faith Abraham trusted in God's voice.
4. By faith Abraham built two altars for God; one at Bethel and another at Sechem.
5. Abraham entered into a covenant relationship with God.
6. He was willing to change their names from Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah.
7. He offered the best of his flock as a sacrifice.
8. He obeyed God' call for personal relationship/ left polytheism for monotheism.
9. He was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac when instructed by God.
10. He was willing to obey God's command of circumcision.

How Abraham demonstrated his faith in God in the incident when he was willing to sacrifice his son

Genesis 22:1-19.

- Abraham collected wood for a burnt offering.

- Abraham went with his son, Isaac and servants a three days' journey.
- He informed his servants to wait for him and his son as they go and worship.
- When Isaac enquired about the lamb for the sacrifice, Abraham told him that the lord shall provide.
- Abraham built an altar and laid the wood in order.
- Abraham bound Isaac and laid him on the altar.
- He took the knife to slay his son, but the angel of the Lord stopped him.
- Abraham took a ram from the bush and offered burnt offering instead of Isaac.
- He named the place "The Lord will provide".

Lessons Christians learn from the incident Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son

- They should obey/honour God.
- They should have faith in God.
- They should be patient and wait upon God/should not give up.
- They should be prepared to face difficult situations/perseverance.
- They should be ready to give up everything.
- They should rely on God's guidance.
- They should be wise when dealing with issues affecting their lives.
- They should involve family members in worship.
- They should rely on God's providence.

Ways in which Christians express their faith in God today

- Praying to God.
- Giving offering and tithes.
- Reading the Bible/Bible study.
- Preaching the gospel.
- Singing Christian songs.
- Attending fellowships.
- Helping the needy.
- Leading holy life/obeying God's laws.
- Repenting their sins.
- Partaking sacraments e.g. the Lord's Supper, baptism e.t.c.
- Caring for God's creation.
- Celebrating Christian festivals.

GODS PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Gen 12:1 – 3, Gen 15:1 – 21, Gen. 17:1 – 8, 15-18.

Promise

- An assurance to someone
- Is a written/spoken declaration/commitment that one will definitely do or not do something.

Gods' promises to Abraham were irrevocable commitments. These are as follows;

1. God would give him land to dwell in. His descendants would also be given the land of Canaan to dwell in.
2. God would make Abraham's name famous.
3. God would establish an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants. He shall be their God.
4. God would be a 'shield' to Abraham that He would protect him.
5. God would make Abraham's descendants a great nation.
6. God would give Abraham and his wife Sarah a son of their own.
7. God would make his descendants to be enslaved for 400 years in a foreign land.
8. However God would deliver / free them and go back to their land with a lot of wealth.
9. God would punish the nation that enslaves Abraham's descendants.
10. God would make some of Abraham's descendants' kings.
11. God would bless Abraham.
12. God would bless those who blessed him.
13. God would curse those who cursed him.
14. God would make all the families of the earth receive blessings through Abraham.
15. Abraham would live long and die in peace.
16. He would have many descendants.

Relevance of the promises to Christians today

The promises made to Abraham are important to Christians in several ways. These include:

1. God chose Abraham from among people who were idol worshippers so that he could serve him. In the same way God continues to call people from different backgrounds to serve him in different ways e.g. evangelism, pastor, priest e.t.c.
2. God's promise to Abraham that he would be his shield of protection he is inherited by Christians; God continues to protect Christians under all circumstances.
3. Through God's dealings with Abraham God shows that he values personal relationship with humankind. Christians believe that God is interested in establishing such relationships with them.
4. Abraham's call demanded that he breaks from his earlier life e.g. he had to leave home, relatives and friends and go to the unknown land. Christians are also called to leave their past sinful lives and put their faith in God the almighty.
5. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan. Historically this was fulfilled and Christians also hope for a new learn – heaven, which is the New Canaan.
6. God promised Abraham that he would be a father of a great nation. Christians today see themselves as the great nation of God and the descendants of Abraham.
7. God's promise to punish those who enslaved the Israelites shows that God is against any form of human oppression.
8. Christians are expected to respond to the promises of God by faith, trust and obedience as Abraham did.

Meaning of the term Covenant

It is an agreement between two or more parties by which they exchange and accept obligations to one another.

It is a serious or solemn agreement between two persons or groups of people

Other words used are “testament” “pact” or ‘treaty’

It brings together two or more parties that have been separate before.

There are two types;

(i) Conditional covenant

It is an agreement/ a covenant between two or more parties which in fact are equal.

(ii) Unconditional covenant

It is a covenant between two unequal parties for example between God and his people.

Examples of well-known covenants in the Bible;

1. Covenant with Noah / Noaic in which God entered into a relationship with the whole world and promised to preserve the life of people (Gen 9) The sign of this covenant is the rainbow.
2. The covenant with Abraham in which God promised to fulfill the promises he made with him. The sign is circumcision.
3. The covenant with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai/ Mosaic in which God promised to be their God the Israelites promised obedience (Exodus 24). The sign is the law / the Ten Commandments.
4. The covenant with King David in which God promised him that his dynasty will continue forever. (2 Sam 7:14 – 16)
5. The covenant with Jeremiah in which God promised to make a new covenant with the Israelites where each individual will know God personally. (Jeremiah 31:3 – 34)

Elements of covenant

1. Two or more parties are involved.
2. Those involved commit themselves to a binding agreement.
3. Involves promises or oaths.
4. It usually has some physical sign or symbol.
5. It involves a witness or witnesses.
6. It is usually sealed.
7. A ceremony or a ritual is performed to enforce it.
8. It has serious/ negative consequences experienced by those who break it and benefits for those who keep it.

God's covenant with Abraham

Gen 15:1-19

Abraham wanted an assurance from God that the Almighty would fulfill his promises.

God commanded Abraham to prepare to offer a sacrifice.

Abraham was asked to bring the following

1. Three year old heifer.
2. Three year old she-goat.
3. Three year old ram.
4. Turtle dove.
5. Young pigeon.

- He was to cut these animals into halves except for the birds and arrange them in two rows.
- He laid the cut halves one against each other in two rows out in the sun.

Birds were killed but were offered whole.

- Abraham fell into a deep sleep during which God gave him more promises.
- God then passed between the sacrificed animals in the form of a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch.
- This was an unconditional covenant because it is God who was to bear the consequences.
- Abraham had been assured of the fulfillment of the covenant.

Note

The physical manifestations of God are commonly referred to as Theophany. The following are well known examples of theophanies in the Bible;

1. The burning bush in the call of Moses. (Exodus 3:2 – 4)
2. The pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud as recorded in the story of Exodus. (Exodus 13:20 – 22)
3. Thunder, lightning, smoke at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:16 – 22)
4. The mighty wind, earthquake and still voice in the story of Elijah. (1 Kings 19:11 – 12)

Importance of the covenant

1. It marks God's initiative to enter into a personal relationship with humankind which had been destroyed.
2. It signified the reward of obeying and having faith in God.
3. It confirms that God was willing to fulfill the promises He had made to Abraham.
4. Through the covenant with Abraham, all nations of the world were to receive God's salvation.
5. It shows that God may elect an individual and use him/her for His purpose.
6. By entering into a covenant with Abraham, God was confirming His choice of Abraham as the one to fulfill His plan of salvation.

Characteristics of God's covenant with Abraham

1. It was unconditional- it had two unequal parties i.e. God and Abraham.
2. It had promises which were given by God.
3. It had an outward sign which was circumcision.
4. It was sealed through the blood of the sacrifice.
5. It was voluntary- Abraham entered it willingly.
6. It was binding- it was to be kept even by Abraham's descendants.
7. It was initiated by God.

Covenants in modern life These include;

1. Baptism/sacraments.
2. Marriage.
3. Ordination.
4. Oath of loyalty to state/ oath of allegiance.
5. Trade agreements/ treaties.
6. Peace treaties.
7. Land buying contracts.
8. Employment contracts.

1. *Baptism*

- Is an agreement between God and the believer to shed the life without Christ and take on life with Christ.
- The believer makes vows to remain faithful to God and obedient to his will.
- The believer promises to keep the commandment of God and to serve him.
- The covenant is enacted through the ceremony of baptism.
- The pastor/priest and the congregation serve as witness.

2. *Marriage*

- It involves the bride and bridegroom.
- These are two parties that were separate before coming together.
- The two exchange vows in the presence of the pastor and the congregation.
- God is also a witness at this covenant.
- Wear rings and exchange marriage vows.
- A marriage certificate is the sign.

3 *Oath of allegiance/loyalty*

- It involves national leaders taking up positions of public service e.g. the head of state, Ministers, etc.
- This agreement is made between them and the people they will serve.
- An oath is taken during the swearing in ceremony.
- They promise to serve the nation and its citizens faithfully

4. *Ordination*

Made by leaders who are taking up leadership in the church.

They take up vows in which they promise obedience and loyalty to God, their supervisors and Body of Christ

Importance of covenants in modern life

1. Through baptism, Christians are encouraged to have the right relationship with God and be able to work for the good of the society.
2. Through Baptism one is able to acquire Christian principles/rules which inspires one to live a virtuous life. This helps one to fight against evils e.g. sexual immorality, drug abuse, and corruption.

3. It makes people to be committed to their work.
4. Makes people to have confidence in their leaders.
5. Helps to create a peaceful environment.
6. Brings unity between individuals and communities that were separated before.
7. Strengthens one's faith in God.
8. Enlightens citizens on their rights.

JEWISH CIRCUMCISION

Gen 17:1-16

Circumcision

The word literally means to cut around or to cut the foreskin.

As a sign of the covenant, God instructed circumcision for Abraham and his descendants.

Elements of Jewish circumcision

1. Every male among Abraham's descendants had to be circumcised.
2. They would be circumcised by the flesh of their foreskins.
3. Circumcision would take place when a male was 8 days old.
4. Circumcision was also required of all male servants of Abraham.
5. The practice would be a mark/symbol of an everlasting covenant between God and Abraham's community.
6. Any man who was not circumcised would be cut off from Abraham's descendants because he had broken the covenant.

Importance of circumcision to Abraham and his descendants

1. It was an outward sign of Abraham's and his descendants' covenant relationship with God.
2. It was an outward sign of a male Jew's true belonging to the Jewish community.
3. It was an outward sign of the inner faith for Abraham and his descendants that they were called to a life of obedience to God.
4. It identified the Israelites as God's chosen race.
5. Through it, Abraham and his descendants were assured of inheriting God's blessings.
6. It confirmed that Abraham was obedient and faithful to God.
7. It was a sign of continued love and protection from God which the Israelites were to enjoy.
8. It signified purity/ cleanliness.

JEWISH VERSUS AFRICAN PRACTICE OF CIRCUMCISION

Similarities

1. In both cases, it promotes one into full membership of the community.
2. In both cases, it is a mark of identification of a person to a particular community.
3. In both, it is carried out on male children.
4. In both cases, circumcision has a religious significance.
5. In both cases, special people/ religious leaders/heads of the community carry out the operations.

6. In both cases, it unites the members with the ancestors.
7. In both cases, members receive new names.
8. In both cases, the rite is carried on from generation to generation/ is compulsory/ whoever fails to observe it is considered an outcast.
9. In both cases, the ritual is a communal affair.
10. In both cases, it involves the cutting of the foreskin.

Differences

1. In some African communities, they circumcised both boys and girls while the Jewish community circumcised boys only.
2. The African communities circumcised mainly teenagers while the Jews circumcised infants at 8 days.
3. Jewish circumcision is a religious requirement while the African circumcision is a cultural requirement/ rite of passage.
4. In the African communities the initiate would later be entrusted with new roles/responsibilities e.g. marriage, inheritance of property etc which was not the case for the Jewish community.
5. Among the Jews it was commanded by God while in African communities it originated from ancestors.

THE EXODUS

THE EXODUS

Introduction

- An Exodus is a mass movement of people from one place to another
- The Israelites hurriedly left Egypt.
- They carried with them unleavened bread.
- The women took away the jewellery and clothing they had borrowed from the Egyptians as compensation for years of slavery, (had been slaves for 430 years)
- The journey of the Israelites through the harsh wilderness, fighting hostile local people, was a difficult one.
- Whenever they forgot the mighty deeds God had done for them God gave them a solution to their problems and restored their faith in him.
- Moses served as mediator between them and God.
- They were directed by God in the wilderness by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. (Exodus 13:20 – 22, 14:19 – 20).

a). Crossing the red sea. (Exodus 14:5 – 31)

- Immediately the Israelites left Egypt Pharaoh and his people regretted letting them go.
- He pursued them with intension to bring them back.
- The Israelites had camped by the sea.
- God instructed Moses to lift his rod above the waters of the Red Sea to divide them.

- The waters separated into walls.
- The Israelites crossed the sea on the dry ground between the two walls.
- When the Israelites had crossed over the other side, Moses stretched out his hand over the water and brought the walls back.
- The Egyptians who were still in the middle drowned and the Israelites sailed.
- The Israelites saw God's mighty work in saving them.

b). Provision of water (Exodus 15:22 – 27, 17:1 – 6)

- After the Israelites had travelled in the desert for 3 days without water, they were thirsty.
- The water they found was bitter and could not drink.
- Called the place "Marah" meaning "bitter".
- The Israelites started murmuring in complain.
- God instructed Moses to throw a splinter of wood into the water and it became sweet.
- At Elim there were 12 springs of water.
- God provided more water when they had almost reached Mt. Sinai.
- He instructed Moses to strike a rock and water came out of it for people to drink (Ex. 17:1 – 7).

c). Provision of manna and quails (Exodus 16:1 – 35)

- As the Israelites were travelling through the desert, they ran out of food.
- They were hungry and again complained to Moses.
- Their complaints displeased the Lord, though he had saved them many times they still did not trust him to provide for them.
- He nevertheless promised to provide for them with food whether they obeyed him or not.
- The next morning God provided them with manna which they collected and ate.
- In the evening, he provided them with quails.
- The provision of manna and quails lasted for 40 years.
- On the sixth day of each week, he gave them two portions; one for the sixth day and the other for the seventh or Sabbath day.
- They were supposed to stay indoors on the Sabbath day to worship and remember God.

d). Defeat of the Amalekites (exodus 17:8 – 16)

- Amalekites were desert nomads who attacked the Israelites in the wilderness.
- When the Amalekite army came against Israel, Moses ordered Joshua to gather men among them to go and fight them.
- During the battle, Moses held up his rod.
- Each time he raised his hands, the Amalekites were defeated. When he brought down, the Israelites would be defeated.
- Aaron and Hur saw this; they decided to support his hands until the Amalekites were defeated. God promised to destroy the Amalekites forever.

Summary of the ways in which God took care of the Israelites during the Exodus

- He guided the Israelites by a pillar of cloud during the day.
- He provided a pillar of fire to guide them during the night.
- God sent an angel who engulfed the Egyptian soldiers in darkness to delay their attack on the Israelites.
- He gave them priests to be intermediaries between them and God.
- God split the waters of the Red Sea to create a dry path for the Israelites to pass.
- He punished the Egyptian soldiers who were pursuing the Israelites by drowning them in the Red Sea.
- God changed bitter water into sweet waters for the Israelites to drink at Marah.
- God provided Manna and quails as food for the Israelites when they were hungry. Healing those who were bitten by snakes.
- God assisted the Israelites to defeat the Amalekites
- He provided them with strong leaders like Moses.
- God gave them the 10 commandments to guide them on their relationship with him and one another.

Problems Moses faced as he led the Israelites during the Exodus

- Lack of water for the Israelites/ bitter water.
- Lack of food for the Israelites.
- Complaining/ grumbling by the Israelites/ refusing to heed to instructions/ stubborn/ stiff necked.
- Warring tribes in the desert/ Amalekites.
- Settling disputes among the people.
- Travelling in hostile/ harsh climatic condition.
- Lack of faith from the people/ worship of the golden calf/ breaking God's commandments.
- Rebellion/opposition from his family.
- Threat from the Egyptian army.
- Bites from snakes.

Problems encountered by Christians in their commitment to Christ today

1. Temptations from the devil/ worldly pleasures.
2. Weakening of faith in God in times of hardships.
3. Opposition/ persecution/ oppression because of what they stand for.
4. False teaching/ heresy/ false prophets who contradict true Christian message.
5. Division/ quarrels/ disagreements within the church.
6. Materialism/ greed for wealth/ struggle for power in the church/ in the society.
7. Challenges from science/ technology which seems to replace the power/ authority of God.
8. Natural calamities; epidemics, diseases, drought, famine, floods, earthquakes which make some Christians question the existence of God.
9. Problems of the destiny of a person after death /Where do people go after death?
10. The wicked seem to prosper /why do the wicked prosper?

11. Bad examples set by the church leaders who are supposed to be the shepherds of the people/ mislead people e.g. through misinterpretation of scriptures.
12. Challenges from other religious/ denominations and the secular society/ traditional culture.
13. Hypocrisy in the church.
14. Financial constraints/ lack of resources in meeting their obligations.
15. Marginalization in the church membership/ activities.

Why the Exodus is important to the Israelites

1. It marked the end of their suffering/ oppression in Egypt.
2. It signified they were a special nation chosen by God.
3. It was a fulfillment of the promises God had made to Abraham.
4. It proved that God was more powerful than other gods/ supreme.
5. It showed/ proved to them that Moses was a chosen leader of Israel as a nation.
6. It made them understand the nature of God.
7. It taught them that God needed obedience from human beings.
8. They received the Ten Commandments which guided them in their relationship.

THE MAKING OF THE SINAI COVENANT (EXODUS 19, 24:1 – 8)

(a) .Preparation

- God made a covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai in the wilderness. He brought them here so that he could enter into a personal relationship with the whole community of Abraham's descendants.
- God called Moses to the mountain to ask him if the Israelites were willing to obey. If they would obey Him, God made the following promises to them;
 1. He would make them His people.
 2. He would make them a kingdom of priests.
 3. He would make them a holy nation.

In readiness for the making of the Sinai Covenant, Abraham made the following preparations:

1. They had to purify themselves i.e. washed the clothes and themselves.
2. Moses marked a boundary at the foot of the mountain/ a holy boundary to prevent any person or animal going up the mountain.
3. To be ready on the third day for the Lord come down on the mountain.
4. Men were advised not to touch a woman/ no sexual relationship.
5. They were to report to the mountain on hearing the sound of the trumpet.
6. On the 3rd day Moses took the Israelites to meet their God.
7. God manifested his presence in the form of:
8. Thunder.
9. Lightning.
10. Earthquake.

11. Thick cloud that covered the whole mountain.
12. Fire.
13. Smoke.
14. A loud trumpet blast that made the people tremble.

1. Moses went up the mountain and was given the Ten Commandments
2. Moses came back from the Mt. and told the people about the laws and ordinances which were to guide them as a covenant people. All the people answered in one voice and said “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do,” (Exodus 24:3 – 4)

Steps in the formation/ sealing of the covenant (*Exodus 24:1 – 8*)

- Moses told the people the 10 commandments. They all agreed to obey.
- Moses wrote down God’s laws and commands.
- The next day/morning Moses built an altar and put twelve stones/pillars around it; the 12 stones symbolizes the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Young men sacrificed bulls/ oxen to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings.
- Moses collected the blood into two basins.
- He poured half of the blood into the altar. This was a sign that God was involved in the covenant formation.
- He read the Ten Commandments book of the covenant to the people to make sure that they understood. The people agreed to obey.
- He sprinkled/threw the remaining blood upon the people. This showed people’s involvement in the covenant formula.
- The use of the blood showed the seriousness of the covenant. Whoever broke this covenant meant loss of his life.
- The use of live animals showed that God is the life giver.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (EXODUS 20:1 – 17)

- The main laws which God gave to Moses are known as the Ten Commandments/ Decalogue.
 - It is an absolute law i.e. unconditional whereby everything had to be followed without question.
 - The Ten Commandments were divided into two major parts.
1. Duties towards God (Ex 20:3 -11) – the 1st 4 commandments about the relationship between God and man.
 2. Duties towards man (Ex 20:12 – 17) – the last 6 commandments about the relationship between man and fellow man.

Duties to God

1. **“You shall have no other gods before me”.**

Application

- It means that God is only one.

- There was need to remind the Israelites that he was the God who brought them out of Egypt and cared for them in the wilderness.
- The Israelites were to worship him alone.
- Any attempts to consider anything else God is wrong.
- We have one God who is the creator and sustainer of all things
- Anything we cherish more than God has become a god.
- It prohibits against Polytheism i.e. “The Lord is one” Deuteronomy 6:4

2. “You shall not make yourself a graven image”

Application

- This is prohibition against idolatry because God is invisible. (Ex 19:19, Deut 4:12 – 16)
- Any representation of God is wrong because it might tempt us to worship it which is disrespect to God.
- Yahweh was not like the Egyptians or Canaanite gods which were depicted in images.

3. “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in Vain”

Application

- It prohibits against taking the name of the Lord in vain/ swearing.
- This commandment forbids the use of God’s name in a careless manner without regard to his holiness.
- One should not swear in God’s name.
- In Mathew 5:33 – 37 Jesus stresses that Christians should be honest, sincere and always speak the truth.
- We need then to respect God’s name and the greatness of his name.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”

Application

The Sabbath Day was instituted by God at creation God rested on this day after creation thus we should not work or involve ourselves in any work.

- It is time to rest/ relax and reflect on what God has done.
- People are expected to honour it by worshipping God.
- Reminder of God’s sacrifice.

Significance of the Sabbath to the Jews

1. They remembered the day God rested after his creation.
2. Day for worship/ thanksgiving/ prayer.
3. It is in obedience to one of the commandments.
4. Day for rest/ leisure.
5. Holy day dedicated to God.
6. Shows that man has his origin in God and is therefore responsible to God.

Duties towards man

5. “Honour your father and mother that your days may be long”

Application

God’s gift of life is passed on through our parents as they take care and bring up children. God takes care of us through our parents.

- Dishonor to parents leads to disgrace.
- The family is the foundation of the society.
- Good respect to our parents leads to right conduct.
- Obedience to parents leads to long life and prosperity in the land.
- Parents deserve honour; respect and children should help their parents.

6. “You shall not kill”

Application

It is God alone who gives life and it should be Him alone to take it. The life of a person is sacred. Christians are called upon to preserve, respect and protect life.

7. “You shall not commit adultery”.

- It is wrong to have sexual intercourse with somebody else’s wife or husband. Such an act sows discord in the community.
- This command safeguards marriage and family.
- Purity is demanded of Christians both in their outward life, thoughts and desires.

8. “You shall not steal”

Application

- Affirms that God is the one who provides us with all that is required to maintain life.
- Stealing indicates lack of trust in God’s providence.
- This command prohibits theft.
- It is protection against property.

9. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”

Application

- False accusations destroy respect and love among God’s people.
- Christians should show love, honesty, faithfulness and truthfulness.
- The need for justice in courts.

10. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s property”.

Application

- Prohibition against covetousness. Desire for that which belongs to another Num 11:11.
- This commandment condemns greed of any nature.
- Greed is motivated by selfishness and hence leads to sin.

THE BREAKING OF THE SINAI COVENANT (EX 32:1 – 35

- Moses went up the mountain to God so as to be instructed on how to lead the Israelites on their last part of the journey to the Promised Land.
- Moses overstayed up the mountain until some Israelites became impatient and restless.
- -The multitude started murmuring against the God of Moses/ Yahweh and desired to go back to Egypt.
- They asked Aaron to make for them a physical god to worship.
- Aaron made an idol god in form of a calf. He used the ornaments they had brought from Egypt.
- The idol represented power and strength.
- Their worship was accompanied by singing, dancing, drinking, eating and indulged in revelry/sex around the calf.
- This was blasphemy before God/idolatry.
- Meanwhile God told Moses to go down for the people had sinned and rejected him.
- - Moses was annoyed and dropped the tablets on which the laws were written they broke into pieces.
- He ground the bull-calf and mixed with water and forced the people to drink.
- Moses called the faithful followers of Yahweh. Only the Levites came forward.
- Moses ordered the faithful people to kill the sinners.
- Moses returned to God and asked for forgiveness on behalf of the people.
- God promised to rub the names of the sinners from the book of heaven.
- God told Moses to continue leading the people.

Why did the Israelites demand for an Idol/possible reasons for breaking the Covenant?

- Moses overstayed up the mountain.
- -They needed another leader because they did not know what had happened to Moses.
- They lacked self-control/ were impatient.
- They lacked faith in God/ unfaithful.
- They did not understand the nature of their God e.g. powerful God.
- It is possible that they were misled by foreigners who joined them on their way to Canaan.
- Aaron was a weak leader and accepted to make the golden bull-calf.
- They had been exposed to idolatry in Egypt.
- The availability of raw materials e.g. Jewellery they had brought from Egypt.

Effects of worshipping the Idol/Bull

1. God was annoyed with the Israelites and wanted to destroy/consume them and start raising a new generation through Moses.
1. Moses pleaded with God to forgive them and God withdrew his wrath/ God forgave them.
2. Moses was annoyed when he found the Israelites worshipping the idol and he threw down the stone tablets breaking them.
3. Moses burnt the Golden Bull-calf into ashes mixed with water and ordered the Israelites to drink.

4. God forgave those who repented after worshipping the Golden calf.
5. Moses separated those who repented; the Levites included, and ordered the unrepentant group to be killed.
6. The Lord sent a plague upon the people because they had worshipped the idol.

THE RENEWAL OF THE SINAI COVENANT **EX 34:1 -35**

- God forgave the people and Moses.
 - The Ten Commandments were re-written on two stone tablets that God had asked Moses to cut.
 - Moses went up the mountain with the two stone tablets alone and no man or animal was allowed to be seen around the mountain.
 - God declared that he could make a covenant with the Israelites.
 - He gave Moses the Ten Commandments the second time.
 - God revealed his nature to Moses as:
 - Merciful/compassionate God.
 - Gracious God.
 - Slow anger
 - Abounding in love
 - Faithful to his promise
 - Forgiving wickedness, Rebellion and sin.
 - Just and jealous/punishes sin
 - He promised to take the Israelites to the Promised Land and protect them against the Canaanites
 - The Israelites were given conditions to fulfill after the renewal these are:
 1. Obey what God commands them.
1. Not to worship any other gods.
 2. Not to make any cast idols.
 3. To keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 4. To rest on the seventh day.
 5. To dedicate all their first born children and that of the flock to God.
 6. To offer to God the first fruit of their harvest.
 7. Not to enter into any covenant relationship with the inhabitant of Canaan e.g. not to intermarry with foreigners.
 8. To destroy the worshipping place of idols.
 9. Not to make molten gods to worship.
 10. Three times in a year the male folk were to appear before God.
 11. Not to offer the blood of His sacrifice with leaven.
 12. Not to boil a kid in his mother's milk.

Giving of more promises by God

God then gave them the following promises if they obeyed Him;

- God would bless them and make them more prosperous.

- God would preserve them as a chosen nation.
- God would do great and awesome things among his people.
- God would help them settle the Promised Land by driving out the inhabitants/their enemies e.g. Canaanite, perizites etc.

THE WORSHIP OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS (*EX 20:22 – 26, 23:14 – 20*)

- Worship refers to reverence paid to God/ respect given to God in recognition of Him as the creator and controller of the universe and the strong feeling of love for God.
- The Israelites must have known God well e.g. they knew him as provider, protector, God of justice, the mighty and all powerful God.
- All these qualities of God must have made them respect him and love him deeply.
- During their period in the wilderness, the Israelites worshipped God as individual and as a community. This occurred at specific places.
- All worship involved:

A. Sacrifices and offerings

- Animals were used in sacrifices.
- In an offering agricultural produce was used.

Sacrifices included:

1. burnt offerings/holocaust

- The sacrificial animal was completely burnt i.e. entirely removed from human possession and given to God.
- It could be given by an individual or by the community.

2. Atonement/ sin offering

- Offered when one had sinned either against God or against his fellow man and wanted his sins to be forgiven.
- The one who had sinned brought an animal before God and it was offered as a sacrifice.
- The animal died on behalf of the person who sinned.

3. Peace offering/ communion sacrifice/ fellowship offering

- Part of the meat of the sacrificial animal was eaten by the people and other parts which consisted of fat and blood was burnt on the altar for God.

4. Gift offering

- The best animal or grain that God had blessed the concerned party was chosen and offered to God as a thanksgiving.

5. Meal offering/ drink offering

- It involved both vegetable and animal offerings.
- Meat offering could be offered together with fresh agricultural produce.

6. Incense offering

- Incense is a substance composed of sweet smelling herbs.
- It was burnt before God and it was a sign of God's holiness and his acceptance of the sacrifices.

B. Festivals

A festival is a celebration commemorating a past event.

There were a number of festivals in the Israelite community. These included:

1. The Passover/Feast of unleavened bread.

1. This feast was held annually at the beginning of each year/ once a year.
2. Unleavened bread would be eaten for 7 days of the first month in every New Year.
3. The feast was a commemoration of the Israelite liberation from Egypt.

2. The feast of weeks/ Pentecost.

1. This feast originally marked the end of the wheat harvest.
2. Later it was conducted 50 days from the Sabbath following the Passover hence name Pentecost.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles.

This feast marked the end of agricultural year.

1. It took place in autumn when the fruits had been safely gathered/ harvested.

C. Altars

Altars marked an earthly meeting place between God and the people.

1. The Israelites built an altar in places where they received a Theophany/ God revelation.
2. e.g. Abraham built two altars, one at Shechem and another one at Bethel when God revealed to him that he would give him the land of Canaan
3. The practice of building altars continued to the time the Israelites settled in Canaan Ex 20:24 – 25.

NB: Altars were also places of sacrifice.

D. Prayer and Songs

People communicated to God through prayer and song. This was mostly used by priests and their leaders e.g. Moses and Joshua.

E. Holy day of worship

The Israelites set a day of worship. Every week they worked for six days and on the seventh day they rested and worshipped the Lord/ Sabbath rest.

F. The Tent of Meeting (EX 26)

1. It was a portable structure in which the Israelites worshipped God.
2. The outer court contained the altar for incense, the golden stick and the bread of the presence table.
3. The inner court was known as the most Holy place because it contained the Ark of the Covenant.
4. - The Ark of the Covenant was covered with pure gold and the inside contained the two stone tablets in which the Ten Commandments were written.
5. It was taken care of by the Levites and the priest from the time of Moses.
6. The Terbanacle symbolized the presence of God among his people.
7. Priests would go inside the Terbanacle to offer prayers and sacrifices to God on behalf of the people.

Elements of the Jewish worship found in the Christian worship today

There are a number of elements of Israelite worship which have been carried over from the time of the Exodus to Judaism the early church and to the present time. These elements include:

1. 1. The Passover feast which found its origin from the Passover which marked the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. This is referred to as the Lord's Supper in the N. T and Christian worship.
2. Use of prayer and songs in worship.
3. Observing the Lord's Day / Sabbath by modern Christians.
4. Offerings are also given in form of money, goods and services tithes.
5. Altars. Most Christian churches have altars also called sanctuary.

NB: The worship of God by the Israelites was more similar to that one of the Traditional African worship.

6. Observing the Ten Commandments.
7. Burning of incense e.g. catholic church.
8. Spiritual leaders e.g. pastors, priests.
9. Dedication of children to God.

Summary of the ways Israelites worshipped God in the wilderness

1. Through offerings, incense, grain gift.
1. Through sacrifices/ Holocaust, atonement.
2. Through festivals/ feasts e.g. Passover, feast of weeks, Terbanacle.
3. Had the Tabernacle/ the tent of meeting.
4. Use of prayers; for thanksgiving and asking for God's protection.
5. Use of songs and dances.
6. Built altars to signify the presence of Yahweh/ approached the altars with respect/ earthly meeting place where they had Theophany.
7. Male folk presented themselves to God three times a year.
8. Observed the Ten Commandments/ had laws.
9. Assembled at the foot of Mt. Sinai where they received the Ten Commandments.
10. Burnt incense to the Lord/ Yahweh.
11. Observed the Sabbath as a day of worship by keeping it Holy and dedicating to God.

12. Paid tithes for the upkeep of the Tabernacle.
13. Consecrated the Tent of meeting.
14. Levite priests led the Israelites in worship/ Religious leaders e.g. Aaron, Moses, Levitical Priests.
15. Made the Ark of the Covenant and carried it whenever they went which symbolized God's presence.
16. The dedication of the first born male children to God in memory of the Passover in Egypt.

How Christians show respect to God

1. They set aside a day of worship.
2. Set aside holy places of worship.
3. They do not mention God's name in vain.
4. They pray to him asking for forgiveness/ confessing to Him.
5. Live exemplary lives/ role models.
6. Giving offering/ tithes.
7. Praise Him for His wonders.
8. Taking care of the environment.
9. Looking after the needy.
10. Preaching/ spreading His word.

THE SINAI COVENANT: MOSES

THE SINAI COVENANT: MOSES

The call of Moses (*Exodus 3:1-22*)

The call of Moses took place as follows;

- Moses had gone to look after his father-in-law's flocks near Mt. Horeb/ Mt. Sinai which means mountain of God.
 - An angel appeared to him as a burning bush which was not being consumed.
 - Moses moved near to see what was happening and God called him by his name in the middle of the Burning bush.
 - He was instructed not to move any closer and to remove his shoes because the place where he was standing was Holy ground.
 - God assured Moses that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
-
- Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.
 - God told him he had seen the suffering of his people (Israelites) and was ready to liberate them from Egypt.
 - God commanded Moses to go to Egypt to free the Israelites.
 - Moses protested that he was not worthy but God gave him the assurance that;
1. God would protect him and be with him.
 2. They would worship God at Mt. Sinai after leaving Egypt.

- Moses asked God what his name was and God replied, “I am who I am,” meaning:
 1. God was what He was in the past and will always be the same i.e. God is eternal.
 2. God does not change with time or situations.
 3. There is no human description of God.
- God then assured Moses that the Israelites would respond positively while Pharaoh would be stubborn until several miracles were done.
- Moses was given two signs as a proof that he was God’s messenger.
 1. His rod/ walking stick/ staff turned into a snake;
 2. His hand was affected by leprosy.
- Moses being a stammerer was given Aaron as his spokesperson.
- Moses later left for Egypt with his family.

Reasons why Moses was reluctant to accept God’s call

1. He was a murderer.
2. He was a fugitive / a run away.
3. He was a stammerer.
4. He was not sure of God/ God’ name.
5. The people would doubt him.
6. He knew Pharaoh would refuse to let the people go.
7. He felt he was worth the task.

Attributes of God learnt during the call of Moses

1. God is Holy/pure. He told Moses to remove his shoes for he was standing on a Holy place.
2. God ears the cries of his people/answers prayers Vs.7.
3. Just/God punishes the wrong doers.
4. Deliverer.Vs.8.
5. God of History, vs. 15 and Vs. 6
6. Caring/loving/ merciful/ compassionate.Vs.7.
7. Faithful/ fulfills promises e.g. fulfilled the promise made to Abraham.
8. Demands faith and obedience from those he calls/sends.
9. Transcendent/mysterious/beyond human understanding e.g. burning bush.
10. Personal/knows us by name e.g. called Moses by his name.vs.4.
11. Uses human beings to accomplish a task e.g. Moses/God commissions people to perform certain tasks/ works through people He chooses.
12. Empowers those He sends/doesn’t give people impossible tasks e.g. enabled Moses to perform miracles e.g. changing stick into snake.
13. Awesome/demands respect vs.5/ worthy of respect.
14. Knows our suffering vs.7. He had seen the affliction of His people in Egypt.

15. Has power over nature/all powerful vs.2 e.g. bush burning though not getting consumed/ almighty/ omnipotent.
16. Eternal. vs. 14 *I AM WHO I AM*.
17. All-knowing i.e. knows us by name, our sufferings e.t.c.
18. Protects his people vs. 12 e.g. promised to protect Moses.
19. God is omnipresent.
20. Uses events to reveal Himself to people e.g. burning bush.
21. God is miracle working God.

What Moses learnt from this incident/call about God

1. God is a God of History i.e. He is a God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
2. God is loving and caring and is concerned with the welfare of his people.
3. God is transcendent i.e. He is beyond human understanding and description.
4. God chooses whoever he wills to carry out his plans e.g. He chose Moses, a murderer, fugitive stammerer.
5. God expects total faith and obedience from the people he chooses to serve him.
6. God fulfills his promises i.e. he was ready to deliver the Israelites from bondage/ slavery he had promised Abraham.

Christian values learnt from the call of Moses

1. Humility.
2. Courage.
3. Faith.
4. Love/ mercy/ care.
5. Honesty.
6. Obedience.
7. Reverence/ respect/ honour/ God-fearing.
8. Service.
9. Holiness.
10. Inquisitiveness/ knowledge/ curiosity.
11. Patience/ persistence.
12. Justice.

THE TEN PLAGUES

Exodus 7:14-11:1-10

Introduction

- When Moses reached Egypt, he gathered all the Israelite elders then told them what God had sent him to do.
- He performed all the miracles God had shown him and the Israelite elders believed in his mission.
- When Pharaoh was approached to let the Israelites go, he became stubborn and increased the workload for the Israelites

- Moses had to perform plagues on Egypt. (A plague may be a disease or an unfortunate occurrence in one's life) (Exodus 7:4 – 5)
- The signs and the wonders of the plagues were to make the Israelite and Egyptians know that only Yahweh was worthy of the title God.

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

- Moses was commanded by God to tell Aaron to strike the waters of the Nile.
- He did this in the presence of Pharaoh and the waters of the Nile turned into blood.
- All the fish died and there was no water to drink. This lasted seven days.
- He did not release the Israelites.

2. *Plague of frogs (Exodus 8:1 – 15)*

- The Lord commanded Moses to tell Aaron to stretch his hand over the streams, canals and ponds.
- Aaron did as was commanded and there were frogs all over the land of Egypt.
- On seeing this, Pharaoh pleaded with Moses and Aaron to pray to the Lord to get rid of the frogs and he would release them.
- They prayed and all the frogs died when Pharaoh saw that the frogs were dead, he changed his mind.

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

- Gnats are small two-winged biting flies.
- The Lord instructed Moses to tell Aaron to strike the ground.
- Aaron did and all the dust in Egypt turned into gnats.
- The gnats covered the entire land.
- Even the magicians accepted it as God's work, but Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go.

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

- The Lord warned Pharaoh through Moses that he would send swarms of flies to the Egyptian houses. But the Israelites houses would be spared.
- When this happened, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and promised to let them to go and worship so that the flies would go away.
- Moses prayed and the flies went away. However, Pharaoh changed his mind and again refused to let the Israelites go.

5. *Death of livestock (Exodus 9:1 – 7)*

- God sent a plague that killed all the Egyptian animals. Their cows, donkeys, camels, sheep, goats and horses were all killed.
- The Israelites were not affected. Still Pharaoh refused to release them.

6. Plague of boils (Exodus 9:8 – 12)

- Moses threw ashes into air as God had instructed.
- This produced boils which became open sores on the skin of the Egyptians.
- Unmoved by the suffering of his people, Pharaoh would still not let the Israelites go.

7. Plague of hail (Exodus 9:13 – 35)

- Moses raised his stick and there was a hailstorm with lightning and thunder. The people, animals and plants that were struck were killed and destroyed.
- Pharaoh promised to let the Israelites go but as soon as Moses had prayed and all the hail and thunder stopped. Pharaoh changed his mind yet again. He did not let the Israelites go.

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

- Locusts covered the whole land and ate all the crops in the fields.
- The locusts ate all that had not been destroyed by the hail.
- Pharaoh once more pleaded for the plague to be lifted.
- As soon as locusts were out of Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind. He still would not let the Israelites out of Egypt.

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

- God instructed Moses to stretch out his hand to heaven.
- There was total darkness in Egypt for 3 days. The Israelites had light where they were living.

1. Pharaoh remained unmoved and would still not let the Israelites go out of Egypt.

10. Death of first-born sons (Exodus 12:1 – 31)

- The last plague is the death of the Egyptians male first born.
- The Lord would kill all the first born sons and first male animals of the Egyptians at midnight.
- The Israelite males would be spared.

Attributes of God learnt from the ten plagues

1. God empowers the people he sends to perform miracles and do his work. He gave Moses the rod with which to work and cause the plagues.
2. God is almighty/all powerful/ omnipotent and no other forces or power can challenge him. The magicians could not match his powers and accepted that God's powers are great (Exodus 8:18 – 19).
3. God is determined to fulfill his plans/to save his people no matter how hard the task may appear to the human eye. He does not give up on his people. Exodus 8:22, 9:6, 10:23.

4. God gives everyone a chance to repent. He forgives the repentant. Each time Pharaoh promised to release the Israelites, God relieved the Egyptians from the plagues.
5. God is God of justice/ he punishes the wrong doer and protects the oppressed. He afflicted the Egyptians who had enslaved his people. He spared the Israelites.
6. God fulfill his promises/ He is faithful. The Israelites finally left Egypt as God had promised Exodus 3:7 – 10, Genesis 15:13 – 14, 26:3 – 4.
7. God expects total obedience and faith from the people he sends.
8. God is a loving/ caring God. He sees the plight and suffering of his people and works to release them from their suffering.
9. More powerful than the Egyptian gods.
10. God was aware of the problems of the Israelites.
11. Determined to save his people.
12. God was working through Moses. This strengthened faith of the Israelites on Moses their liberator

THE PASSOVER

Exodus 12:1 – 31

Passover is derived from Hebrew word Pasach meaning “to pass” with the aim of sparing or protecting.

Preparations for the Passover

God instructed Moses to prepare the Israelites for the tenth plague.

Moses called all the elders of Israel and gave them the following instructions.

1. On the tenth day of that month each man had to choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household. If his family was too small to eat a whole animal, then he and his next-door neighbor were to share the animal.
 - The animal chosen was to be a male, one year old and without blemish.
 - Using a young animal signified the innocence of the sacrifice while an animal without blemish signified purity of the sacrifice.
1. The animal chosen was to be killed on the eve of the 14th day of that month/eve of the night of the Exodus.
2. The blood of the animal was to be smeared on the door posts and lintel of Israelites' houses.
 - The blood was to act as a sign of distinguishing the Israelites houses from those of the Egyptians so that the angel of death would spare them when he killed the first-born sons of the Egyptians.
1. The lamb/animal for sacrifice was to be roasted whole i.e. with its head, legs and inner parts.
 - Roasting was the quickest method of cooking since the Israelites were in a hurry.
1. The meat was to be eaten that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

- The bitter herbs signified the bitter experience of slavery in Egypt.
- 1. Everything was to be eaten and whatever remained was to be burnt.
- 2. They were to eat the sacrificial meat after they had dressed up and packed their luggage (Vs 9 – 11)
- 3. The Israelite women were to ask for Jewellery, Silver and clothing from the Egyptian women on the eve of their departure.
- These items were to act as compensation for the free labour the Israelites had given Egypt.
- 1. Everyone was to remain indoors until morning in order to be protected from the angel of death.
- 2. The Passover was to be commemorated annually and its significance taught to the coming generation.

Note

- On that night the Angel of death “passed over” the houses of the Israelites and killed the entire male first born of the Egyptians, including Pharaoh’s son.
- There was great wailing in Egypt.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and released the Israelites.
- The Israelites left Egypt for the Promised Land through the wilderness/Exodus.

Attributes of God shown in the Jewish Passover

1. God is caring i.e. preserved the life of the Israelites.
2. God loves.
3. God is powerful i.e. took care of nature.
4. God is provider of life i.e. killed the Egyptians.
5. God is the creator and controller of human life.
6. God is universal e.g. controlled lives of the Egyptians and Israelites.
7. God is omnipresent i.e. everywhere including to the Israelite and the Egyptians.
8. God is faithful to his promises.
9. He punishes the disobedient.

ISRAELITES NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF GOD

ISRAELITES NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF GOD

Through the teachings of Moses and their personal experience, the Israelites learnt the following about the nature of God:

1. He is the God of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
2. God is more powerful than the other god's e.g. he led them across the Red sea.
3. He fulfils his promises as evidenced by their release from Egypt.
4. God is holy as seen from the restriction from contact with the Holy Mountain.
5. God uses his chosen people to carry out his mission e.g. Israel.
6. God is the provider as seen in his provision of food and water in the wilderness.
7. He is a moral God as he gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites to guide their behavior/ God is a jealous God.
8. God is a personal God who initiates a covenant relationship with individuals for e.g. the Sinai covenant.
9. He is the only God/Yahweh was the true God.
10. God is just as he punished idol worshippers.
11. God is transcendent and beyond human understanding as seen in the revelation at Mt. Sinai.
12. God demands total obedience from his people as expressed in his instruction during the making and the renewal of covenant.
13. God is awesome as shown in people's fear of him as seen on Mt. Sinai.
14. God is omnipresent. He moved with them and was present in the pillar of cloud and fire.
15. God is a jealous God as expressed in the Ten Commandments.
16. God forgives sinners.

LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL: DAVID AND SOLOMON

Background to Kingship in Israel

1. Refers to the manner in which a community's way of life is ruled or controlled.
2. When the Israelites settled in Canaan for the first 200 years they were ruled by judges.
3. The first judge was Joshua who took over after Moses died in the wilderness.
4. The period after Joshua's death was characterized by political and social disorganization and was between the Israelites and their neighbouring nations.
5. To restore order, God raised judges to rule over the people of Israel e.g.
 - Othniel - Judges 3:9 – 10.
 - Eliud - Judges 3:15.
 - Shamgar - Judges 3:31.
 - Deborah - Judges 4:4.
 - Gideon - Judges 6:11 – 24, 7:1 – 2.

The Roles of the Judges /Characteristics of judges

1. They were charismatic.
2. Temporary leaders who led the Israelites battles.
3. Upheld covenant faith.
4. Acted as God's spokesmen/women and.
5. Settled disputes.
6. They ruled Israel on behalf of God.
7. Some judges acted as God's prophets.

8. They acted as religious leaders and led the Israelites during religious functions.
 9. Acted as the conscience of the nation/kings.
 10. Condemned idolatry and preached the worship of Yahweh.
- Prophet Samuel was the last judge. When he grew old, he appointed his two sons as judges, but they failed as leaders.
 - The people of Israel went to Samuel and demanded for a king.

REASONS FOR KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL

(1SAM 8:1 – 9)

The people requested Samuel to choose for them a king because:

- Samuel's sons were bad and evil leaders/failed as judges/perverted justice and therefore the people rejected them.
- The Israelites wanted to be like their neighbouring nations/other nations who had earthly kings.
- They needed a leader/warrior king who would lead them to war against their enemies e.g. the Philistines.
- They wanted a stable hereditary leadership.
- They wanted a human leader who could be recognized by other nations.
- A leader to organize them.
- Wanted a political nation governed by law and order instead of a theocratic government.
- Samuel had grown too old and needed a replacement.
- They failed to understand that Yahweh was their unseen King. God alone chooses rulers.

REASONS AGAINST KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL

1 SAMUEL 8:10 – 20

The following are the reasons why Samuel was unwilling to choose a king;

- Choosing a king meant rejecting of God as their ruler/king/challenged the kingship of God over Israel.
- The king would force people into military services.
- The king would introduce forced labour in Israel.
- The king would introduce slavery in Israel.
- The king would grab their land and property.
- The king would impose heavy taxation to maintain the army
- The king would demand free good and services.
- The king would Force people's daughters into inter-marriage.
- The king would take their daughters to be perfumers and cooks in his palace.
- In becoming like other nations, the Israelites would lose their identity as a covenant people.
- Hereditary kingship would bring oppression and dictatorship in Israel.
- It was a way of not appreciating/ not being thankful for God's deliverance from Egypt/ Exodus.

- If ruled by the king the Israelites would lose their identity as God's chosen people/people of the covenant.
- The king would not be God's choice and thus would not rule according to God's will/demands.
- The king would deviate/ divert people's attention from God and the covenant way of life.
- They will cry out to God and He will not listen.

KING SAUL'S SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

1SAM 13:1 – 14, 15:7 – 25, 28:3–19

Background to King Saul's reign

- When the elders of Israel went to Prophet Samuel and asked him to appoint for them a king, Samuel prayed to God seeking his guidance.
- God told him to obey the voice of the people.
- He sent him to a man called Saul, son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin.
- Samuel was to anoint him to become the King over Israel.
- Samuel poured oil on Saul's head from a flask he had with him. (I Sam 10:1)
- Therefore Saul became the first King of Israel.
- Samuel made it clear to the Israelites that they still remained God's people.
- An Israelite King would still remain the servant of God. The king was to rule God's people according to the covenant way of life.
- He explained to the people the rights and duties of the king. He wrote them in a book and laid it before the Lord, (I Sam 12:14 – 15).
- The initial appointment of Saul as King of Israel was in accordance to God's will. He approved of Saul's leadership in the following ways:
 1. Saul was Yahweh's own choice. (I Sam 9:16; 10:24).
 2. Saul received God's spirit, which gave him power to act as God's appointee. (ISam 10:10)
 3. Through Yahweh's help, Saul fought against all Israel's enemies everywhere and won e.g.
- Fought against the Ammonites (ISam 11:1).
- Led a successful war against the Philistines, thus saving Israel from their enemy (ISam 14:47).
- Defeated the Amalekites (I Sam 15).

However Saul failed and was rejected as King. He had a number of weaknesses that led to his failure and final rejection by God.

King Saul's failures/ weaknesses

1. He became impatient and offered sacrifices to God at Gilgal instead of waiting for Prophet Samuel, I Samuel 13:1 – 14. He assumed priestly duties by offering sacrifices.
1. He disobeyed God's command and failed to carry out the law of total destruction of a conquered enemy/ The Law of herem or the ban (I Sam 15:1 – 23) failing to destroy everything i.e. during the mission against the Amalekites.

2. The spirit of God left Saul and was replaced by an evil spirit which tormented him and made him like a madman. I Sam 16:14.
3. He was jealous of David for his success as a warrior (I Sam 18:7 – 8, 19:1 – 22)
4. He massacred the Gibeonites contrary to an Oath taken during the time of Joshua.
5. Saul committed the sin of necromancy when he consulted a medium after the death of Samuel. (I Samuel 28:3 – 25)

Lessons learnt from king Saul's failures.

1. Christians should be patient and wait for God's intervention in times of crisis. Saul lost patience when Prophet Samuel delayed in coming on the appointed day.
 2. Christians should be obedient and faithful in God/patient.
 3. Political leaders should be more accommodating to people who hold different views and ideas from their own.
 4. Christians should be sincere in the worship of God. To be sincere means to be truthful or honest about our actions.
-
1. Leaders should be God fearing so as to succeed in their leadership.

KING DAVID'S IMPORTANCE

Introduction:

He was the second King of Israel.

He was anointed by Samuel after Saul failed.

He is regarded as the most successful King in Israel.

Importance: Refers to his successes, achievement and qualities.

King David's achievements as the king of Israel

1 Sam 16:1 – 23, 2 Sam 6:1 – 15

1. He was chosen by God to be the king of Israel/anointed by God's prophet Samuel.
2. David was filled with God's spirit right from the time of anointing/throughout his reign.
3. He had outstanding qualities of leadership e.g. he was charismatic, generous, patient, honorable, wise, brave, eloquent in speech, God-fearing.
4. He knew and obeyed God/He was a man after God's own heart/faithful/ trusted God throughout his life.
5. David consulted prophets of God in all undertakings.
6. David was acclaimed/accepted/chosen as King of Israel by the whole of Israel at Hebron, 2 Sam 5:1 – 5
7. He courageously fought and defeated his enemies e.g. the Philistines.
8. He captured the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites/He made it the political administration capital for the nation and a religious centre.
9. He chose Jerusalem a neutral city of his nation. 2 Sam 5:6 – 10, 6:1 – 19
10. He recaptured the Ark of the Covenant.
11. He united his people through personal efforts.
12. He extended the boundaries of his kingdom by capturing smaller states.

13. He established a standing army / he was a good military commander. He broke the Philistines control over Canaan once and for all and shut them up in coastal plain 2 Sam 5:17 – 25, 21:15 – 22.
14. He also waged successful wars against Moab, Ammon, Edon, Amalek and Aram/Syria and concluded a treaty with the Phoenician King, and Hiram of Tyre. David came to be recognized as the ruler of an empire that stretched from Lebanon Mt. to the borders of Egypt, from Med. Sea to the desert of Arabia.
15. He established a long lasting dynasty /Davidic which lasted for 400 years.
16. He was a shrewd/ good administrator /He chose wise elders and counselors to advice him.
17. He organized religion through the Temple music/ composed Psalms.
18. He was humble/ repentant. He was ready to accept the sins he had committed e.g. when he committed adultery with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife and arranged for the death of her husband, he was later remorseful. He put on Sackcloth as a sign of repentance after Prophet Nathan rebuked him for the offence (2 Sam 12:1 – 15).
19. Divided his Kingdom into small administrative districts.
20. He came up with the idea of building the Temple for God.
21. God made a covenant with David through Prophet Nathan.
22. David respected the Prophets of God and always consulted them whenever he wanted to do anything e.g. when he wanted to build the Temple he consulted Prophet Nathan. (2 Sam 7:1)
23. He was a great diplomat and established good political relations with the neighbouring Kings.
24. David ruled over Israel, administering Law and justice to all people, (2Sam 8:15).
25. He insisted on taking census of all Israel 2Sam 24: 1 – 9. The information collected was for the purpose of recruiting young men into military service and deciding on the policy of taxation.
26. He made his nation rich by taxing his enemies

David's weaknesses

However David had some weaknesses e.g.

1. He committed adultery with Uriah's wife.
2. He plotted for Uriah's murder.
3. He coveted his neighbor's wife.
4. He forced a soldier to meet the wife.
5. He broke military laws by putting Uriah in the frontline instead of the back.
6. He married many wives which took a large portion of state money.
7. Conclusion: He repented and God forgave him.

The importance of David as an ancestor of Jesus Christ *2Samuel 7:1 – 29, Luke 1:26 – 3)*

- David intended to build a splendid temple for God after he had accomplished building a palace for himself in Jerusalem, 2 Sam 7:1 – 29.

- He felt it was not fair for the Ark of the Covenant to continue dwelling in a tent while he himself lived in a magnificent palace.
- He consulted Nathan the Prophet to find out whether it was in order to do so.
- The Prophet approved the idea.
- Later that night, Nathan received a revelation that stated that David was not to build a house/ temple for God; (2 Sam 7:5 – 6)

Promises God made to David through Prophet Nathan

In 2 Sam 7:9 – 16 is a summary of the divine promises made to David by God. These are as follows;

1. God promised to Keep David and his descendants safe from all enemies.
2. God would give David's descendants a place to settle/their own land.
3. God promised to raise up an heir from the house of David to sit on the throne.
4. He promised to let David's son be the one to build a temple for him. God's relationship with this king would be like that of a father to his son.
5. God promised to establish an everlasting kingdom for David and his descendant rule forever.
6. God promised to make David's name greater or famous among all other leaders of the earth.
7. God would protect David's descendants from oppression and make them live in peace.
8. God would bury David with ancestors.
9. God would punish David's son when he did wrong.
10. God would always support David's heirs.
11. The Messiah would come from David's lineage.
12. God would protect David from his enemies.

The immediate fulfillment of these promises was seen in the reign of King Solomon, David's son and successor.

- Solomon did build the Temple of God 1Kings 6:1.
- Solomon's reign was marked by a period of peace and prosperity since David had subdued all the enemies of Israel.

David as an ancestor of Jesus Christ

1. Jesus was born in the family of David.
- Joseph was a descendant of David Luke 1:26
1. Angel Gabriel in his annunciation message to Mary says that Jesus will be like his ancestor David Luke 1:32 – 33.
 2. Zechariah in his Benedictus says that God has raised up a savior descended from the house of David Luke 1:69.
 3. Jesus was born in Bethlehem which was also the birth place of David. Luke 2:4.

4. The blind man at Jericho hailed Jesus as the son of David and looked to him to restore his sight Luke 18:38.
5. Jesus was hailed by the crowd as the Messiah descended from David during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Math 21:9).
6. God promised David that he would have an everlasting kingdom and Jesus established the Kingdom which does not have geographical boundaries/an everlasting kingdom.
7. The early apostles like Peter and Paul made a number of references to Jesus as a descendant of David. Acts 2:29 – 35, 13:23.

Ways in which David demonstrated his faith in God/promoted worship of Yahweh

1. He accepted to be anointed by Samuel as next King.
2. He killed a bear and lion bare handed as a shepherd of his father's flock.
3. He trusted God and killed Goliath using a stone.
4. He consulted God in all his undertakings.
5. He accepted God's promises made to him through Prophet Nathan.
6. He brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem making it a religious capital
7. Though faith in God he conquered all Israelites enemies.
8. He wanted to build God a house/temple.
9. He danced before God and made sacrifices to him after bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.
10. He composed Psalms.
11. He repented after sinning.
12. He strongly believed that God had given him the power.
13. He advised his son Solomon to be confident and obey God's Laws if he wanted to be a successful King in Israel.
14. He was humble before God and attributed his successes to God.
15. He taught the Israelites that Yahweh was their King.
16. He fasted and prayed.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER DRAWN FROM DAVID'S LEADERSHIP

Good leaders should:

1. Have faith in God. A leader should be a God fearing man/seek God's guidance as all authority comes from him.
1. Have courage/bravery and fearlessness in spite of many dangers: a leader should be more courageous than his people.
2. Be just and fair. All leaders must ensure that there is fair treatment for all in society/was a good administrator/ he never favoured anyone.
3. David led his armies into battles. Christian leaders should be in the forefront when their people have problems to be solved.
4. Humility. When David sinned he was ready to ask for forgiveness from God. A leader should accept mistakes and be willing to ask for forgiveness/ repentance.
5. David consulted the prophets of God in all his undertakings. A leader needs to recognize God's chosen servants, priests; pastors co-operate with them and constantly ask Gods guidance before indulging in any venture.

6. Kindness. David had a forgiving heart towards some of the offenders e.g. spared Saul's life 1 Sam 24:10. Therefore modern leaders should be willing to accommodate their rivals even forgive their offenders.
7. David felt that he was ruling for God. He was just a servant of God not his master. A leader should lead as a servant of God.
8. A leader should be patriotic to his country and be ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of unity, love and peace.
9. A leader should be patient in decision making. David gave his people to decide whether to accept his rule or not.
10. 12. Loyalty. David drew support of his subjects and never imposed his will on them. Modern leaders should never betray their oath of loyalty they make to serve their subjects faithfully after taking office.
11. Gratitude. David always thanked God for any success or favours he received from him (Samuel 7:18 – 29). Modern leaders should not be boastful over their personal achievements. It is God who gives such success.
12. Obedient and humble. He humbled himself before God and his Prophets and obeyed God's commands/compassionate, loving, kind and merciful. He was tolerant with King Saul. He also helped the needy.
13. Shrewd administrator. He chose wise leaders to help and advise him. Modern leaders should choose wise people to advise them in their administrative duties.

KING SOLOMON'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

KING SOLOMON'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

1 Kings 3-11

Solomon inherited the Kingdom from his father David.

His task was to maintain and control a peaceful territory established by his father.

Solomon prayed to God for divine wisdom in the execution of his duties as a result he made many achievements.

King Solomon's achievements

1. He built a Temple for God in Jerusalem as a fulfillment of God's promises to David. (1 Kings 5, 6)
2. He collected and composed thousands of proverbs and songs which were used in teaching and worship (3,000 Proverbs 1,005 songs) (Prov. 1:1 – 5)
3. He established and developed trade links with other countries which led to economic prosperity in Israel/ He was a successful merchant.
4. Solomon initiated industrial activities and exploited copper deposits in the area of Edom which had been conquered by David.
5. He developed diplomatic relations with foreign countries by marrying the daughters of the Kings of those countries e.g. Married the daughters of the Kings of Egypt, Moab, Edom, Tyre and many others 1 Kings 3:1, 1:1) He remained at peace with those countries.
6. He built up a professional army equipped with horse drawn chariots, Had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen 1 Kings 10:26.

7. He had government officials who assisted Solomon in his administrative duties. (I Kings 4)
8. He was a great wise man e.g.
 1. He was able to judge difficult cases and settle disputes fairly (in the story of two women (I Kings 3:16 – 28)
 2. His wisdom is seen in the way he organized trade with other countries.
 3. The queen of Sheba (Ethiopia travelled all the way to test Solomon's wisdom. (I Kings 10:1 – 9)
1. Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant to the Temple of Jerusalem which represented God's presence among his people (I Kings 8).
2. He built himself a palace that took 13 years to be completed (1 Kings 7).
3. Solomon divided the kingdom into administrative districts in order to exploit the resources effectively.
4. Solomon initiated an ambitious building programme in which he fortified Jerusalem and other cities.

King Solomon's failures Although Solomon was a successful King, he had many failures. These include;

1. He married many foreign wives who brought with them the worship of foreign gods to Israel. Ex 34:16.
2. He allowed his foreign wives to worship their gods in Israel.
3. He built high places of worship/temples for the gods of his wives. Ex 20:4 – 5.
4. Solomon worshiped the gods of his wives alongside the God of Israel thus broke the covenant with God.
5. He imposed heavy taxation on his subjects and his districts in order to raise part of the government revenue.
6. Solomon overspend and misused the wealth of the Kingdom by building a huge palace.
7. He overtaxed his subjects to maintain high standard of living in his royal court/ was extravagant.
8. He introduced forced labour to carry on his building programmes. E.g. palace and temple, therefore breaking the covenant rule of brotherhood.
9. He gave King Hiram of Tyre an area of Israel's land to pay off his debts thus treating the nation's land as his own personal property.
10. He killed his half brother Adonijah (1Kings 2) because he suspected that Adonijah could be his rival to the throne thus committing murder.
11. He practiced nepotism by exempting his own people from taxation and forced labour i.e. tribes of Judah and Benjamin exempted from forced labour and payment of taxes.
12. He hired the skills of pagan craftsmen in the construction of the Temple and his palace.
13. He made treaties with foreign Nations/neighbouring nations against the covenant requirements.

Lessons Christians learn from King Solomon's reign
Christians should;

1. Be sexually pure.
2. Be Monogamous. Solomon's seven hundred wives led him into worshipping their foreign gods.
3. Be just and fair.
4. Respect and honour God.
5. Not misuse national resources.
6. Put God above everything else.

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL (*I Kings 12.*)

The death of Solomon and the Division of the Kingdom

After the death of King Solomon, his son Rehoboam succeeded him.

Not all tribes of Israel accepted him as their King and therefore it split into two.

The Northern 10 tribes formed Israel while the 2 Southern tribes formed Judah. Judah retained Jerusalem as the capital city.

Factors that led to the division/reasons for the rise of schism in Israel

1. Solomon practiced idolatry which made God to punish him by splitting the kingdom.
2. Solomon built high places for idols.
3. The introduction of forced labour and heavy taxation led to discontentment among the Israelites and this made them rebellious.
4. Solomon had many foreign wives who brought with them the worship of foreign gods to Israel.
5. Rehoboam's failure to heed to the elders wise counsel to rule the Israelites less harshly.
6. Rehoboam's acceptance of the foolish advice given by the youth to rule the people more harshly than his father had angered the people.
7. Long standing feuds in David's house.
8. Jeroboam was ready to lead the rebellious groups against Rehoboam.
9. Solomon's favor extended towards the Southern tribes making the northern tribes to rebel/Solomon practiced nepotism and tribalism making northern tribes rebel.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN ISRAEL

The Temple of Jerusalem played important roles in religious, social and economic lives of the Israelites.

1. It symbolized God's presence among his people through the Ark of the Covenant which was kept in the Temple.
2. It was a dwelling place for God. I Kings 8:12 – 13.
3. It was a centre/house of worship and prayer for the Jews/ priests offered sacrifices, burnt incense and prayers to God in the Temple.
4. All the Jewish Religious festivals/feasts such as Passover, Pentecost and New Year were celebrated in the Temple.
5. The Temple was a symbol of national security because the Jews believed that the Temple would never be destroyed.
6. Religious rites were performed in the Temple e.g. Purification and dedication rites, naming, circumcision of baby boys and lepers were cleansed in the temple.
7. It was a place for pilgrimage for the Jews living in Palestine and the Jews of the Diaspora

8. It was a commercial centre and housed the Jewish treasury where currencies were exchanged and animals for sacrifices sold.
9. It was a centre for Jewish learning where the teaching of the law was conducted
10. It was used as a law court where social and religious issues could be solved by the Sanhedrin/council of Jewish religious leader.
11. 11. It was a symbol of Jewish unity. It united the Jews as the people of God, since it was built and maintained by Kings. It was a royal sanctuary thus providing stability for the monarch.
12. It was the residence for the religious leaders and the place where priests and prophets Lived, e.g. prophetess Anna, Luke 2:36 – 38.
13. The Jews believed that the Messiah would appear in the Temple.
14. The Temple was the only place where sacrifices to God were offered by the priests.
15. God revealed himself to many in the Temple e.g. Hannah, Isaiah etc.

LOYALTY TO GOD ELIJAH

Elijah means “Yahweh is my God”

Factors that led to spread of idolatry in Israel

Introduction:

Idolatry refers to worship of idols.

An idol is an image representing a god usually made using materials such as bronze, stone or hard wood.

The images of these gods would be kept in the places of worship where the worshipers went to ask for whatever needs they had.

The 2nd commandment Ex. 20:4 forbids making of images of anything “In the heavens above or the earth below...”

The Israelites were forbidden from bowing down to /worshipping these images. (Deut 5:8 – 10 and Lev 26:1)

To guard against the temptations to turn to the worship of the Canaanite gods, Yahweh through Moses had forewarned the Israelites that when they enter Canaan, they were supposed to destroy all the worshipping places e.g. temples/shrines and cultic objects (Ex .34:13).

The Israelites were not supposed to:

1. Make any agreement/treaties with the foreigners.
2. Not to intermarry with the foreigners.
3. Practice polytheism /worship of many gods.
4. Copy the way other nations were ruled and governed.
5. Compromise the worship of Yahweh with that of Canaanites.

However, when the Israelites settled in Canaan the Canaanite influence on them was great and they started to fall away from the worship of Yahweh.

The following contributed to this:

A. The local Canaanite religion

The Canaanite religion had the following features/ qualities;

1. It was predominantly a nature religion related to forces of nature e.g. rain and drought. They were a means of maintaining the ordered harmony of nature and the life of the community/it was cyclic they repeated seasons.
2. It was polytheistic/ comprised of many gods and goddesses' e.g.
 - El – The high god, the king and father
 - Asherah – the “wife” of El, a goddess of fertility.-Baal – the storm god also referred to as the god of rain and fertility. He was sometimes called Baal Hadad which means god of storm. He was represented in the form of a bull, a symbol of strength and fertility.
 - Baalath – female partner of Baal. Baalath means lady, her personal name was Astarte.
 - Mot – was the god of drought, famine and death.
 - Anat – “sister” of Baal, a goddess of war and love.
1. Symbols/idols/images were made to represent each god/goddess e.g.
 - Baal was represented in the form of a bull and stone pillar.
 - Asherah by a sacred pole.
1. Temple prostitution was part of the worship of gods and goddesses.
 - -The man identified himself with Baal while the woman identified herself with Astarte the wife of Baal. It was believed that if a barren couple imitated Baal and Astarte when having sex, they would be able to bear children.
1. Human/animal sacrifices were made to gods/goddesses.
2. Festivals and feasts were celebrated in honour of the gods and goddesses e.g.
 - Feast of unleavened Bread which was carried out at the beginning of the barley harvest. -----Feast of weeks celebrated during the wheat harvest.
 - Feast of in-gathering celebrated at the beginning of the agricultural year.
1. Rituals were performed to ensure continued fertility/well being of the community.
2. There were prophets and prophetess for each god and goddess.
3. Each god and goddess played a specific role in the community e.g.
 - Anat-Female deity rep. love
 - Asherah-Female deity rep. motherhood
 - Astarte- female deity represented war.
1. There was a chief god/goddess i.e. El
2. There were temples/shrines/high places of worship of the god and goddess.
3. Agricultural activities were linked to appeasing Baal, the rain god.

Influence of the local Canaanite Religion

1. the new situation in Canaan made the Israel compromise the worship of Yahweh with that of Canaanite duties leading to Syncretism e.g. one time the Israelites recognized Yahweh as their sole God in the time of need/crisis at other times worshipped him as a Canaanite deity at Canaanite sanctuaries and making their own at Gilgal, Bethel, Dan, Gibeon, and Shiloh
2. The Israelites used the items of Canaanites, sanctuaries e.g. Altar, the stone pillar and the wooden pole belonging to the Canaanite religion in worship.
3. The sacrifices and offerings of the Canaanites were taken over by the Israelites e.g.
 1. Peace offering for renewed communion between the deity and the worshippers.
 2. The burnt offering – given wholly for the deity.
 3. Cereal offering of the fruits.
1. Israel adopted great festivals which belonged to the structure of agriculture life in Canaan e.g.
2. Transition from pastoral life to agricultural life, they were attracted by the agricultural successes of the Canaanites and thought this was due to their religion and thus began copying their worship activities.
3. The Israelites were attracted to the visible gods of the Canaanites as opposed to the invisible Yahweh.
4. The Israelites failure to effect God's commands to destroy all the cultic objects and temple used in the worship of Canaanite gods.
5. The Israelites failed to understand the nature of their God: They broke God's commandments which prevented them from worshipping their gods e.g. made and worshipped the golden bull calf.
6. The change of environment from nomadic to settled and agricultural environment. The nature gods proved more relevant than Yahweh (The God of the desert.)

B. The religious schism between Judah and Israel

Schism: refers to a division within or separation from an established church/Religion.

- The other factor that led to the spread of idolatry in Israel dates back to around 922 B.C. when Jeroboam became the King of Israel. He made sure that the people of his kingdom did not have any links with the people of Judah.

Ways in which King Jeroboam contributed to religious schism between Judah and Israel. **1Kings 12:25 – 33**

1. He made two golden calves and placed one at Bethel and another at Dan to represent Yahweh Vs 29.
2. He set up two rival places/ centers of worship and ignored Jerusalem. V.s31.
3. He made the Israelites to offer sacrifices to the golden calves. V.s.32.
4. He chose priests from ordinary families to serve at worship centers. Priests were supposed to come from the house of Levi. Vs. 31
5. He built other places of worship/shrines on hill tops vs. 32.
6. He burnt incense at altars of the idols/ made sacrifices to idols himself, thus breaking the first commandment.
7. He instituted religious festivals in the months of his choice.

- From the above we conclude that Jeroboam set a bad example for all the Kings who came after him in Israel.

Factors which lead people away from the worship of God today

1. Materialism, love/craving for earthly possessions/wealth at the expense of spiritual development.
 2. Corruption which makes people mistrust God/come to the conclusion that God does not care.
 3. Permissiveness in society which makes people lose value especially religious values/social influence from peer groups.
 4. Mass media /pornography where people spend time listening and watching T.V, videos and films. They may influence people's activities which are contrary to the true worship of God.
 5. Urbanization leads people to lose their identity/change values which may lead to degeneration of morals.
 6. Dehumanization where the value of a person is not considered but the service they can provide.
 7. Threats to human life/human dignity; caused by wars nuclear power/abortion which make people lose faith in God.
 8. Confusion arising from religious pluralism. Some people wonder which is the true religion as some religions advocate worship of idols/Satan.
 9. Oppression. Social/political/cultural/economics/religion suffering might make some people loose faith in God.
 10. Sexual immorality/adultery, fornication, prostitution, homosexuality take away some people from the community of worshippers.
 11. Scientific discoveries. People come to place their faith in science and technology. They believe it can solve all their problems.
-
1. Addiction to drugs.
 2. Social prejudices/discrimination racism/tribalism destroys the unity of humanity.
 3. Poverty dehumanizes the unit of humanity.

C. King Ahab's marriage with a Phoenician princess (I Kings 16:29 – 34)

The third factor that led to idolatry in Israel was Ahab's marriage to Queen Jezebel who promoted idolatry in the following ways:

1. She imported her Baal religion to Israel.
2. She asked her husband, Ahab to build high places for the idols.
3. She influenced the king to make Baalism the state religion.
4. She persecuted the prophets of Yahweh.
5. She influenced King Ahab to worship Baal.

THE EFFECTS OF IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL

THE EFFECTS OF IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL

1. It led to the persecution of Yahweh's prophets. The remaining loyal followers of Yahweh were driven into hiding.
2. It led to the division in Kingdom as a punishment by God/Unity was undermined.
3. Religious syncretism developed where they worshipped both Yahweh and Baal e.g. Israelites turned to fertility gods to ensure good harvests and looked to Yahweh in times of military crisis..
4. Israelites broke their covenant relationship with God.
5. Israelites forgot the covenant of brotherhood and practice.
6. God raised up prophets like Prophet Elijah to help bring back the Israelites to the covenant way of life.
7. Famine and drought befell Israel leading to the people's suffering e.g. 3 years drought/suffering.
8. Social evils such as bribery, sexual immorality and stealing became rampant.
9. False prophets emerged in Israel and received state protection and gave false messages.
10. The Israelites were defeated in battles leading to their exile in foreign countries.
11. They introduced new religious festivals that were not in the Mosaic Law.
12. The Canaanite agricultural calendar was adopted by Israel for the timing of the pilgrimage festival. (Ex 34:22 – 23).
13. Names of Canaanite gods were used for Yahweh e.g. El the name of the father of all gods was applied to Yahweh. The name Baal was also given to Yahweh.
14. Parents began naming their children after Baal e.g. one of the judges, Gideon was also named Jerubaal, which means "Let Baal contend".
15. The Canaanite sacrificial system was incorporated into Israelite worship e.g. the different types of Israelite sacrifices such as peace offerings, burnt offering (Holocaust) and cereal offering (Oblation) were formerly Canaanite in origin Lev 1 and 2 but were later taken over by Israelites.
16. Under the influence of Jezebel, King Ahab declared Baalism a compulsory state religion. Baal was worshipped as the Lord of heavens who sustains and gives life.
17. Queen Jezebel ordered the destruction of the altars of Yahweh/Yahweh's altars were destroyed/ neglected.
18. Emergence of weak rulers through bloody coups.
19. Exile to Assyria and Babylon.
20. The 450 prophets of Baal were made officials of the royal court in order to promote and protect the Baal religion.
21. The religion of Yahweh was now in danger of being destroyed. It is in this context that Yahweh raised up Prophet Elijah, a Tishbite, to return Israel to the covenant way of life.

ELIJAH'S FIGHT AGAINST FALSE RELIGION AND CORRUPTION

Introduction

60 years after Jeroboam I was made ruler of the kingdom of Israel, a prophet named Elijah appeared in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He prophesied during the time of King Ahab, son

of Omri (869 – 850 BC).

Prophet Elijah's mission

1. He was God's spokesman/messenger of God.
2. He spoke with the authority of Yahweh with no fear of the consequences to himself
3. He stood for the covenant way of life at a time when it was rejected by the Israelites.
4. Elijah pronounced God's judgment on Israel together with her king for their sin.

A) FIGHT AGAINST FALSE RELIGION *1 KINGS 18:17-46*

God sent Prophet Elijah to fight against widespread idolatry in Israel. He did this through several ways including calling for a contest between him and the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel. The contest went as follows;

- Prophet Elijah asked Ahab to assemble all the people at Mt. Carmel.
- The king summoned all the people including the prophets of Baal to Mt. Carmel.
- Elijah told the people to choose between worshipping God and Baal.
- He suggested to the people that two bulls be brought and each party to offer a sacrifice to their God.
- He challenged them and said whichever party will make their God burn the sacrifice will be the true God.
- The prophets of Baal were given a bull which they prepared and called upon the name of their god.
- Elijah mocked them asking them to shout louder to their god.
- They prayed, cut themselves with knives until they bled but Baal did not answer them.
- Elijah asked the people to come to near him as he repaired the altar of God.
- He placed the sacrifice on the altar and asked the people to pour water on it.
- Fire consumed the sacrifice/ the wood/ the stones/ the water/ dust around it.
- The people threw themselves on the ground and worshipped the Lord as the true God.
- Elijah killed the prophets of Baal.

Lessons learnt about the nature of God from the contest at Mt. Carmel

- Yahweh is the only true God. Baal is not a god at all.
- Yahweh is a living God who controls force of nature/ He is the Lord of nature/ He has power over nature.
- Yahweh is a powerful God.
- Yahweh is a merciful God who wins back wayward hearts. I Kings 18:37.
- Yahweh is a jealous God who will have no other gods beside him. vs. 21
- Yahweh is a God of justice who punishes idolaters and other sinners/He punishes evil.
- Yahweh answers prayer/He is a faithful God.
- God should be worshipped.
- He works through human beings e.g. appointment of Jehu.
- God wants human beings to obey him.
- He is omnipresent.

Conditions that made it difficult for prophet Elijah to stop idolatry in Israel

1. The existence of false prophets who gave false promises to the Israelites.
2. King Ahab had allowed his Phoenician wife to bring the worship of false gods and goddesses.
3. Jezebel ordered the persecution of the true prophets of God.
4. King Ahab had allowed the building of temples/ high places for the worship of Baal.
5. The Canaanite religion had a strong influence on the Israelites.
6. The king participated in idol worship.
7. The idol gods could be seen/ touched so they appeared real.

Elijah's fight against corruption

(1 Kings 21:1 – 29)

Prophet Elijah fought moral corruption by condemning King Ahab's behaviour involving Naboth's vineyard.

- Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, which was adjacent to the palace.
- He offered to buy it but Naboth refused because it was a family inheritance.
- The king was depressed but Jezebel planned a corrupt scheme to acquire it.
- She forged letters using the King's Seal and accused Naboth falsely for:

(i) Showing disrespect to God/ Blasphemy.

(ii) Cursing the king/ treason.

- This led to the stoning to death of Naboth.
- Ahab went and possessed the land.

In so doing Ahab and Jezebel had broken the following commandments: 1 Kings 21:1-16

- They broke the commandment of not to kill when they planned for the stoning of Naboth.
- When they worshipped idols, they broke the commandment of not worshipping other gods.
- They broke the commandment of not coveting a neighbor's property when they wanted Naboth's vineyard.
- The commandment of not stealing was broken when they planned to take away Naboth's vineyard.
- They used the name of God in vain when they said Naboth had blasphemed against God.
- The commandment of not to cheat/ bear false witness was broken when they planned/ instituting false witnesses against Naboth.

Forms of punishment prophesied by Prophet Elijah to king Ahab and Jezebel

1 Kings 21:19-24.

- Death of King Ahab would be in the same place/ valley of Jezreel like Naboth's. Vs. 19.
- Evil would be upon Ahab. Vs.21.
- God was to take away the posterity of Ahab/ his rule would come to an end.
- Dogs would lick the blood of Ahab.
- All the male children free/ slaves would be cut off.

- The lineage of Ahab would be wiped out.
- The dogs would eat anybody who belongs to the family of Ahab who died in the city. Vs. 24.
- The birds of the air would eat all members of Ahab's family who die in the field.
- Dogs would eat the body of Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel. Vs 23.

Forms of corruption in the society

The following are the forms of corruption found in the society today:

- Tribalism.
- Bribery.
- Cheating in business.
- Stealing.
- Robbery with violence.
- Dishonesty/telling lies.
- Misuse of public property/funds.
- Grabbing of personal or public land.

Any form of corruption is wrong as it is an unfair dealing and causes suffering to individuals who fall victim.

- It can also retard development in society.
- A Christian has a duty to play in building a fair and just society by applying the life skills of critical thinking, creative thinking and making appropriate moral decisions.

Ways of fighting against corruption in the country today

1. Condemning all the unjust practices in the society.
2. By practicing moral values such as honesty and integrity.
3. By making moral choices and informed decisions through the use of life skills like critical thinking, creative thinking and decision making.
4. By lobbying for the punishment of all those who abuse justice.
5. By obeying the laws of the state.
6. By exposing corrupt practices in the society.
7. By advocating for the enactment of laws that will fight corruption.
8. Praying for the corrupt to change their behaviour.
9. Setting a good example by acting as good role models for others to copy.
10. Educating people on the evils of corruption.
11. Preaching to corrupt people to change their ways.
12. Providing civic education on corruption.
13. Reporting those who are engaged in corrupt practices to the relevant authorities.

REASONS WHY ELIJAH FACED DANGER AND HOSTILITY AS A PROPHET OF GOD I KINGS 18:19-21, 19:1-21, 21:1-26

Prophet Elijah's mission was to fight false religion and moral decay in Israel. This put him in great danger and hostility with Ahab and his family in the following ways:

1. He foretold a 3½ year drought that caused suffering to the people. I Kings 17:1, 18:3-6, 17:7-16.
2. He was one of the prophets of Yahweh who were being persecuted by Jezebel.
3. There were many false prophets of Baal who enjoyed state protection. They outnumbered Yahweh's prophets. Baal's prophets supported the Kings decision to fight Elijah.
4. He rebuked King Ahab's and Queen Jezebel's evil ways.
5. Queen Jezebel sought to kill him for killing Baal's prophets at Kishon valley.
6. He hid in the wilderness to avoid persecution, where he faced the danger of starvation.
7. He fought for the true worship of Yahweh, which angered Jezebel.
8. Prophesied doom for Ahab and Jezebel's family.

Problems Elijah faced in Israel

1. His life was threatened.
2. He was fearful.
3. He was hungry and thirsty in the wilderness.
4. He had no support from his fellow Jews.
5. His fellow prophets were killed.
6. His message was rejected.

THE RELEVANCE OF ELIJAH'S PROPHETIC MISSION TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

- Elijah was courageous and faced the king whenever he turned away from the covenant way of life. Likewise, church leaders today should remain courageous and firm in condemning any form of social injustice e.g. Desmond Tutu of South Africa struggled to end apartheid which was finally achieved in 1994.
- Elijah was loyal to God and struggled to return Israel to the monotheistic worship of Yahweh. Modern Christian should remain faithful to God through word and deed even if this would cost them their lives.
- Just as God helped Elijah, when he was in difficulties by providing him with food and drink, modern Christians should not despair in their missionary work but lean on God for encouragement and providence/pray to him for provision whenever they lack.
- Elijah was a man of prayer and God always answered his prayers. Christians should pray to God in faith and God would surely answer them. They should not give up.
- Christians should not compromise their faith in God for fear of threats, rejection, opposition or persecution/should be loyal to God.
- Elijah lived a simple life and stood for the rights of common people in the same way Christians should advocate for the rights of the poor and speak against any form of oppression.
- Christians should accept their call and accept any task God gives them.
- Christians should not give false evidence against their neighbours like Jezebel in the case of Naboth.
- Both political and church leaders should realize that all authority comes from God and they are accountable to him for their deeds.
- Christians should be persistent like Elijah was in their struggle against injustice.

- God communicated with Elijah in a “still small voice” indicating his intimacy with the prophet. God is able to establish an intimate relationship with his faithful.
- Christians should show strong faith in God and avoid all forms of idolatry such as love for money, devil worship and drug abuse.
- They should avoid sinful life so as to escape God’s punishment.
- Christians should preach and win converts to God.
- Christians should be ready to suffer and face opposition in their work.
- Christians should worship one true God and put their trust in him. He is the one who has all the powers.
- Christians should condemn all forms of social injustices such as corruption, murder of innocent people and exploitation of the weak.

Qualities of Prophet Elijah that a Christian leader should possess

1. Truthfulness.
2. Courage.
3. Faithfulness/ trust.
4. Kindness.
5. Loving/ caring.
6. Honesty.
7. Responsible.
8. Loyalty/ obedience.
9. Respectful.
10. Prayerfulness

SELECTED ASPECTS IN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

SELECTED ASPECTS IN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE;

African concept of God, Spirits and Ancestors

a) **God**

- All African communities believe in a supreme being who is the origin and sustainer of all things.
- He is the creator of the universe and all that it contains.
- All Africans agree that nobody has ever seen God.

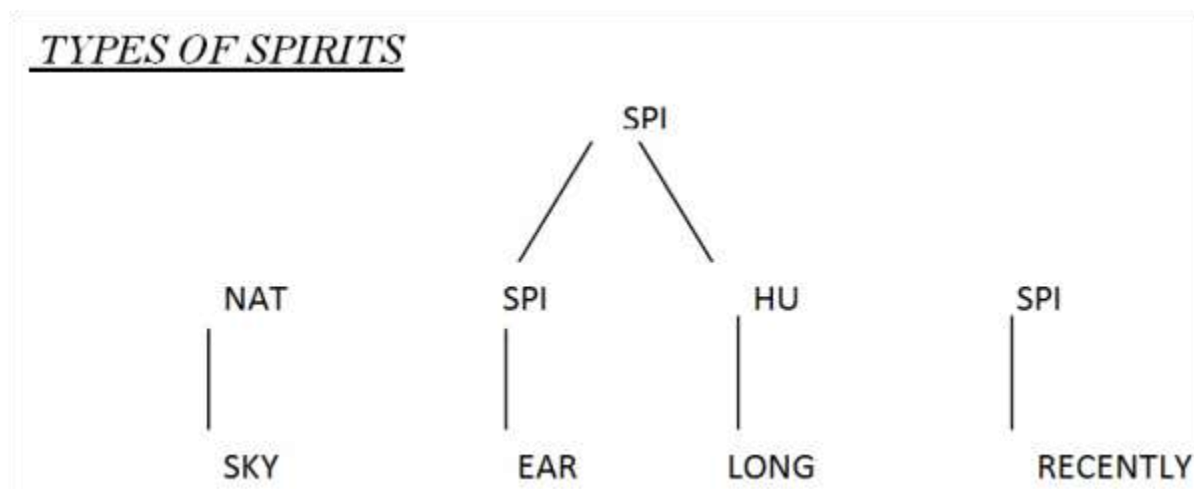
Attributes of God as understood by African people

1. God is the creator of the universe and everything in it.
2. God is a provider. He provides and sustains his creation.
3. God is merciful. He removes suffering from communities.

4. God is all powerful / omnipotent. He has power over all creation and controls nature.
 5. God is holy/ pure seen from the nature of sacrifices and the purity of the people involved in sacrificing.
 6. God is all-knowing /omniscient. He knows and sees everything e.g. Zulu of South Africa refer to him as the “wise one”.
 7. God is everywhere/ omnipresent in the universe e.g. when a person is on a journey, members of the family ask God to be with the person.
 8. God is immanent because he is not limited to space and time. He is both very far and very near.
 9. God is transcendent. He is beyond human description/beyond human comprehension and cannot be limited.
 10. God is self-existent. He exists on his own and existed before creation. He continues to exist.
 11. God is a spirit. He has no physical form and is invisible.
-
1. God is everlasting/eternal. He is immortal and lives for ever.
 2. God is good. He is not evil and did not create evil.

(b) African concept of spirits

- They are invisible beings second in Seniority in the hierarchy of beings.
- Some spirits are believed to have been created by God as spirits/ divinities.
- Others are spirits of people who died long ago and are no longer remembered by the living.
- Spirits are subordinate to God and depend on him for survival.
- God uses them to perform certain things such as causing floods and lightening.
- They can be reborn among the living.



1. Sky and Nature Spirits

They are of two types

(i) *Spirits of the sky*

They are associated with the sun, moon, stars, thunder and lightning.

(ii) *Spirits of nature*

Are associated with natural phenomena such as hills, mountains, rocks, forests, lakes, rivers, animals and insects.

They are believed to control the force of nature

Some may be manipulated by human being for good or evil purposes.

1. *The human spirits*

They are of two categories

(i) *Ghost spirits*

Belonging to those who died long ago and whose names cannot be remembered.

(ii) *Ancestral spirits/ living dead*

These are dead people whose identities are still alive in the memories of people

3. *The divinities*

Communities in Africa e.g. the Ashanti of Ghana believe in a category of spirits between God and the spirits.

They are believed to have been created by God.

4. *The ancestors*

- They are founders of African clans and tribes.
- They are people who died and whose names and identities are still remembered by their relative
- As spirits, they are concerned with the people's welfare and are close to them.
- They speak the language of human beings when they appear to them in dreams or visions.
- They participate in the activities of the living relatives.

THE AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HIERARCHY OF BEINGS

A. *Hierarchy of beings*

The Africans understand the universe to consist of two parts.

(i) The visible/ earth.

(ii) The invisible/ sky which is regarded as the home of God.

The universe has a specific order of created beings, with God the creator occupying the highest rank.

This ordering is what is referred to as the hierarchy of beings.

It can be divided into seven categories as follows;

1. GOD (Supreme being responsible for the existence and sustenance of human beings and all other beings).
2. DIVINITIES (Are spirits created by God).
3. SPIRITS (Belonging to people who died a long time ago).
4. LIVING DEAD/ ANCESTORS (Act as intermediaries between human beings who are alive and the spirit world).
5. HUMAN BEINGS (Include those who are physically alive and those yet to be born).
6. PLANTS & ANIMALS (They are used by human beings in their natural and religious life as food and sacrifice).
7. NON-LIVING THINGS (Natural and artificial beings e.g. rain, rivers, mountains, rocks and all other lifeless bodies).

Inter-relationship of all things, living and non-living

- According to the African view of the universe, all created things depend on each other and God.
- The universe is viewed in totality of existence.
- It is also viewed in a religious context.

(i) Human Beings and God

Many African myths of creation point to the fact that human beings are dependent on God e.g.

- They depend on God for the most essential requirements of life e.g. rain, air and sunshine.
- Are less powerful than God.
- Must obey God's laws and commandments.
- Failure to heed these regulations may lead to punishment. Those who obey prosper.
- Must offer sacrifices to God to maintain a good relationship with him.
- Natural calamities e.g. drought, famine, floods and earthquakes are believed to be controlled by God and are beyond people's power.

(ii) Human Beings and animals

Africans believe God gave human beings animals for their use and should handle them responsibly.

The following are the uses of animals to human beings;

- Domestic animals like cattle, sheep and goats are used for food.
- Payment of dowry and settlement of disputes.
- Possession of animals is seen as a sign of prestige and wealth.
- Skins are used as clothes.
- Used to make music instruments e.g. drums.
- Used as sacrifices to God.
- Used as payment of a fine from an offender to God/ancestors or the offended.
- Used to predict weather patterns. Some of them are used to communicate the social standards expected of people e.g.

Hyena - Used to discourage cowardice and greed.

Hare - Used to discourage trickery.

Tortoise - Illustrates the importance of being slow but wise.

Snake - Not killed by some communities, it is believed to be immortal and that the ancestors may visit the living from it.

- Some animals and birds are treated as totems by communities. Plants and animals are used as a symbol of a family.

(iii) Human beings and plants

Human beings depend on plants in various ways e.g.

- Food.
- Fuel.
- Construction of buildings.
- Medicinal purposes.
- Totems.
- Pasture.
- Some trees are used as sacred places of worship.
- Pasture for their animals.
- Provision of shelter.

(iv) Human beings and non-living things

- Non-living things e.g. rain, rocks, mountains, hills, rivers, moon and sun are given religious significance e.g. rain is a great blessing from God while thunder is seen as God's movement or voice.
- Rocks and mountains are viewed as God's manifestation to humankind and also as dwelling places for the living dead and spirits. Such places are used for the worship of God and are treated as sacred.
- Heavenly bodies help human beings to determine times and seasons.
- Human beings depend on the sun for sunlight during the day and on the moon and stars for light at night.

THE ROLES OF GOD, SPIRITS AND ANCESTORS

a. Roles of God

Refers to the functions/ roles of God which He plays in the world and peoples' lives. They include;

- God cares for his creation and can be invoked in times of need.
- He is the giver and sustainer of life, provides necessities of life e.g. food, air, water and fire.
- He protects human beings from evil, e.g. protects the weak and hears the cry of those unjustly treated.
- He comforts the sorrowful e.g. heals the sick.
- He is the guardian of moral and ethical order. He punishes those who do evil.
- He controls the spirits that are more powerful than humans.
- He gives order to the universe and controls it. His activity didn't end with creation.
- Gives power to the religious specialists e.g. medicine persons, kings, priests and prophets. He communicates with them through dreams, trances and visions.
- He answers prayers.

B. The role of Spirits

Although spirits are invisible, they are believed to play an important role in the lives of the living. Generally people fear spirits; they are viewed as total strangers to the living. When they appear to humans, people feel disturbed. The roles of spirits include;

- Some may be manipulated by human beings and cause harm to others e.g. with sickness and death.
- Spirits can possess religious specialists e.g. medium and diviners and give them important information on how to handle people's problems.
- Spirits relay God's response to human beings. In return human beings act according to the wishes of God through the spirits.
- Bad spirits sometimes possess people.
- Spirits guard sacred places.
- They intercede for people before God.

C. Roles of ancestors

- They are believed to appear to the living in various forms e.g. visions/dreams to enquire about the family affairs and to find out what is going on as they're still part of the family.
- May cause illnesses or mental disturbances.
- Give instructions to the family as to what should be done in certain areas affecting it.
- Rebuke and warn the living of the impending punishment to those who have failed to honour their obligation to them.
- Request for something like animals to be slaughtered for them.
- Interact with the living.
- Act as mediators between the living and God.
- Inflict punishments on offenders in society.
- Bless the living members of the family.
- Avert consequences of curses.
- Protect human beings against evil.
- Provide names to new born.
- Preside over all religious ceremonies in the community.
- Custodians of African traditional, moral culture and religious values.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LIVING TOWARDS GOD, SPIRITS AND ANCESTORS

- Take care of God's creation.
- Obey God's instructions.
- Set aside specific places for worship of God.
- Respect sacred places of worship.
- Appreciate God's blessing.
- Make their request known to God.
- Worship God.
- Give their children names of God.
- Had a duty to share God's given resources with fellow human beings.

SPIRITS

- Respect places like shrines which are associated with spiritual manifestation.

- Appease the spirits by pouring libation to them.
- Respect and honour the spirits.
- Protect sacred places.
- Consult spirits on spiritual matters.
- Obey the will of the spirits.

ANCESTORS

- Show respect to them.
- Address them by their proper names and titles.
- Pour libation to them.
- Offer sacrifices to them and give them offerings to appease them.
- Obey their commands and wishes.
- Name their children after their ancestors.
- Build shrines for them.
- Pray to God through them.
- Invite them to social functions.
- Teach their children about their ancestors.
- Consult them through diviners and medicine people.
- Praise them through song.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN WAYS OF WORSHIPING GOD

- Worship is the means through which human beings communicate with God.
- Worship may be public or private, formal or informal, communal or individual and direct or indirect.

Places where worship is conducted in African traditional society

- Under sacred trees e.g. Mugumo tree.
- On hilltops and rocks.
- In caves.
- At riverbanks and on the shores.
- In the sacred forests.
- In graveyards
- At crossroads.
- In the homes of some religious specialists.

God is worshipped through the following ways;

- Through sacrifices
- Through offerings
- Through singing and dancing
- Through prayers.

1. Sacrifices

1. An animal is slaughtered in honour of God.
2. It involves the shedding of blood of human beings, animals or birds.
3. Sacrifices are carefully selected, since they are offered to the creator of the universe.
4. Animals offered have to be of one color e.g.

- Black.
- White.
- Brown.

1. They are given back to God as a sign of appreciation of what God has provided for them.

Why sacrifices are made to God, spirits and ancestors

- To appreciate God as the source of life.
- To thank God for the blessings to the people.
- To appease God for the wrongs done.
- To petition God for help during difficult times.
- To invite God to participate in family and community functions.
- To maintain a good relationship
- To avert evil e.g. drought, famine, floods or epidemics.

Occasions when sacrifices were offered

1. During rites of passage i.e.

1. Birth and naming.
2. Initiation.
3. Marriage.
4. Death.

1. During disasters.
2. After a good harvest.
3. During installation of leaders.
4. During cleansing ceremonies.
5. During reconciliation ceremonies.
6. Before going to war.

Note

- Sacrifices are offered by heads of families, priests, medicine persons.
- Prayers accompany sacrifices.
- They are acts of humility before their creator.

2. Offerings

- It is another way of worshipping God.

- It involves the taking of foodstuffs e.g. milk, water or honey and giving them to God.
- Offerings are carefully selected.

3. Singing and dancing in worship

- Songs and dances are performed during communal worship.
- They are used in praising and thanking God.
- Songs and dances make the worshipers emotionally connected with God.
- Songs and dances are accompanied by clapping of hands, drumming and playing musical instruments.
- They also promote solidarity among the worshippers.

4. Prayers.

- They are verbal communications with God.
- Prayers are mostly short and to the point.
- Prayers are offered during important religious occasions. They pray in different ways e.g.
 - Kneeling.
 - Standing.
 - Prostrating.
 - Bowing.
 - Facing certain directions.
 - Raising hands.

5. Invocations - Short formal prayers e.g. “Help me, O God!” or “O Great God”.

6. Blessings - Blessings by an elder constitute acts of prayer. It is believed that the person blessing is doing so on behalf of God.

7. Salutations - e.g. “Dear God”.

VENERATING AND COMMUNICATING WITH SPIRITS AND ANCESTORS

Veneration refers to the way in which respect and honour is accorded to the ancestors and spirits.

Ways in which traditional African communities demonstrated their respect to ancestors and spirits

- Pouring libations.
- Making sacrifices and giving offerings.
- Naming children after them.
- Praying to God through them.
- Addressing them by their proper names and titles.
- Inviting them to social functions e.g. birth, initiation, and marriage.
- Teaching children about them.
- Building shrines.

Communicating

- Human beings communicate with spirits for a good or bad cause.
- People communicate with the spirits through the religious specialists e.g. the diviners and mediums.
- The religious specialists link human beings to the living world.
- Mediums and diviners may become spirit possessed through;
 - Sitting quietly in a place.
 - Singing.
 - Dancing.
 - Clapping of hands.
 - Falling into a trance. The possessed person loses one's senses and becomes the spirit's instrument.
- The spirit speaks through the medium and reveals information on issues like finding lost property, crimes in the society
- The spirit may make certain demands on the living.
- They may advise and give a warning on impending danger.
- They may make promises of blessing to a given family or clan.

NB: It is the duty of the living to abide by what the spirits want.

- Spirits that possess mediums are not harmful.
- Evil spirits cause harm to those they possess.
- People communicate with spirits through the following ways;
 - Through divination.
 - Singing and dancing to them.
 - Recitation/ chanting and invoking their names.
 - By making sacrifices to them.
 - By saying prayers.
 - By giving offerings.
 - By giving sacrifices.
 - Through burning incense.

AFRICAN MORAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

(i) The meaning of life and its wholeness in the traditional African society

- In TAS, God is the source of life.
- Life is a rhythm which recycles itself.
- There are several dimensions of life i.e.
 - Physical dimensions.
 - Social dimension.
 - Spiritual dimension.
 - Environmental dimension.

- Physical dimension of life refers to the material state of human beings.
- Social dimensions comprises of relation of living with others in a community.
- Spiritual dimensions link human beings with spiritual power e.g. God, spirits and Ancestors.
- Environmental dimension of life is the relation between the physical environment and humans.
- Life is enhanced through observance of rituals, taboos and regulations.
- Life is promoted through transitional stages e.g. birth, initiation, marriage and death.
- It is perpetuated through marriage for the continuation of the community.
- Death transforms an individual from physical life to the spiritual one.

(ii). The African concept of community and kinship system

(a) *Meaning of a community*

- A community is a group of people occupying one geographical location and guided by common values.
- An African community consists of the living, living-dead and the yet to be born.
- Each community is governed by specific rules, regulations and traditions.
- Survival of the community depends on God and other spiritual powers.
- A community believes that it is God who created the first human being.
- God gave them a place to settle in and responsibilities to fulfill.
- Leadership is provided by heads of families, elders and religious specialists.
- Social structure of the community comprises family units which form a clan, and several clans make a community.
- Members are expected to show concern for one another and foster the common good.
- The community promotes a sense of belonging and identity for its members thus making individuals feel secure.

(b) *African concept of Kinship*

- Kinship refers to relationship between people through blood, marriage or adoption.
- Kinship ties are strong bonds that exist among community members.
- Those related by blood have common ancestors. They feel a strong bond towards each other because they are tied by kinship relationships to one another.

Importance of kinship ties to TAS

1. They determine how members relate to one another.
2. They bond together the entire life of a community i.e. the living, the living dead, the unborn.
3. They assist the people to live together in peace and harmony.
4. They provide a sense of security to all members at all times.
5. They regulate marital customs, rules and regulations.
6. They give an individual a deep sense of belonging identity.
7. They enable people to face hardship together.
8. They safeguard the communities' traditions and customs.

9. They enhance unity among community members.
10. They determine punishment for the offenders.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HARMONY AND MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HARMONY AND MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY

They include;

(i) Political ties.

- Power and authority is exercised and shared among clan leaders and elders.
- This enhances a peaceful co-existence among community members.

(ii) Communal ownership of property.

- Land and other resources are owned by community.

(iii) Division of labour.

- Done according to age, gender and social status.
- Ensures that all members participate in the activities of the community.

(iv) Communal worship.

- All members are to pray and worship together and during times of crisis e.g. when there is a disaster, epidemic or serious sickness, people gather to offer sacrifices to God and ancestors/ spirits in order to appease them.
- Common beliefs about God and spirits are passed on from one generation to another and are held dearly.
- Members of the community try to live in harmony and peace with the departed and unborn.
- Every activity in life has a religious dimension.

(v) Marriage.

- Strengthens and fosters closer ties among different families.
- Exchange of gifts is a sign of friendship, acceptance and mutual responsibility.

(vi) Leisure activities.

- People come together to sing, dance and be entertained.
- In TAC leisure is integrated with other activities although after work, people rest and share jokes.
- In the evening, men are entertained by the youth.
- Elders correct the youth accordingly and identify talents among performers.
- Beer-drinking parties are forms of leisure activities.
- During leisure activities people discuss family and community affairs.

(vii) Children.

- The birth of children cements relationships, because in some communities, marriage is not complete without children.

(viii) Rites of passage.

- Ceremonies marking birth, naming and initiation and bring families and community members together and create a source of unity and collective responsibility.

(ix) Observation of taboos.

- Guides individuals in moral behaviour and maintains discipline and harmony.

(x) Rules and regulations.

- Rules dictate and govern the roles and duties of all members in the community depending on age, gender and social status.
- Breaking of rules results to punishment.
- Elders maintain law and order by settling disputes and reminding members of what is expected of them.

(xi) Belief of a common ancestry.

- This promotes a sense of brotherhood among members of the community.

(xii) Sharing.

- Genuine concern for each individual within the nuclear and extended family is common.
- Cooking and eating is done at household level and all share in feasting and rejoicing in some communities.
- Marriage gifts such as animals and foodstuffs are shared among relatives of the bride's family.
- Land in T.A.C is communally owned and is used collectively by members of a given clan or family.
- People work together on such land and share the proceeds.
- This creates a strong bond of unity among the people.

(xiii) Social norms.

- People grow in T.A.C. knowing what is right and wrong.
- Rules and regulations are established to govern and regulate people's behavior.
- Everyone understands the virtues they should uphold i.e. Friendship, love, honesty, courage, bravery, compassion among others.
- People are discouraged from developing vices i.e. cheating, theft, selfishness, greed and dishonesty.
- - Social norms keep the community from disintegrating and they provide peace to the individual and society.

rites of passage

- Are important events in a person's life beginning from conception until after death.
 - They are marked by celebrations.
 - Most of the ceremonies are religious and have the following common characteristics;
1. All of them involved *separation/ seclusion*. In death one is forever separated from the community.
 2. *Transitions*. An individual undergoes some physical, social and emotional changes.
 3. *Incorporation*. One is brought back to the community after seclusion and is given full rights in his/her new status. An individual becomes an active participant in the community. In death he/she is incorporated in the spirit world.

Rites of passage are:

- Birth and naming
- Initiation
- Marriage
- Death

BIRTH

Introduction

- It is the 1st stage of life; the whole community is involved including the ancestors.
- Having children is considered so important that a barren woman is despised and made an outcast.
- From the time of pregnancy, there is rejoicing in the community. The expectant mother is accorded a lot of respect and is given special treatment including;
 1. Eating special food and avoiding some i.e. eggs and fatty meat which may make the baby too big hence creating complications during delivery.
 2. Refraining from heavy tasks e.g. splitting firewood, carrying heavy loads.
 3. Refraining from sexual intercourse because pregnancy is believed to make the woman ritually unclean.
 4. Avoiding handling iron tools in the house for fear that such tools may cause injury.

5. Not speaking to her husband directly but can only do so through an intermediary.
6. Returning to her home to give birth there and coming back after weaning her baby.
7. The mother carries protective charms to protect her from people with evil eyes and bad omen such as sorcerers.
8. The midwives assist the woman in delivery and the sex of the baby is announced i.e. 4 ululations for a boy and 3 for a girl.

Rituals observed after child birth

Introduction

- The child belonged to the community.
- The birth of the baby is witnessed by the elderly women who act as midwives.
- Men are not allowed to go near the delivery place.
- When the baby arrives, its sex is announced by shouts/ululations.

The rituals observed during childbirth are:

i. The placenta and the umbilical cord are disposed off ceremoniously. i.e.

1. Thrown into a running stream/river
2. Dried up and kept for rituals performed later
3. Carefully buried near the homestead or in uncultivated field/ shamba with bananas/cereals.
4. Hung in the house to symbolize the continuity of life.

It should be noted that these ceremonies are observed so that the womb may remain fertile / to ensure continuity of life.

1. A purification/cleansing ritual is done on the mother and the child by a medicine man/diviner to prepare the mother for the birth of the next child including ritualistic washing.
2. Protective rites, performed by the local medicine person. They are meant to protect the child from evils i.e. magic, malicious spirits, sorcery, witchcraft and evil eyes.
3. The baby is committed to God for protection and to bring good fortune. An object is tied round the neck, waist, or wrist as a physical sign of the ceremony.
4. Thanksgiving ceremony performed to show gratitude to God for the safe arrival of the baby.
5. Prayers offered for continued blessings for both the mother and child
6. The baby's hair is shaved after sometime as a sign of purification and newness. When new hair grows it will signify a new phase of life for the baby.
7. Mother's hair was also shaved to show that she has cast off that pregnancy. New hair symbolizes new life.
8. In some communities the mother and the baby are secluded from the rest of the community, so as to give the mother time to rest.
9. The whole community celebrates this rite of passage by rejoicing, singing, dancing and bringing gifts to the mother and the child.

The importance of rituals performed during a naming ceremony in Traditional Africa Communities

1. Bathing of the child sets in the beginning of a new life.
2. Shaving of the mother and baby's hair symbolizes a new status.
3. Choosing of an appropriate name to give to the baby is for identification/ incorporation into the wider community.
4. Feeding of the baby symbolizes a new life/ growth.
5. Holding of the baby by members of the community shows concern for it/ shared responsibility.
6. Saying prayers/ words of blessings for the mother and baby signifies long life.
7. Slaughtering of an animal signifies thanksgiving.
8. Feasting is a sign of joy/ socialism/ welcoming the baby.
9. Giving presents to the baby and mother is a sign of goodwill.
10. Wearing of charms signifies protection to the baby and the mother.

NAMING

The significance of naming includes:

1. Gives the new born baby an identity.
2. Indicates that the child is an accepted society member.
3. Through naming, they show gratitude to God.
4. Reflects part of the personality of the child.
5. Naming children after the departed relatives appeases the spirits.
6. The name can reflect a remembrance of a certain event that was memorable at the time of birth.
7. Naming customs differ from one community to another. Some names are chosen before birth others are given immediately they are born, others are named after a few days.
8. Sometimes children are given more names as they grow.

How names are given to children in T.A.S

1. Children are named after relatives, e.g.
 - Grandparents
 - Uncles
 - Aunties
1. According to the time of day, season, and place.
2. Named after great leaders and heroes.
3. After important historical events.
4. Animal names.
5. Names that reveal physical features.
6. Religious names i.e. names of God.
7. Reflect the difficult time the mother experienced in labor.
8. Names that reveal internal qualities of a child.

9. Gender of the child.
10. Parent's choice.
11. Twins had special names.
12. 1st born child of the family could have a special.

CHANGING ATTITUDE TO BIRTH AND NAMING

- It is no longer a communal affair.
- The sex of the child is no-longer announced by ululations.
- The role of a midwife is no-longer important.
- The pregnant mother is no-longer secluded.
- Some rituals are no-longer performed e.g. purifying rituals.
- Shaving rituals are no longer practiced.
- Wearing protective charms is no longer a common practice.
- Some naming patterns/models are no longer adhered to.
- The attitude towards the sex of the child is no longer the same/discriminative.

Methods used to solve the problem of childlessness in T.A.C

1. Offering sacrifices to ancestors to appease them.
2. Seeking the services of a diviner to find out the causes and offer solutions.
3. Marrying another wife.
4. Praying for God to reverse the situation.
5. Allowing the woman to get children with a relative of the husband if the problem is with him.
6. The couple may adopt children.
7. Children may be given as a gift to a childless couple by relatives.

Role of birth in naming and inculcating moral values (virtues)

Respect: The mother is respected. The traditions are respected through performing rituals.

Love: Through the acceptance of the baby. The parents respect each other.

Care and mutual responsibility: The mother and the baby are cared for. The parents have a responsibility to taking care of the newborn.

Obedience: To the community's traditions.

Harmony: Is restored between community members i.e. joining the living and the non-living through naming.

Unity: The people come together to celebrate the birth of a new child.

Patriotism: The people name their children after community heroes.

INITIATION

- It mainly marks the transition from childhood – adulthood.
- It prepares someone to face adulthood and gain skills.
- The different forms of initiation are:
 - Circumcision.
 - Removal of teeth.

- Tattooing.
- Piercing the chin and ears.
- Clitoridectomy.

COMMON RITUALS PERFORMED DURING INITIATION

1. Offering sacrifices to ancestors to appease them and bless the initiates.
2. Blood was left to drain on the ground as a connection between the initiates and ancestors.
3. Seclusion is done during initiation for several reasons that include;

1. To receive education on;

- Human sexuality.
- The community's secrets.
- Skills and knowledge.

1. For healing.
2. To give time for bonding together.
3. To be well fed.
4. Give time to allow preparation for celebrations to welcome them back to the society.

1. Singing and dancing is done during initiation for the following purposes:

- Celebrate the occasion.
- Encourage them.
- As an act of worship.
- Express solidarity.
- Praise the heroes.
- Mock the cowards.

1. Gifts and presents were given as a sign of appreciation and congratulation.
2. Washing and shaving was done so as to:

- Shed off the former status.
- Cleanse the initiates.

1. Giving names and wearing new clothes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INITIATION RITES

1. To make them full members of a community.
 2. Introduce individuals to the community secrets and traditions.
 3. For them to acquire new life status i.e. adults.
 4. To give them an opportunity to access high responsibilities in life e.g.
- Become clan warriors.

- Be allowed to marry.
 - Allowed to own property.
 - Assume some leadership posts.
1. Train the initiates to acquire important virtues of courage and endurance.
 2. To be linked with the ancestors through shedding of blood.
 3. For the unity of community members.
 4. Prayers and sacrifices offered are acts of worship.
 5. It is a gate-way to marriage.
 6. Creates a bond of unity and friendship between age mates which is lifelong.

-The three stages they undergo are:

- Separation
- Seclusion
- Incorporation

The reasons for singing and dancing during initiation ceremonies in Traditional African Communities

1. The songs inform the participants of the history of the community/ preserving culture/ importance of initiation.
2. They provide an opportunity for the members to socialise/ welcome ancestors.
3. It diverts the initiates' minds from the impending pain.
4. The songs teach the initiates important moral values.
5. The songs educate the participants of gender roles/ relationships.
6. Through singing and dancing members exercise their bodies.
7. The songs encourage the initiates to face the challenge/ rebuke cowardice.
8. It exposes those with leadership qualities/ skills/ talents/ singers.
9. They are used to mark the various stages of the initiation ceremonies.
10. It is a form of prayer for the initiates/ drive away evil spirits/ invoking spirits.
11. Singing and dancing is a form of entertainment.

ROLE OF INITIATION IN INCULCATING MORAL VALUES

(i) Respect.

- The initiates gain respect and they are also expected to show respect to the community members.

(ii) Loyalty.

- Developed through the initiates keeping the community secrets.
- Through the initiates becoming clan warriors.

(iii) Endurance and courage.

- Developed during pain bearing, tolerance and perseverance.

(iv) Sharing.

- Through sharing ideas, food and resources during seclusion.

(v) Chastity.

- Through the sex education they get.
- Female cut to reduce sexual desire in women.

(vi) Self control.

- Through being taught against unhealthy sexual relations.
- Through pain bearing, endurance, tolerance and perseverance.

(vii) Solidarity/unity.

- The community come together to sing and dance.
- They come together to prepare the celebration.
- They come together to welcome back the initiates to the community.

Ways in which initiation rites have changed today

1. Some initiation rites have been abandoned, e.g. removal of teeth and
2. The rites are less elaborate.
3. Some communities have adopted initiation rites from others.
4. The times for initiation have been shifted due to formal education.
5. Many prefer to go for circumcision in hospitals.
6. The age of initiation has shifted from adolescent to young children.
7. It is carried out at family level and not communal level in most cases.
8. Female genital mutilation (F.G.M) has been outlawed.

MARRIAGE

- In T.A.C, marriage is looked upon as sacred and ordained by God.-It is a requirement and an obligation for every normal person to get married and have children

Importance of marriage:

- Creates new relationship bonds when two families come together and so expand kinship ties.
- Promotes social status of those involved.
- Source of wealth due to dowry payment made by the wife's family.
- Meeting point of the departed, the living and the yet to be born.

- Religious obligation through which human life is preserved, propagated and perpetuated since it is sacred.
- Promotes immortality because parents are remembered by their children when they die. They perpetuate the name of the family.
- Gives identity, a sense of belonging and completeness.
- Allows the individuals to have sex.
- Gives men and women new roles and responsibilities.
- It is in marriage that children are born into the community.
- Communal affair that brings people to work and feast together.
- Provides security to parents especially in their old age when their children take care of them and inherit their wealth.

MORAL VALUES INCULCATED BY MARRIAGE

- Creates respect and confidence since it promotes the social status of those involved.
- Promotes co-operation when two families come together to help sustain it.- Promotes hospitality and sharing when the families visit each other, share food, services and bride wealth.
- Brings together the living, the departed and the unborn encouraging unity.
- When children are named after ancestors and the departed, loyalty and obedience is promoted.
- It is compulsory for all which creates obedience.
- Promotes chastity since sex is only allowed in marriage.
- Encourages self control because adultery is forbidden and couples have to follow all the rules of marriage.
- Marriage comes with new roles and duties thus promoting responsibility.
- Those dishonest in marriage are punished; this helps to instill honesty, integrity and faithfulness.
- The first duty is procreation which calls for love in the upbringing of the children.
- All have roles to play. This calls for handwork so that harmony is maintained.

DEATH

- The last rite of passage.
- In many African communities, it is said to be caused by:

- Witchcraft - Sorcery
- Curses - Evil magic
- Diseases - Evil spirits
- Old age - Breaking of taboos/binding oaths
- Death is feared and resented. The dead continue to be part of the family and they are remembered through naming of children after them.
- The importance of the funeral rite is determined by the status, sex and the age of the person being buried e.g.
- Young children and unmarried people are simple and attended by few people

- For leaders, the rich and heroes in the community it will be elaborate and attended by many people.
- Normal duties are disrupted on the burial day so as to allow many people to attend such funerals.

DEATH RITES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY (A.T.S)

- In some communities, the corpse is washed using water and herbal medicine in order to preserve and send it clean to the spirit world.
- In some communities, the dead are buried with their belonging e.g. food, animals, bows, arrows. They believe that the dead will need those things in the spirit world.
- Pregnant women and children are not allowed to touch or come in close contact with the corpse so that misfortunes do not befall them.
- -The dead are buried in a carefully selected place in the ancestral land so that the spirits continue to be close to the family.
- The body is carefully placed in the grave facing an appropriate direction according to the customs of the people.
- In some communities the bodies are properly dressed before disposal while others e.g. among the Abagusii the dead are buried naked in the belief that they will be reborn in the spirit world.
- -The grave is respected by being protected and made a family shrine particularly in cases where the dead were the head of the family. People avoid walking over the grave.
- - Before and during burial, the members of the family and all relatives enter a period of mourning. Normal activities are temporarily halted in some communities this period is marked by people smearing their bodies with white clay; others stop washing their bodies, stop eating or refrain from sexual intercourse.
- During this period there is singing and dancing of mourning songs as a way of expressing sorrow and sending off the departed to the next world.
- In some communities there is feasting and beer drinking.
- After burial, close relatives shave their hair as a sign that one of their members has been separated from them and for cleansing impurities. The new hair grown shows that life continues after death.
- Sacrifices are offered to introduce the deceased to the spirit world.
- Most communities pour libation to their dead ancestors.
- In some communities a symbolic fire is lit near the grave and the graveyard is guarded by the mourners.
- A widow's inheritance is divided by the husband's kinsman.

ROLE OF DEATH IN CREATING MORAL VALUES

1. Creates co-operation since the whole community is involved.
2. All mourners are given food supplied by the family of the deceased or outsiders also help in providing and promoting hospitality and sharing.
3. Africans are careful to follow all the funeral rites so as to promote obedience.

4. In some communities, the affected are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse encouraging chastity and self control.
5. Members of the deceased mourn and have to come to terms with their grief promoting perseverance.
6. By following all the wishes of the dead person, death encourages respect.
7. The dead body is carefully disposed of to avoid any haunting and the grave is respected promoting respect.
8. When the society takes care of the widows and orphans, they show love.
9. Children, pregnant women and witches are not allowed near the corpse and this shows responsibility.

Reasons why death is feared in Traditional African Communities

1. It disrupts the rhythm of human activity/ life.
2. It is irrevocable/ inescapable.
3. It brings impurity to the family.
4. It deprives the community of members.
5. It involves too many rituals.
6. It comes unannounced.
7. Separates one from the loved ones/ end of life on earth.
8. Nobody knows about the after life.
9. It may cause misunderstanding in the community.
10. Death rites reveal people's characteristics.
11. It may bring poverty to the family.

Practices in T.A.C that show their belief in life after death

- i. Naming children after the dead.
- ii. Invoking the names of the dead during problems./ inviting them to important occasions.
- iii. Burying the dead with some property.
- iv. Offering sacrifices to the dead.
- v. Pouring libation to the living-dead.
- vi. Taking care of their graveyards.
- vii. Fulfilling the wishes / will of the dead/ carrying out the demands of the dead.
- viii. Talking of the dead as having gone for a walk.
- ix. Washing the dead body/ oiling/ giving a decent burial to the dead.
- x. Holding commemoration ceremonies.
- xi. Burying the dead in a particular position/ direction/ in ancestral land.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS SPECIALISTS IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TODAY

The religious specialists include:

1. Medicine people.
2. Mediums.
3. Diviners.
4. Priests.
5. Rainmakers.

6. Prophets.
7. Seers.
8. Blacksmiths.
9. Elders.

How the Religious specialists acquire their skills

The religious specialists acquire their skills through the following ways depending on their specialization:

1. Inheritance.
2. Apprenticeship.
3. Dreams and visions.
4. Being possessed by the spirits.
5. Receiving a call from God/ ancestors.
6. Observation of the work of other specialists.

(a) Medicine people

They are also known as healers, herbalists, traditional doctors.
They perform the following functions;

- Identify illness and their causes.
- Identify appropriate treatment and prevention measures for the illnesses.
- They avert the effects of a curse.
- Offer sacrifices and prayers to God and ancestors.
- Prepare charms for protection against witchcraft and evil spirits.
- Give medicine to increase fertility in both people and animals.
- Act as counselors, guiding people on all issues of life.

Relevance in modern society

1. Medical doctors and scientific researchers today work side by side with traditional healers to alleviate human suffering. Herbs are used to make modern medicine.
2. Some people still believe that there are some illnesses that cannot be treated in hospitals hence turn to herbalists.
3. Some people also believe that medicine people who practice magic have the power to change their fate e.g. they are consulted to influence political fortunes, legal matters and enhance academic performance.

(b) Mediums

- Are people through who spirits and ancestors communicated with the living.
- They give the cause, nature and treatment of a disease or misfortune.
- They reveal messages from the spirit world on behalf of the living.
- They give information concerning lost articles or theft. They only acted when they were spirit possessed.

Relevance today

1. Are not common in Kenya today but they are in the West African countries.
2. There are people who still believe in the messages revealed through mediums. However, their role has been eroded by the influence of Christianity.

(c) *Diviners*

- Are people who reveal secret information from the past or the future.
 - -Get their power through inheritance or divine calling.
 - The use divination objects, common sense and insight.
 - Unveil mysteries by interpreting the information received from the spirits.
 - Help the society to solve issues that are difficult for them to understand.
 - They do the work of counselors, judges, advisers, comforters, assurers during crises.
 - They also play the role of priests, seers and fortune tellers.
 - Diviners are still consulted in Kenya today particularly during moments of crises.
 - -They, however, face many challenges:
-
- Divination is condemned in the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:10 – 11)
 - Science and technology have further diminished their importance since many mysteries can be explained through science and technology.

(d) *Rainmakers*

- Are highly respected.
- Get their power through supernatural endowment and apprenticeship.
- They observe the behavior of plants, insects and animals. They study the sky, stars, moon, clouds, wind movement and their body senses to predict weather.
- They use sacred objects in rainmaking.
- They act as intermediaries between God, the spirits and human beings.
- They beseech God either to bring rain when there is a drought or to stop rain when there are floods.
- Some rainmakers practice as diviners, medicine people, medium and priests.
- They give offerings and sacrifices to God and pray on behalf of the people.

Functions of Rainmakers

1. They perform rituals to cause rain.
2. Have the ability to stop destructive rain.
3. They predict weather conditions by studying the skies and behaviour of plants and animals.
4. They preside over religious functions.
5. They advise the community on both religious and social issues.
6. They give blessings to the members of the community.
7. They mediate between people and God.

Relevance today:

1. Rainmakers are often engaged during public gatherings and other big events to delay the rain until the event is over.
2. Christianity has eroded people's believe in rainmakers.
3. Christians believe that only God is able to resolve a difficult situation.
4. Meteorological departments now give information on the weather and seasonal changes.

(e) Priests

- Perform religious duties. They either inherit the position or receive a divine call.
- Offer sacrifices and offerings and preside over rituals and prayers.
- Take care of religious places i.e. shrines.
- They act as judges, advisers and experts in traditional rituals and rules.
- They pour libation, offer prayers of petition, repentance and thanksgiving to God.
- They intercede for human beings before God, the spirits and the ancestors.
- They are made to be in charge of royal graves.
- They install kings and chiefs.
- They symbolize God's presence in the African society.
- They act as guardians of community knowledge, taboos, religion and oral history.
- Sometimes they perform rainmaking ceremonies and conduct fertility festivals.
- They drive away witches, appease spirits, reverse curses and protect people from danger and harm.

Relevance today:

1. Their roles has been diminished by several influences e.g. Christianity and formal education.
2. African priests no longer play major religious roles in the community. Their duties have been replaced by those of religious leaders i.e. bishops, pastors and priests in Christian churches.
3. Traditional priests are sometimes invited for national public functions to offer prayers.

(f) Prophets/ seers

- Prophets are also referred to as seers.
- A prophet is a person who can foretell the future by revealing visions, dreams or messages from God.
- They foretell invasions i.e. war, drought or epidemics.
- They communicate God's message to the community and predict the will of God.
- Prophets often play the role of political leaders, diviners, ritual leaders, mediums and legal and moral advisers to the community.
- They perform religious duties which were beyond priests and medicine people.
- They receive messages from the ancestors and the spirits through dreams and spirit possession.
- They carry out cleansing rituals.

- They advise people on religious matters.
- They pray to God on behalf of the people.
- They act as judges and preside over disputes.
- They are guardians of the community's customs and traditions.
- They act as the spokesmen of their communities.

Relevance today

1. People still consult prophets before making important decisions.
2. Today people prophesy in churches or Christian fellowships through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
3. Many people take their religious leaders as prophets because they act as the conscience of the society to tell the people what God expects from them.

(g) Elders

- Are senior members of the community.
- In charge of families, villages and clans.
- Are people who are morally upright.
- They settle disputes in the community.
- They are custodians of the community property and decide how it would be shared.
- They are custodians of the traditional values, customs and history of the people.
- They offer guidance and counseling to the members of the community.
- Elders console the community in times of distress i.e. war, famine and other calamities.
- They are consulted by the individuals before making families decisions.
- They stipulate the rules and regulations to be followed for the maintenance of law and order.
- They lead the community during important functions such as the rites of passage and religious ceremonies.

Relevance today:

1. Elders today help in settling disputes which are too culturally defined for the courts e.g. family rows and land disputes.
2. Elders have been called by the Kenyan government to help solve land disputes and ethnic clashes.
3. Elders still carry out rites of passage i.e. initiation.
4. Elders are useful in maintaining the African culture through oral narratives, songs, poetry, proverbs and riddles.
5. Elders provide useful information to researchers in History and Anthropology.
6. They give general guidance to individuals, family and the community as a whole.

Factors that have undermined the status of elders in African Communities today

Education Central EA

1. New government structures where administrative officials have taken over the roles of elders in law maintenance.
2. Most of the judicial duties have been taken over by the law courts.
3. Education has brought new values/ ideas and the authority of the elders is no longer regarded with high esteem or is even questioned.
4. People have migrated to new areas where they do not respect local leaders.
5. The influence from other religions (Christianity and Islam) with their leadership structures; with their adherents respecting their religious leaders more than the community leaders.
6. Urbanization has undermined the role of of the elders as it becomes difficult for elders to operate as the people come from different backgrounds.
7. Stern norms/ values which promote individualism.
8. Schooling where children spend most of their time with teachers depriving them the time to be with elders
9. Permissiveness in the society has eroded the respect of elders.
10. Economic factors where the worth of a person is judged by the wealth/ property one possesses.
11. Political power/ decision making has shifted from the elders to politicians/ political leaders to whom people look upon for leadership.

Factors that have negatively influenced the role of the religious specialist

1. The influence of Christianity; it associates the practices of these leaders with magic and witchcraft. Christian leaders are also given prominence over the traditional leaders.
2. The new government structures and political systems have taken over the roles of traditional leaders.
3. Formal education is used as a tool in choosing leaders as opposed to age, wisdom and experience used in traditional African communities.
4. Through migration, people from different cultures mix up and may not recognize local leaders.
5. Science and technology provides solutions to problems related to weather conditions and medical treatments. This disregards the work of rainmakers and herbalists.
6. Increased poverty makes some people engage in work of specialists without the necessary skills in their effort to earn a living.

AFRICAN MORAL VALUES

Moral values are acts/deeds that are acceptable or good in the society and they are;

Hospitality

- This refers to generosity and kindness to guests and strangers in homes.
- Africans welcomed visitors at any time. They were treated to plenty of food, drink and entertainment.
- Today there is a tendency towards individualism especially in the case of those living in urban centers.

Honesty

- Means being truthful.
- It was taught to children as they grow up to ensure they become dependable people who always tell the truth.

Courtesy

- Refers to politeness and good manners.
- - In A.T.S there were rules that guided the behavior of individuals towards others based on age, gender and status of a person.

Tolerance and perseverance

- Tolerance means to endure somebody/something without complaining.
- Perseverance is a steady effort to achieve a goal without giving up.
- People in A.T.S valued these qualities as they aided one to go through hardships courageously.
- These values were reinforced during initiation.

Loyalty

- Being true and faithful in supporting somebody or a particular cause.
- Children are taught values of the community which they are expected to keep and protect.
- They are taught not to betray the family and friends and always stick together.

Chastity

- This is having good sexual morals.
- Unmarried people were expected to keep their chastity or virginity until marriage while adultery was forbidden for the married.

Respect

- Polite behavior to oneself and others where one recognizes other's rights and status.
- Children are taught to recognize the status of their parents, elders and leaders.

Responsibility

- Caring attitude towards others that leads one to help them.
- Africans helped one another.

Love

- A strong feeling of affection towards somebody or something which was expressed in actions in A.T.S.
- Love is equated with protection, loyalty, co-operation, generosity and hospitality which were important in T.A.S.

Co-operation

- This is working together for a common purpose.
- In T.A.S people worked together in all circumstances which made work and life easier for them.
- In T.A.S, people co-operated to accomplish tasks for the good of all.

Integrity

- It is the quality of having strong moral values.
- People of integrity do not give up on their beliefs and values even in the face of intense pressure.
- People of integrity are respected and will often be given positions of leadership.

Unity solidarity

- This is to join together.
- Africans united in all aspects

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF VARIOUS ISSUES

Community

- An African community consisted of the living, dead and the unborn.
- Each community had common characteristics such as common ancestors, unique language, a particular geographical area, a culture and distinct social, economic and political structure.
- Today, the understanding of community has changed due to such factors as; education, urbanization, migration, natural consciousness and religion.
- Urbanization has brought together people of different background.
- Formal education has promoted new loyalties based on new social status and academic and professional qualifications.
- New political systems and forms of Government have changed the traditional African community.

Old age and the aged

- In A.T.C, old people were well taken care of and highly respected.
- They did light duties e.g. looking after young children while others worked.
- They were members of the council of elders who settled disputes and were consulted for advice.
- The elders were custodians of community values, customs and religious beliefs.
- Today due to urbanization, many elderly people are left alone in the rural areas with no-one to take care of them.
- Sometimes they end up in homes for the aged or begging on the streets.

Education Central EA

- - Old people are important because they have wealth of knowledge to share. We should take care of them.

Land

- Was special and highly valued.
- It was a source of food for the people and their animals and herbs for medicine.
- Land was believed to be God given.
- Land was communal.
- - There were land allocations to each family for farming. The men were the guardians of the land.
- Land was not sold and there were no landless people.
- Today land is only communally owned in nomadic communities since most of it is individually owned.
- An individual can buy land and settle anywhere and is not bound to the ancestral land.
- Land ownership is evidenced by a little deed or land allotment letter issued by the Government.
- Today, some land is set apart by the government for public use like establishment of game parks, roads, schools, cattle dips and market places.

Property

- is anything owned or possessed by a person.
- In A.T.S., property could be individual or communal.
- Women and children contributed to the accumulations of wealth by working on farms and grazing cattle.
- Women and children were not allowed to own property.
- Today, property can be owned by a man/ woman/ child.
- There are various ways of acquiring wealth other than agriculture and keeping animals.
- African economies have been influenced greatly by the western money-based economies where money is seen to satisfy or fulfill all needs.

Widows and orphans

- A widow is a woman whose husband is dead.
- An orphan is a child whose both parents are dead.
- In A.T.S., a widow was inherited either by her husband's brother or cousin to ensure that the late brother's family would not suffer.
- A woman not only belonged to her husband but also to his kin.
- Any of his brothers takes over the household in his absence.
- The children born after his death were still referred to as his children.
- A man who inherits the wife takes over all the duties of the dead man e.g. protecting and providing for the family.
- Today the spread of HIV/AIDS has raised a lot of debate over the practice of widow inheritance.

Education Central EA

- Due to individualism and lose family ties, it has become hard to care for members of the extended family.
- A child who lost one or both of parents in T.A.C. was easily adopted into the family.
- Orphans didn't find it hard surviving because of the strong kinship system.
- -Widowhood or being orphaned is very painful experiences for the people today.
- Many widows have found themselves and their children going without food especially if the husband was the only provider.
- Some children have dropped out of school to take care of their siblings.
- Many orphans have ended up in the streets for lack of a caretaker.
- A number of organizations have started to build children homes or orphanages to cater for the orphans especially with HIV/AIDS.

Dress

- In TAC clothes were made from animal skin, bark, feathers, reeds/and sisal.
- Every community had a way of dressing, depending on the climate in their region and their way of life.
- Age, gender, status would always determine the type of clothing one wore.
- Ornaments i.e. bangles, necklaces, anklets and ear plugs/ rings were part of the traditional dress.
- The Maasai, Turkana and Giriama have to raid for livestock to maintain their traditional dress.
- Today dress undergoes a lot of change because fashion changes with peoples tastes.
- Today we have a national costume whose design is base on traditional costumes.

Dowry or bride price

- This is a gift of property that a groom gives to the bride's family.
- Bride price was given in terms of cattle, goats, sheep, and honey and food stuff.
- Today, the concept of bride price has been commercialized.
- Sometimes conflicts arise between parents and those intending to marry.
- Dowry should be used appropriately to cement relationship.

Medicine

- Medicine was provided by medicine people who diagnosed and treated sicknesses.
- Their medicine was in the form of herbs, minerals, powder and seeds and also spiritual.
- Today, people take the sick to hospitals for proper diagnosis and treatment by qualified medical doctors.
- Christians also offer prayers for the quick recovery of the sick.

Leisure

- This is free time for one to enjoy/ spend.
- In T.A.C. leisure was integrated in the daily life of the community.

Education Central EA

- People would work and have leisure at the same time e.g. singing while digging.
- They had leisure in form of festivals and rites which involved singing, eating, drinking and dancing.
- Some leisure activities were free of charge and mostly communal.
- Some leisure activities were specific to certain gender age group.
- Today leisure is separated from work.
- People engage in various activities e.g. listening to the radio, watching television, reading magazines or visiting friends.
- Some leisure acts today are very expensive.
- Some people misuse their leisure time abusing drugs or engaging in sexual immorality.
- Some people help the needy visit the sick, do voluntary community and church work during their leisure time.