

CONTINUATION OF AMOS (SENIOR SIX NOTES)

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PRIEST AMAZIAH AND PROPHET AMOS (AMOS 7:10-17).

When Amos was prophesying in the northern region, he was attacked and stopped by priest Amaziah from prophesying especially because of attacking the place of worship and the king.

Because of Amos' prophecies, a conflict developed between him and Amaziah and the following caused the conflict;

According to Amaziah, Amos was blasphemous. When Amos attacked the places of worship by saying that the altars would be destroyed; Amaziah said that it was blasphemy which was against the covenant way of life.

When Amos attacked Jeroboam the King by saying that he would die in battle, Amaziah said that he was guilty of treason.

Amos wasn't born a prophet which made Amaziah not to believe in his prophecies. This annoyed Amos because his prophecies were undermined.

Amos was stopped by Amaziah from prophesying God's message. He advised him to go back to Judah and carry out his prophecies there.

Amaziah reduced Amos' status by referring to him as a money hungry prophet which was a characteristic of the false prophets yet he was a true prophet.

Amos pronounced judgement upon Amaziah's wife. He said that she would become a prostitute on the streets which annoyed Amaziah hence a conflict.

Amos said that Amaziah would be taken into exile and he would die in a heathen country.

When Amos said that Amaziah's child would be killed in war, a conflict developed between the two.

When Amos said that Amaziah's land would be divided up and given to others, they disagreed because Amaziah would not believe that.

When Amos said that the people of Israel would be taken away from their own land into exile he conflicted with Amaziah.

Amaziah and Amos conflicted because Amaziah doubted Amos' prophecies. He didn't believe whatever he prophesized.

THE FIVE DESTRUCTIVE VISIONS

THE VISION OF LOCUSTS AMOS 7:1-3.

In this vision Amos saw God create a swarm of locusts just after the King's share of the hay had been cut and the grass was starting to grow again.

In the vision Amos saw the locusts eat up every green thing in the Land;

The vision symbolized disaster which was befall the Israelites in terms of famine leading to death of many people.

On seeing the vision, Amos pleaded we said; sovereign Lord, forgive your people, how can they survive? They are so small and weak.

The Lord changed his mind and said "what you saw will not take place". This means that he withdrawal the punishment.

THE VISION OF FIRE AMOS 7:4-6.

Amos saw God preparing to punish His people with fire. The fire burnt up the great ocean under the earth, and started to burn up the Land.

The vision symbolizes a prolonged drought which would dry up all the water bodies and the land as a sign of destruction to all the Israelites.

When Amos saw this vision, he pleaded to god and said "stop, sovereign Lord, How can your people survive? They are so small and weak"

The Lord changed His mind again and said, "This will not take place either ".

THE VISION OF A PLUMBLINE (AMOS 7:7-9).

In the vision Amos saw God standing besides a wall that had been built with the help of a plumb line; and he had a plumbline in His had.

He asked Amos that, "Amos what do you see?" Amos said that "A plumbline," then God said that He was using it to show that His people are like a wall that is out of line. (crooked wall / the Israelites had failed to live according to the covenant way of life.

When Amos saw this vision, he didn't plead to God as he had done in the first two visions and God wasn't willing to change His mind about punishing the Israelites because they were like a crooked wall fit for destruction.

In the vision God promised to destroy the worshipping places and to bring the dynasty of king Jeroboam to an end.

THE VISION OF A BASKET OF FRUIT (AMOS 8:1-4)

Amos saw a basket of fruit at the end of the King's harvest.

It meant that the end had come for the people of Israel and God wasn't going to change His mind.

The vision symbolized that people's sins were beyond limit and it also meant that it was the right time for God to punish them.

Because of the destruction, the songs in the palace would become cries of mourning.

There would be dead bodies everywhere and the city would be filled with wailing because the dead bodies would be many

THE VISION OF THE DESTROYED ALTAR (AMOS 9).

Amos saw God standing besides the altar. He commanded him to strike the tops of the temple columns so hard that the whole porch will shake. He told him to break them off and let them fall on the head of the people.

God promised to kill the rest of the people in war and no one would survive or escape. To emphasize this God said that "even if they dig their way down to the world of the dead, I will catch them. Even if they climb up to heaven, I will bring them down. If they hide on the top of Mt. Carmel, I will search for them and catch them. If they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the sea monster to bite them. If they are taken away into captivity by their enemies, I will order them to be put to death. Amos 9:2-4.

The vision symbolized the destruction of the temple and all the worshippers.

Because of people's sins and their failure to change, the temple would no longer be God's dwelling place.

THE DAY OF THE LORD (AMOS 5:18FF).

The people of Israel were longing for the day of the Lord. However, much they sinned; they expected the day of the Lord to be characterized by the following;

They expected God to show his power over the pagan states. In other words they believed that God would not allow the pagan states to defeat them.

They expected that the day of the Lord would be a day of victory and glory in battle i.e. they expected to defeat all their enemies.

They expected to begin living in material prosperity and accumulate a lot of wealth.

They expected to receive God's blessings especially the blessings He had praised through Abraham their ancestor.

They expected their vineyards and olive gardens to produce in plenty and they also expected corn to grow faster than it would be harvested.

On this day, they expected that God would send rain at the right time such that people could plant and harvest enough food.

They expected God to forgive their sins and begin living in harmony with them.

The Israelites expected to increase in number together with their domestic animals.

They expected trade to boom such that they make a lot of profits on the day of the Lord.

They expected to live in peace and never to be disturbed by their enemies.

THE PROPHETS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

Amos and other prophets attacked and rejected the view of the Israelites about the day of the Lord. The following was said;

Amos said that the day of the Lord was coming but it was going to be characterized by doom and disaster. To emphasize this, an example was given of a man who runs away from a lion and meets a bear or away from a lion and meets a bear or someone who goes home and puts the hand on the wall only to be bitten by a snake. Amos 5:19

Amos and other prophets attacked and rejected the view of the Israelites about the day of the Lord. The following was said;

Amos said that the day of the Lord was coming but it was going to be characterized by doom and disaster. To emphasize this, an example was given of a man who runs away from a lion and meets a bear or someone who goes home and puts the hand on the way only to be bitten by a snake. Amos 5:19.

Amos and other prophets said that on this day, people's feasts would turn into mourning and the songs of joy would turn into funeral songs.

Songs said that on that day, all the idols which were being worshipped by the people would be destroyed such that religious sanity would be created.

On that day, God would humble everyone who thinks that he is powerful. This is when even the bravest soldiers would run away from God's punishment.

Amos said on that day the Israelites would be dragged into exile where they would seriously be mistreated.

On that day, people would suffer from hunger, they would starve to death. They would not come out of their houses to look for food because of fearing God's punishment. Therefore, they would begin eating one another.

On that day, both human pride and arrogance would be destroyed and all the people would fear to mention or say a word in order not to annoy God.

On that day, both human pride and annoyance would be destroyed and all the people would fear to mention or say a word in order not to annoy God.

On that day, Samaria would be attacked by a foreigner army which would gain control over it.

On that day people would cry and wail because the dead bodies would be many in the cities and along the roads.

Amos said that on that day, God was going to pass judgement upon all the Israelites. And because of their evils it was not going to be a day of light but of darkness.

Amos said that the day of the Lord was going to be of misery, agony and mourning. The dead bodies were to be so many and no one would bury them.

THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The Christians have the following views about the day of the Lord;

They believed that this day is going to be Jesus' second coming (Parousia) which all people are longing for.

Christians believe that on this day Jesus will appear with the angels. He will come as the Lord to carry out his judgement. Therefore, this day is believed to be a day of judgement.

The Christians believe that when the trumpet is sounded announcing the second coming of Jesus, the dead shall have to rise.

The Christians believe that on this day, there will be a final struggle against the powers of Satan. In other words, Satan shall be defeated on this day.

The Christians believe that this day will mark the end of the world. Therefore, on this day, the universe will come to an end.

The Christians believe that on that day, the righteous shall be separated from the unrighteous. This would be like separating the sheep from the wolves.

It is believed that the righteous will go to heaven and sit at the right hand of God whereas the wicked or inners would serve their everlasting punishment.

Christians believe that on that day Jesus will take control over the whole universe. He will show His powers as the king and the Lord. The Christians believe that on that day strange miracles shall happen e.g. the dead will rise; the sun will go down at noon etc.

The Christians are expected to repent as they prepare for the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, all people are expected to be ready for this day.

The Christians believe that the day will come abruptly like a thief. It is believed that no one knows the day or even the hour.

AMOS' CONDEMNATION OF THE VARIOUS STATES

(Reasons why Amos began by condemning other nations before condemning Israel)

Amos wanted to show that Yahweh was a universal God. Therefore He had the right to pronounce judgment upon all the states because he was a God of all the people but not only the Israelites.

Amos wanted to show that Yahweh was the master of the whole universe. He had the right to judge all the people since there was no God above Him.

Amos wanted to give the Israelites chance to repent and ask for forgiveness. He believed that incase the Israelites heard about his prophecies they would repent.

It was a technique of getting an audience from the Israelites. Amos thought that if the Israelites had heard about his prophecies, they would be willing to listen to him incase he began prophesying to them.

Amos wanted to show the Israelites that they had sinned against the Lord more than others. i.e. they had committed terrible sins against the Lord. Therefore, worse punishments were to befall them if they had refused to change.

Amos wanted to show that there was no nation above the law of God. Therefore, all the people were expected to respect God's law.

Amos wanted to get attention from His own people. (The people of Judah / After condemning the pagan states, Amos prophesized among the people of Judah.;

Amos wanted to show that salvation was for all people. Therefore, He wanted the Israelite and people of other nations to prepare for salvation.

He wanted to show that being omnipotent, God had the powers to punish all the sinners, that is why He pronounced judgement upon the Israelites and other nations.

Since He is omnipotent, Yahweh wanted to show that He was closely following all the nations and therefore expected all people to change.

Amos wanted to show that sin is punishable everywhere it ours. Even the pagan nations were liable to punishment. Therefore, he wanted them to get prepared for God's punishment.

Amos began by condemning the pagan states because of the evils they had committed and the message of destruction He wanted to pronounce upon the pagan states and Judah.

Amos wanted to condemn Syria for continuous sinning and to pronounce God's punishment upon them. Because of mistreating the people of Giread, God was going to send fire upon he palace built by king Hazael and He was going to burn the fortresses of King Benhadad.

He promised to smash the city gates of Damascus and take way the people of Syria as prisoners to the Land of Kir.

Amos condemned Philistia for continuous sinning. They carried off a whole nation and soldthem as slaves to the people of Edom.

God promised to send fire upon the city walls of Gaza and burn down its fortresses. He promised to remove the rulers of the cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon. And all the Phiistines who are left will die.

Amos condemned the people of Tyre for continuous sinning. Because of carrying a whole nation into exile in the Land of Edom, and their failure to keep the treaty of friendship they had made, God was going to send fire to burn their city walls of Tyre and their fortresses.

Amos condemned the people of Edom for hunting down their relatives, the Israelites and failure to show them mercy. God was to send fire upon the city of Teman and burn down the fortresses of Bozrah.

Amos condemned Ammon for continuous sinning. They ripped open pregnant women in Gilead. God was to send fire upon the city walls of Rabbah and burn down the fortresses. Their king and his officers will go into exile

Amos condemned the Moabites for dishonoring the bones of the King of Edom by burning them to ashes.

God was to send fire upon the land of Moab and burn the fortresses of Kerioth. The Moabites were to die in battle, their ruler and all the leaders of the Land.

Amos condemned Judah for continuous sinning, for despising God's teachings and not keeping his commands and following the false gods.
God promised to send upon Judah and burn down the fortresses of Jerusalem.

PROPHET HOSEA

Hosea was a son of Berri, he prophesized in the Northern region after prophet Amos. He was one of the Minor Prophets.

God told Hosea to marry a woman who was going to be unfaithful (prostitute). In this way God wanted to illustrate the relationship between him and the unfaithful Israelites using Hosea's marriage experience.

HOSEA'S MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE AND ITS PROPHETIC MESSAGE.

Hosea compared the relationship of a loving father with his children to God's relationship with the Israelites.

He shows that the Israelites had rejected God's love like his wife who was unfaithful and had rejected his love.

Hosea illustrates this when he says that "I loved him and called him out of Egypt as my son. But the more I called to him, the more he turned away from me" (Hosea 11:1)

What Hosea describes about his wife and children applies to the Israelites and what he says about himself applies to God.

The following illustrates how Hosea's marriage experience reflects God's experience with the Israelites;

Although Gomer was a prostitute therefore, not worth to be a wife to prophet, Hosea accepted her as his wife.

Likewise God the Almighty chose the Israelites to be his special people not because that they were righteous and better than other people, therefore, they weren't expected to deserve special attention from God.

Hosea's marriage to Gomer who was a prostitute symbolizes a permanent covenant relationship which was established between God and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai.

Gomer's unfaithfulness which took place after marriage symbolizes the unfaithfulness of the Israelites towards the covenant faith. Just as Gomer wasn't committed to her husband's love and ended up becoming unfaithful, Israel too became unfaithful to God and failed to live to the covenant expectations. They committed sins like murder, idolatry, oppression of the poor etc.

Hosea's appeal to Gomer to abandon her unfaithfulness and go back to him symbolizes God's appeal to Israel to abandon Baal worship, syncretism etc.

Hosea's punishment to his unrepentant and unfaithful wife by evicting her from his house with nothing covering her and the building of a thorny fence was a symbol of what would happen to the unrepentant Israelites. The Israelites would be sent into exile as a punishment where they would suffer a lot of humiliation.

Gomer was going to other lovers for material prosperity and she also hoped to get comfort, sweet wine, clothes etc. Likewise the Israelites turned to Baal worship hoping to get material prosperity.

They had been influenced by the Canaanites and convinced that Baal was responsible for people's fertility and material prosperity.

Gomer's search for better comfort and prosperity from other lovers signified her ungratefulness for her husband's generosity. Likewise by looking for prosperity from Baal, the Israelites had become unfaithful and forgotten all God's favours and providence.

Hosea punished Gomer with an intention of making her realize that He was her true source of exile, she lived under restrictions of wars and she missed the true goodness of her husband and later he said to herself "I am going back to my first husband" likewise the Israelites experience in exile and suffering aimed at making them realize that God was their true source of happiness and material prosperity therefore Baal was useless.

Hosea's punishment to Gomer was intended to make her hate her lovers and bring an end to her promiscuity. Likewise the Israelites punishment was intended to bring an end to their apostasy therefore; the exile period was a moment of purification which would force the Israelites to reject Baal and turned to God. .

Hosea remained faithful to Gomer and continued looking for her but she stubbornly refused to return to her husband. Likewise God remained faithful to the promise he had made to the people of Israel i.e. He remained their God and didn't abandon them and He also continued calling them to return to the covenant faith.

Just as Hosea loved Gomer despite her unfaithfulness, God too loved the Israelites despite the fact that they were sinful. God said "How can I love my people, how can I abandon you, how I can I destroy you?"

The names of Hosea's children had symbolic meaning e.g. "Jezreel" was a name given to the first son and it symbolized the punishments which would befall the Israelites. It meant destruction.

The second was a girl and her name was “unloved” meaning that God was going to withdraw his love from the Israelites. Therefore they were going to be unloved.

The third child was a boy and he was called “not my people”, this signified that the Israelites had ceased to be God’s people because they had failed to live according to the covenant faith.

Hosea predicted that his children were going to be as unfaithful as their other just as the future generation of Israel proved to be unfaithful to God and to the covenant Law.

Hosea asked his children to go and plead with their mother so that she would stop her unfaithfulness and this symbolized the prophets who were sent by God to go and prophecy among the Israelites and encouraged them to repent.

After punishing Gomer, Hosea forgave her and won her back to himself and restored their marriage. Likewise the punishments of the Israelites in exile were to be followed by forgiveness and later they would go back to God and to their land of Canaan.

The names of Hosea’s children would be changed and this signified the restoration of the relationship between God and the Israelites.

“Jezreel” would change to “prosperity” which meant that the Israelites were going to experience growth and prosperity after exile.

“Unloved” would change to “loved” which meant that God was going to show love to the Israelites after repentance.

“Not my people” would change to “my people” implying that the Israelites would be called God’s people again.

In the new marriage relationship Hosea and Gomer loved each other and they were faithful to one another likewise the renewed covenant relationship between God and the Israelites would be characterized by faithfulness and love.

In the new marriage relationship Hosea was required to pay a high price for restoring Gomer as his wife. This symbolized the price which was supposed to be paid by God by sending his only son who shed innocent blood and it also symbolized God’s love and his initiative to restore the broken relationship between Him and the Israelites.

Hosea and Gomer weren’t expected to resume marital duties for sometime and in the same way the Israelites were to live for sometime without leaders / kings and without sacrifices until when God would fully accept them as His own people.

RELEVANCE OF HOSEA’S MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY

The Christians learn so many lessons from Hosea’s experience including the following:

Christians should be faithful to their marriage partners likewise Hosea remained faithful to Gomer despite her unfaithfulness.

Christians should stick to the marriage agreement likewise Hosea did not break the marriage agreement despite the fact that His wife broke the agreement.

Christians should tolerate evils of their partners and other weaknesses e.g. unfaithfulness like Hosea who was tolerant despite the unfaithfulness of his wife.

Christians should forgive one another in case of misunderstandings. Hosea was in position to forgive Gomer.

Christians should reconcile, Hosea reconciled with Gomer and he accepted her back as his own wife.

Christians should be contented with what they have unlike Gomer who seemed not contented and ran towards other lovers expecting to get a lot from them

They should promote / advocate for permanence in marriage. Hosea didn't divorce Gomer despite her unfaithfulness.

They should show love to one another likewise Hosea had too much love for his wife Gomer.

They should treat one another with respect like wise Hosea treated Gomer with respect despite the fact that she never respected herself and her husband.

They should seek for God's guidance unlike Gomer who wasn't guided by God.

They should be ready and willing to be connected in case of any mistake unlike who were sent by Hosea.

Christians should be willing to change, likewise Gomer changed after sometime in exile.

They should follow God's instructions likewise Hosea followed God's instructions and married the unfaithful woman.

Christians should be exemplary e.g. Hosea showed a good example when he remained faithful to the unfaithful woman and later forgave her.

HOSEA'S ACCUSATIONS TO THE PRIESTS OF ISRAEL.

Hosea accused / condemned the priests of Israel because of the evils they were committing which were as follows:

The priests weren't exemplary most of them failed to repent despite the fact that they had sinned against God. Among the Israelites, one was expected to repent and ask for forgiveness in case they sinned.

They failed to respect God's temple. Some of them had sexual intercourse from the temple which was a sign of disrespect to God's temple yet the temple was supposed to be treated with a lot of respect.

They failed to respect God as their liberator, yet at Mt. Sinai they had promised to respect Him and worship Him.

Some of the priests stopped God's prophets from prophesying God's message which was against God's expectations e.g. Amaziah stopped prophet Amos from prophesying.

Some of the priests hunted God's prophets after conniving with other people e.g. priest Passhur hunted down prophet Jeremiah.

Most of the priests were practicing idolatry which was against the covenant way of life because the Israelites were only expected to worship God but no idols.

Some of the priests were fond of giving empty sacrifices yet they were expected to sacrifice with a lot of faith. Therefore the empty sacrifices were rejected by God.

The priests were victims of temple prostitution and all sorts of evil. Being God's servants, they were expected to be clean without any sin.

They failed to provide lasting justice to their followers. e.g. while judging case they were dishonest because of accepting bribes.

They had ignored their duties as messengers of God. Instead of guiding people towards the covenant faith, they misguided them.

They had become so rich out of the sacrifices they received from the evil people. They were interested in people's sins because the more the people sinned the more sacrifices were brought.

Some of the priests were drinking a lot of wine which was against the covenant way of life.

WHY HOSEA WAS AGAINST THE SACRIFICES OF THE ISRAELITES.

Hosea was against the sacrifices of the Israelites because of the following reasons:-

The Israelites were offering unclean sacrifices. Some of the sacrifices were ritually unclean e.g. they were lame, blind etc.

Some of the sacrifices were offered by unclean people. Some of the people who officiated sacrifices were guilty of sins like murder, sex abuse, greed etc.

Some of the sacrifices were treated with disrespect e.g. some priests ate God's chosen parts (fats) which was a sign of disrespect.

Some sacrifices were a mere outward show. I.e. people sacrificed with an intention of showing off their wealth which displeased God.

Some sacrifices were insincere yet the Israelites were expected to sacrifice with a lot of sincerity.

Some sacrifices were offered by unrepentant people. The Israelites were expected to repent if their sins were to be forgiven after sacrificing to God.

Some of the sacrifices aimed at bribing God yet God isn't a human being therefore he can't be bribed.

Some people offered sacrifices yet their hearts were far away from God therefore Hosea condemned their sacrifices.

Some sacrifices were made for formality. In other words, they were sacrificing because they wanted to fulfill the Law of Moses.

Some of the people who sacrificed were intentional sinners. They sacrificed hoping to be forgiven by God and later they committed the same sins.

Some people sacrificed to God when they lacked faith yet God was interested in people's faith other than their sacrifices.

Some people sacrificed with a double mind. They sacrificed to God and at the same time they felt like withdrawing the sacrifices yet they were expected to sacrifice to God wholeheartedly.

Some people used to offer sacrifices to God and at the same time they sacrificed to pagan gods. This meant that they were syncretic.

Some sacrifices were grabbed from the poor especially by the rich. Therefore Hosea condemned sacrifices acquired through illegal ways.

EVILS WHICH WERE CONDEMNED BY PROPHET HOSEA

The Israelites lacked love for their God and that is why they were unfaithful yet the covenant love was expected to be steady and fast.

They were hypocrites especially in their religious practices. e.g. they expressed repentance which was insincere and shallow.

They had broken their promises they had made to God e.g. they had promised to keep the Law of Moses, to live a righteous life but instead they promoted evil, murdered etc.

The Israelites were dishonest especially those who were involved in business. They used to cheat their customers in different ways. e.g. tampering with the weighing scales.

They were committing evils like making the leaders to get drunk and later they would murder them.

They worshipped idols which was against the covenant way of life. The Israelites were only expected to worship Yahweh.

They abused the worshipping places and other religious practices. Some of them practiced temple prostitution while others turned the religious festivals into pagan festivals.

The priests who were meant to promote the law, instead promoted evil among the people. They were committing sins like corruption, they drank too much wine etc.

The priests failed to judge with justice and by doing so, they neglected the teachings of the Law. As judges they were expected to promote justice among the people.

The priests were greedy and interested in people's sacrifices. They promoted evil because the more the people sinned, the more sacrifices were received by the priests because they were entitled to a share of the sacrifices.

The leaders broke the covenant law e.g. they made alliances with all their neighbours yet they were expected to depend on God alone.

Political leaders exploited and oppressed the Israelites which was against the covenant law. E.g. they killed them, overtaxed them, grabbed their land etc

The Israelites weren't loyal to their kings. At times they betrayed them, on many occasions they joined the enemies to attack Israel. Some of the priests were drunkards yet they weren't supposed to drink too much wine, therefore this act was against the covenant way of life.

The prophets who were meant to be God's servants were hated by the people. Instead of listening to their prophecies, they stopped them from prophesying e.g. Amaziah stopped Amos from prophesying.

HOSEA'S MESSAGE OF JUDGEMENT.

Because of the wickedness of the people of Israel, Prophet Hosea like Amos pronounced judgement / doom for the people of Israel. **The following is a summary of his judgement;**

Hosea said that God was going to bring destruction on Israel. Their land would dry up, the birds and animals were to die and therefore making it difficult for the people to survive because of the famine.

The prophets and the priests who neglected their duties would be destroyed together with the rest of the Israelites.

Hosea said that the priests would be punished for eating God's sacrifices, He said that however much they would eat, they would still remain hungry.

He said that those who practiced temple prostitution would be carried into exile where they would face a lot of humiliation.

H prophesized doom using the name of his first son "**Jezreel**" which meant the destruction / punishment which would befall Israel.

Using the name of the second child, "**unloved**" he prophesized that the Israelites would cease to be called God's loved people. In other words, God would stop showing love to the Israelites.

The third child "**not my people**" showed that God would stop calling the Israelites His own people.

Hosea said that very many people would be humiliated by their enemies and Israelites military power would be weakened.

Hosea said that God would not accept those who worshipped idols, He would also allow the enemy to destroy their land.

Hosea said that punishment would befall those who were dishonest while judging cases. No one would survive, they would die a violent death and God would turn their honour into disgrace.

He said that those who were making alliances with the pagan states would be destroyed and some of them would be taken into exile. While in exile they would try to seek for assistance from the king of Assyria but would not get any help.

He prophesized doom to those who worshipped idols in order to make the land fertile. He said their prayers wouldn't be answered because their idols would be smashed and their crops would not be productive.

He said that the idol worshippers would not have children and those who would happen to get some children, their children would be taken into exile where they would be killed.

He said that the kings would be taken away from their land and the people would have no leaders despite the fact that they had demanded for a king.

God promised never to listen to the prayers of the people and never to accept their sacrifices because they lacked love in their midst.

Hosea said that God would send disastrous wind which would wash away people's crops and later the people would die of hunger.

Hosea said that God was going to break down the altars of the Israelites and cause death in Israel.

Hosea pronounced judgement against Judah for attacking Israel and stealing their land. Hosea said that God was going to destroy them and He was going to pour punishment on them like a flood.

HOSEA'S MESSAGE ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR THE REBELLIOUS PEOPLE AND THE MESSAGE OF HOPE / MERCY.

While prophesying, Hosea showed the Israelites that in spite of their rebellious nature, God loved them and there was hope for them. **He showed them this in the following ways;**

He said that even when the Israelites were unfaithful to God, He didn't abandon them.

Hosea said that God had too much love for the Israelites and that is why He wasn't willing to destroy them. This is reflected when he said; "How can I give you up Israel, how can I abandon you, and how could I destroy you?"

He says that because of God's love, He went ahead and made a covenant with the unfaithful Israelites.

He says that God promised never to punish Israel in anger and never to destroy Israel again. "I will not destroy you Israel again, I will not punish you in my anger".

Hosea says that out of God's love, the Israelites were rescued from suffering in the Egyptian slavery.

He predicted that there would be time when the Israelites would cease to be called "unloved" and they would be called "love people of God"

He predicted that there would be time when the Israelites would cease to be called "unloved" and they would be called "loved people of God"

He said that time would come when "not my people" would turn into "my people" and this showed that God forgives and continues to love his people.

Hosea foresaw the Israelites experiencing growth and prosperity with the change of his child's name "Jezreel"

During the time of restoration, Hosea said that the Israelites would be under God's care and protection and they would show that Love and faithfulness to their God.

Hosea foretold that time would come when the Israelites would no longer experience suffering under their enemies.

Hosea's act of sending his children to plead with their mother symbolized God's love, this was equivalent to the prophet who were sent by God to prophecy among His people.

Hosea predicted that God would protect the Israelites from external enemies and therefore remove all the harmful weapons and give the Israelites peace.

Hosea's willingness to remarry his wife symbolized God's love for his people. Even after the Israelites had sinned against God, He forgave them and He accepted them as His own people.

Hosea prophesized that time was coming when the Israelites would respect God and out of his love He would give them new hearts and forgive them.

God's love is reflected in the high price Hosea paid in order to restore his wife back just as God had a pay highly in order to save mankind from sin.

He foretold that time would come when the Israelites would be restored back to their land after exile and they would receive God's favours and blessings.

Hosea says that God's love for the Israelites was reflected in the way He provided for them in times of need e.g. when they were hungry He fed them.

God promised to answer their prayers and take care of them as long as they had nothing to do with the idols.

Hosea predicted that the Israelites after exile would become famous like the wine of Lebanon.

Hosea foresaw the Israelites going back to their land where they would settle and harvest alot and never to suffer from famine again.

He said that the Israelites would be protected by their God ad He would show them a lot of love.

Hosea foresaw the Israelites rebuilding their cities after exile and enjoying nice wine in their land.

COMPARISON BETWEEN HOSEA'S MARRIAGE AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

Similarities

In both, love was a key component e.g. Hosea had too much love for his wife despite her unfaithfulness and also in African traditional society there was love in marriage.

In both permanence was emphasized e.g. Hosea didn't divorce his wife despite her unfaithfulness and also in ATS partners were not allowed to divorce though it would take place under serious circumstances.

In ATS the choice of a marriage partners was done by the elders likewise in Hosea's case, the choice was done by God who was superior.

In ATS, sex misuse was condemned and punishable. The main aim of the punishment was to stop evil likewise, Hosea condemned the unfaithfulness of his wife and he punished her with the intention of stopping her unfaithfulness.

In both case, marriage was seen as a religious institution ordained by God. In Hosea's case, his marriage was ordained by Yahweh and in ATS marriage was ordained by super natural beings.

In both cases children were valued. In ATS they were considered to be a blessing and people used to produce many children because of their importance and also Hosea had children who were considered to be blessing from God.

In both cases, the husband is regarded as the head of the family. In ATS it was emphasized and very clear and also in Hosea's case, he was the head of the family.

In ATS, the approval of a marriage partner was done by the senior members of the family they made the final decision either to approve or disapprove their children's choice. Likewise in Hosea's case, choice was approved by God because he is the one who instructed Hosea to go and marry Gomer.

Differences

In ATS marriage was between two families, societies / communities while in Hosea's case, marriage was between Hosea n Gomer. Therefore, it was a contact between 2 people.

In ATS women were considered to be subordinates (inferior) while in Hosea's marriage the issue of subordination wasn't reflected. Therefore, there was equality between Hosea and Gomer.

In ATS, polygamy was practiced or allowed because of different reasons while in Hosea's case; he maintained monogamy despite the fact that his wife was unfaithful.

In ATS marriage was cemented by bride wealth whereas in Hosea's case bride wealth wasn't mentioned at all when he was going to marry Gomer.

In ATS, divorce was encouraged but it was only allowed under serious circumstances like witchcraft unlike in Hosea's case where divorce was impossible.

In ATS, in case a partner wronged the other, he was supposed to pay a fine whereas in Hosea's case, it is Hosea who paid highly yet it was his wife who wronged him.

In ATS, extra marital sex would only be allowed under certain cases e.g. in case of barrenness, impotence etc unlike in Hosea's case where he didn't have any extra marital sex. He was in position to wait for his wife who had become unfaithful.

THE NATURE OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Man can be described in the following ways;

Man is sinful. Hosea condemned the Israelites because of their sinful nature.

Man is unfaithful; Gomer seemed to be unfaithful to Hosea that is why she became a prostitute.

Man is unrepentant. Many Israelites especially the priests sinned against God but didn't endeavour to repent.

Man is forgetful. Gomer forgot all the love she had received from Hosea and turned to other lovers.

Man is greedy and never contented. Gomer had greed for material wealth that is why she ran towards other lovers hoping to get a lot from them.

Man is dishonest. The judges of Israel were corrupt and judged cases dishonesty hence calling for Hosea's condemnation.

Man is faithful. Hosea remained faithful to Gomer despite her unfaithfulness.

Man is patient. Hosea patiently waited for Gomer when she ran towards other lovers hoping to get a lot from them.

Man is impatient. Gomer was impatient, that is why she left her original husband and decided to go with other lovers whom she expected to provide a lot.

Man is forgiving; Hosea was in position to forgive Gomer and accepted her back as his wife.

THE NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF HOSEA.

God is described in the following ways;

God is the source of providence. He provided for the Israelites whenever they were in need e.g. He gave them food in the desert, water etc.

God is forgiving. He forgave the Israelites whenever they sinned against Him and repented.

Yahweh is a punishing God, He promised to punish the Israelites by through Hosea's message of judgement / destruction.

Yahweh is a loving God. He had too much love for the Israelites that is why He chose them as His special nation, made a covenant with them etc.

Yahweh is a jealousy God. He doesn't tolerate any rival. No Israelites was allowed to worship any other god apart from Yahweh.

He is a faithful God. He remained faithful despite the fact that the Israelites became unfaithful and turned against Him.

He is the source of protection. He promised to protect the Israelites after exile and never to be disturbed by the enemies.

He is a spirit by nature. He did not appear physically because He doesn't possess a physical body.

He is merciful. He had mercy upon the Israelites that is why He forgave them when they sinned against Him.

He is Almighty. No god is above Him and He can't be compared to other gods.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The writer of the book of Job is not clearly identified but he is believed to have been a Jew. This book talks about a rich man who lost all of his wealth, his children and even got serious afflictions against his health. However, despite all the problems, he never lost hope in God.

Job's suffering was different from the Israelites understanding of the causes of suffering because they believed that people suffered due to their wickedness but job was a righteous man who suffered seriously.

Job 1 and 2 show how a good man, righteous and faithful suffered a lot when God was testing his faith.

It all started when heavenly creatures appeared before God, and Satan came along. When God asked whether he had seen His servant Job who was honest and faithful, Satan replied that Job loved God only because the almighty God had blessed him with a lot of wealth, but if he lost such wealth, Job would curse Him.

This kind of contest between God and Satan exposed Job to terrible suffering because God permitted Satan to bring disaster to Job's life which ended up into the following forms of suffering:-

THE FORMS OF SUFFERING EXPERIENCED BY JOB

Job experienced physical and psychological torture since he was struck by disasters which brought a lot of pain in his life.

Job's oxen and donkeys were attacked by Serbians who killed all the servants who were attending to them before carrying all the animals away.

Job lost all his sheep and all the shepherds who were taking care of them when lightning struck them dead.

Gangs of the chaldeans attacked and stole all the camels which belonged to Job after killing all the servants who were in charge.

Job's children were killed by a windstorm which blew from the desert and crushed a building over them during a party.

Job was affected by a terrible disease of boils covering all his body and he had wounds all over the body.

Job's wife convinced him to curse God and die other than living in pain. In this case she became a bigger problem to him because she was tempting him to do what was wrong.

The wife deserted him because he had lost wealth and his health was disappointing.

Job's pain increased so much all over the body, that flies began feasting on him. (feasting on the wounds which attracted the flies).

Job's friends worsened his suffering when they began blaming him for being the cause of his suffering, thinking that he had seriously committed certain sins hence demanding from him to seek God's forgiveness.

Job lost his appearance and it became very difficult for people who knew him before to notice (recognize) him because of the terrible suffering he experienced.

Since Job believed that he was innocent, the insistence of his friends in forcing him to repent increased more pain.

Job's suffering went beyond imagination when he became useless and began seeing everyday as a burden because of the too much pain.

He became hopeless, helpless and miserable because he couldn't even assist himself in anyway apart from scratching his body.

Days and nights became longer than usual so that a mere day seemed like a century of a glory.

He got so exhausted seeing no meaning in life an existence. He had no time to rest and whenever he turned, he felt arrows of suffering / pain piercing him.

HOW JOB'S SUFFERING PROVED HIS FAITHFULNESS.

Job's suffering proved his faithfulness in the following ways;

When he lost all his property he remained faithful and obedient to God.

When job lost his children, he never abandoned or even cursed God but instead he praised his name.

When he was attacked by a skin disease he did not abandon God.

Even when job became poor, he remained faithful to God, he never turned away from him.

When he was abandoned by friends, relatives and his wife he remained committed to God.

When he was advised by his wife to curse God and die, he never did so but instead he leaned on God

He did not yield to the devil's temptation, despite all the forms of suffering that he experienced.

He continued having trust and confidence in God during his time of suffering.

During his suffering, he prayed to God to answer him instead of turning away from him to other gods.

He believed in God and also believed that it was the almighty God who had a solution to his suffering.

HOW CHRISTIANS TODAY PROVE FAITHFULNESS

The Christians today prove faithfulness in the following ways;

By turning to God in case of problems or in case of suffering.

By repenting their sins and asking for forgiveness from God.

By giving thanks to God for the blessings and for being good to them.

By contributing towards the construction of worshiping places (churches).

By showing love to one another especially to those who are suffering.

By practicing monotheism (i.e. worshiping the only true God) and turning away from other gods.

By giving offertory to God and tithing to God the only source of good things.

By praying to the Almighty God who is above other gods.

By preaching the gospel to all people all over the world so that they get to know about the good news of Jesus Christ.

By obeying the ten commandments and other laws of God since God calls for obedience if one is to receive his blessings.

By making holy journeys (pilgrimages) for example to Rome, Jerusalem, Namugongo Uganda martyr's shrine.

By fasting which is a form of prayer and a manifestation of faith.

HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD RESPOND TO UNEXPECTED SUFFERING

The Christians should respond to unexpected suffering in the following ways;

They should stand firm amidst suffering and stick to God as the only one with the answer.

They should pray for God's guidance since he is the only one who can take them through suffering.

They should praise God's name since he is the source of happiness.

They should behave with humility before God during suffering since pride is evil.

They should dedicate their lives to God since he is the provider of all solutions to all problems.

They should ask God to comfort them since He is the source of comfort

They should remain obedient to God and avoid disobedience since disobedience brings suffering.

They should remain faithful to God during suffering since He is the only one who can bring to an end to all forms of suffering and turn them in to blessings.

They should invite religious leaders to pray for them so that they overcome suffering.

They should endure suffering just as Jesus endured all forms of suffering to fulfill his mission.

They should have hope of overcoming suffering since suffering is not the end of life but it is part of life.

They should have trust and confidence in God as the only source of solution to those suffering.

They should go for counselling and take up constructive advice.

THE NATURE OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JOB.

Man is God's creature and under God's care as he was created by God right away from Genesis.

Man is very weak physically and spiritually and that is the reason why Job had no resistance and went ahead to complain.

Man is faithful; Job had faith that is why he didn't turn away from God despite the suffering.

Man doesn't admit sin easily. Even if Job was innocent, his friends took him to be like the rest who don't easily admit when they sin.

Man is sometimes righteous. Job was righteous despite the suffering he went through which could happen to any other innocent person.

Man is God's servant, because God asked Satan whether he had seen his servant Job.

Man who lives faithfully makes God happy. The reason why God sounded like boasting against Satan was because of the faith and honesty of Job.

Man is a source of temptation because Job's friends and wives were tempting him to curse God.

Man is supposed to worship God the almighty because this is what exactly Job did and maintained. This made Job win the war against Satan.

Man's wisdom can't be compared to God's wisdom because neither Job nor his friends knew God's programmes for Job.

Human understanding is too inadequate to understand what God wants, that is why Job and his friends failed to understand what God wanted from him.

Suffering is part of human life. It could be a means of proving man's faith, that is why Job suffered and out of endurance God rewarded him.

Man loses heart quickly. Job reached an extent of raising temper against God until when God's response opened his eyes.

THE NATURE OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JOB

God can be described in the following ways;

God is the creator. He is the one who created the universe. He also told Job that he had no power as a creature to challenge his creator.

God is omnipotent because it is through Him that all Job's wealth and health were destroyed and restored later.

God is the source of blessings. He blessed Job with all the wealth and children which were destroyed and later restored in multiples by God's grace.

God is a spirit. While responding to Job's complaints He didn't appear physically because He doesn't possess a physical body.

God humbles the proud. While rewarding Job, his friends were calmed down and Satan was put to shame.

God is the source of life. He was responsible for putting life into all the creatures that Job owned and even the new ones he got.

God is holy and righteous. At one time He criticized Job for halving complained to a righteous God.

God is caring and a concerned God. He showed concern when he did not completely abandon Job and He also rewarded Him after suffering.

God is the source of protection however much Job was tortured by Satan, God protected him and did not permit Satan to kill him.

He is a loving God. Because of His love, He intervened in Job's suffering to show him the proper way of conduct.

God is omnipresent. He was in heaven with the heavenly creatures and he was also on earth monitoring Job, Satan and Job's friends.

God is omniscient. He knew the reasons behind Job's suffering. He knows what goes on under the sea, on earth and in heaven.

THE NATURE OF SATAN IN RELATION TO THE BOOK OF JOB.

Satan can be described in the following ways;

Satan is one of the heavenly creatures. It is said that when the heavenly creatures appeared before God, Satan was among them. Therefore according to the book of Job, Satan is a heavenly creature.

Satan is omnipresent i.e he is found everywhere. According to the book of Job, Satan was roaming all over the earth before he appeared in heaven with other creatures

Satan is subjected to God's control. God permitted Satan to bring suffering into Job's life but he told him not to kill him.

Satan is the source of suffering on earth for example he brought different forms of suffering into Job's life. For example death of his children, he suffered from sores all over his body, lost animals and servants.

Satan is unrighteous. Because of being unrighteous that is why Job's wife tried to persuade him to do what was wrong. She told him to curse God and die by doing so she was trying to lead him into sin which was as a result of Satan's influence.

Satan is the source of pain and is always happy on seeing people suffering. For example Satan was happy on seeing Job undergoing a lot of suffering.

Satan is interested in seeing people turning away from God. He tried so hard to bring different forms of suffering into Job's life so that Job turns away from God.

Satan can be used by God to test people's faith. For example God used Satan to test Job and see whether he would turn away from him, however he remained faithful.

Satan has powers but his powers are not above God's powers, that is why he did not overpower Job to the extent of losing faith.

Satan leads to suffering and misery. Because of Satan, Job experienced a lot of suffering and misery in his life and family.

Satan can cause death. Job's children, the animals and servants all died because Satan had a hand in their death.

Satan is the source of evil and sorts of misfortunes poverty inclusive. Job lost all his wealth and became poor because of Satan's influence.

Satan is the cause of diseases and all sorts of destruction, for example job's health was attacked by a skin disease and it was covered by boils to the extent of job losing his appearance.

Satan is the cause of sorrow. During the period of suffering , job's life was characterized by grief and sorrow.

Satan is the source of temptation. Job's wife tempted job to curse God and die because of satan's influence.

Satan hates righteous people. He seemed not to be comfortable with job's reputation before God.

Satan ruins relationships between man and God. He strived so hard to ruin job's relationship with God.

Satan creates conflicts between married people or it distorts the relationship between married people. Forexample Satan made job's wife denounce the husband.

JOB'S COMPLAINT TO GOD AND HIS FRIENDS' CHALLENGE.

His friends' challenge was as follows:

Job's friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar visited him to comfort him about the suffering he was experiencing.

On meeting Job, they wept and then kept quite for 7 days while meditating upon Job's suffering.

After making a number of complaints, his friends challenged his faith and trust in God by accusing him of sins he might have committed although he was claiming to be innocent.

Eliphaz commended Job for being faithful and for trusting in God the Almighty.

Eliphaz asked Job whether he would remember a single case where a righteous man has ever met disaster.

According to Eliphaz, and among all the Israelites, suffering was a result of wickedness. He was indirectly telling Job to understand that he was being punished for the sins he committed.

Eliphaz said that God alone is righteous and no man is blameless. This was confirming that Job's suffering was not without a cause. He could have committed evil against God.

Eliphaz was trying to convict Job by saying that God doesn't trust anybody, even if they are the heavenly servants since God finds faults even with His angels.

Basing on Eliphaz's analysis of God, Job had no claim of being innocent, if also heavenly angels could be found guilty.

Eliphaz went ahead and asked Job to turn to God. This meant that he wanted Job to admit that he was a sinner and therefore ask for forgiveness from God.

Eliphaz continued to ask Job to turn to God, meaning that if he admitted his sinfulness God would forgive him and end his suffering.

According to Eliphaz, it is God only who sustains life by doing great things beyond man's understanding. This means that Job had not mastered God's nature properly.

Eliphaz finally gives his view about Job's suffering insisting that suffering is a punishment from God for wrong doing.

Eliphaz also says that happy is the person whom God corrects which stresses that Eliphaz was forcing Job to accept that he was a wrong doer.

Bildad also spoke out against Job's suffering in the following ways;

He challenged Job and said that God never twists justice and He never fails to do what is right. Bildad continued that if Job claims innocence, then at least his children might have sinned against God and were the cause of his troubles.

Bildad stressed that because of Job's wickedness, God had abandoned him.

Zophar reacted as follows:

He said that Job was wicked and had full responsibility of his suffering.

Zophar advised Job to put his heart right with God. He also told him to put away evil and all wrong deeds from his home.

Zophar continued to say that Job claimed to be pure, but if God asked him, he would not have an answer. In this way Zophar wanted to make Job confess for his evil deeds against God.

Zophar believed that God's mysterious powers had enabled him to see Job's evil and therefore put him to punishment.

Zophar advised Job to give up evil, face the world, be courageous, so as to have his miseries solved.

JOB'S RESPONSE TO HIS FRIENDS' CHALLENGE

Job insisted that the God whom he offered sacrifices to, whom he thought he had known, had disappeared from his life and was now shooting poisonous arrows towards him.

Job cried to God to let him die saying that he had reached the end of his strength, so he wanted to rest forever.

Job expressed his disappointment to those who claimed to be his friends, because they were not showing him where he went wrong but only criticizing him.

He compared his friends with the streams which dried up when people were desperately thirsty, because instead of consoling him, they just looked for ways and loopholes of making him suffer the more.

Job challenged his friends to let him know in which ways he had wronged God, promising to render them audience if they would show him where he had committed any evil.

He told them that mere mentioning that he was guilty of evil was leaving a lot to be desired, it was unjust and annoying.

He insisted that he was righteous; confessing before them that he knows what is right and wrong.

He responded to Bildad's speech and said that no man can win his case against God and no one can argue with God and win a debate.

Job stressed that he was innocent but he would not argue with God. He said that whether one is sick, innocent, guilty God would destroy them.

Job told his friends that if he was guilty, God would have given him the answer, but his friends were looking at things like human beings.

He told his friends again who claimed to possess wisdom that their wisdom was earthly wisdom and they would die with it.

He emphasized that he was suffering because of God's will and because God had control over all the creatures including man.

He compared himself with a tree that has been cut down, that even if he had been deprived of everything, God would make him prosperous again.

He asked his friends to stop tormenting him but give him words of encouragement and comfort.

He had expected his friends to be supportive but instead they were blaming him, which proved that they were of no use to him during suffering.

He surrendered his life to God as the only source of life, the only one who gives and takes away and the only comforter to those suffering because his friends had failed to support him.

Job said that his friends had betrayed him by speaking badly about him.

He expressed the terrible situation in which he was, that all his relatives and friends despised him because of his appearance and his only trust was in God who would eventually come to his rescue.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO JOB'S COMPLAINT

After Job's complaint and his claim of innocence, the Lord spoke out to him and asked him several questions that; 'who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant empty words?' Job 38:2.

God asked Job to stand up like a man and answer the questions put before him.

God asked Job whether he was there when He was creating the universe and deciding how large it would be and so many other questions.

After admitting his foolishness for having challenged the Almighty God, Job was asked by God to repent.

The Lord went ahead and challenged Job for having questioned his justice.

God told Job that he was ashamed and Job accepted his shame for whatever he had said.

The Lord turned to Job's friends; Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and expressed his anger against them for speaking ill against Him.

He told Job's friends to get 7 bulls, and 7 rams to be given as a sacrifice for their sinfulness. God told Job's friends to bring the sacrifice to Job, who would present them to God and pray for them.

After Job's prayer for his friends, God restored Job to his original good health.

Then God made Job prosperous again giving him more sheep, Carmel, servants, horses, cattle and children. He got 7 sons and 3 beautiful daughters.

God also blessed Job's last days and He let him live for another 140 years.

RELEVANCE OF JOB'S EXPERIENCE TO THE MODERN CHRISTIANS.

The relevance of Job's experience is as follows:

Christians should have faith in God just as Job had despite the suffering he experienced.

Christians should praise God despite the suffering they may experience. On learning about the misfortunes that befell him, Job praised the Lord.

Christians should remain humble and calm during suffering. Job did not question God during the time of suffering.

Christians should pray for God's assistance. Job prayed to God to intervene in his suffering but he did not turn to other gods.

Christians should live an exemplary life. Job showed a good example when he remained faithful during suffering.

Christians should endure trials and temptations. Job endured despite the suffering he experienced.

Christians should live a righteous life. Job lived a sinless life therefore he was righteous despite the suffering.

Christians should trust and have confidence in God likewise Job did not lose trust and confidence in God despite the suffering he experienced.

Christians should visit those in suffering Job's friends visited him when they heard about his misery.

Christians should be careful when passing judgement upon others. God was annoyed with Job's friends who blamed Job for the suffering he was experiencing.

Christians should show care, concern and comfort those suffering unlike Job's friends who failed to comfort him but instead caused more suffering to him.

Christians should praise and thank God for whatever they receive. Job thanked God and praised Him when he heard about the misfortunes that had come his way.

Christians should pray for God's blessings. Job's last part of his life was blessed by God and he was given more than he lost.