

## ***THE OLD TESTAMENT***

### **LESSON 2**

## **YAHWEH THE TRUE GOD**

*Objective* : To understand that Yahweh is the true God and that everything happens according to his wish.

Israel is God's chosen people. Their history starts with Abraham "Father of the faithful." 'Go to the land I want to show you' was God's order to Abraham. According to that, he started out from Haran, crossed River Euphrates, turned west and reached Canaan. First he stayed at Shechem and later lived in the land between Bethel and Ai and worshipped God.

God tested Abraham's faith. He was ready to sacrifice his only son. When Abraham was coming down Mount Moriah with his son, he heard God's message, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen 22:18). Because of Joseph, who was Pharaoh's minister, Jacob and his sons came to Egypt and settled in Goshon. They became a strong clan in Egypt but were persecuted and harassed by the Egyptians in many ways. To liberate them from slavery, God chose Moses who grew up in the palace. When God's wrath came upon Egypt and the Pharaoh, the people were punished with various types of plagues, and the Israelites were liberated. The huge crowd of people, which started for Canaan, included adult males numbering more than 600,000. God parted the red Sea and led them to the other shore. They traveled for about 40 years through the deserts. God fed them with Manna and Quails and gave them water from rock. When his death was nearing, Moses called all the people and gave them the last message, which was not to forget the true God. At the age of 120, Moses climbed Mount Nebo and standing on Pisgah Peak, saw the Promised Land and died. Then Joshua became the leader. In the same way Moses crossed the Red Sea, Joshua and the Israelites crossed River Jordan and put up tents at Gilgal. After capturing Jericho, they captured the town of Ai, south and North of Canaan. At Mount Ebal God's commandments were written on stone and he made them strong and steadfast in the faith of God.

After Joshua, judges were appointed to lead Israelites. Including Deborah, the prophetess, 15 judges took up leadership of Israelites. When they started living in Palestine, their unity was lost. Forgetting the true God, they started

worshipping Baal of the heathens. They lost their moral values also. Lack of strong leadership was evident. This led to the rule of kings.

### **Reign of the Kings (B.C. 1050 – 586)**

Saul belonging to the tribe of Benjamin was ordained as the first king of Israel by Samuel. He was able to instill a sense of unity into people and made Israel a powerful nation. After Saul's death, David became King of Israel (BC 1010 – 970) He expanded the empire. He wanted to build a beautiful temple in Jerusalem. For that, he brought the ark of the Covenant from Baalah in Judah and kept it in the tent that David had set up for it. David's immoral act of marrying Uriah's wife Bathsheba angered God. But prophet Nathan made him understand the depth of his sins and David repented and wrote Psalm 51. He chose Solomon as his successor. Solomon's reign was a period of prosperity (970 – 930). In 7 year's time; he built the beautiful temple at Jerusalem. Solomon initially trusted in the true God but later forgot him. He made altars for his many wives to worship their many heathen gods. . As a result, after the wise King Solomon's death, Israel was divided into two. The northern part known as Israel came to be ruled by 10 tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam. The Southern part known as Judah was ruled by Rehoboam, son of Solomon. Israel's capital was Samaria and Judea's capital was Jerusalem.

### **Kings of Israel**

19 kings belonging to various tribes ruled Israel. Most of them were weak rulers and idol worshippers. They were acting against the commandments given to Moses from God. During the reign of King Ahab, prophet Elijah proved who the true God was. Israel was attacked by the Assyrian Empire several times and majority of the people were taken as prisoners to Assyria. As a result, Israel became nonexistent. Foreigners started living in Samaria. Children of their descendants and the local residents are known as Samartians.

### **Judah**

After the fall of the northern region, Judah existed for about 150 years more. 20 kings ruled Judah one after the other. All of them were from David's tribe. Prophet Isaiah urged people to depend on God instead of foreign powers. Still, kings gave tribute to enemy kings and continued as puppet kings. During the reign of Zedekiah, in the war with Nebuchadnezzar, Judea was defeated

badly in BC 586. The king and a good number of Jews were taken as slaves to Babylon. The temple at Jerusalem was destroyed completely. All the silver and gold utensils were taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem and the land of Judah, which was once ruled by mighty kings, became nearly non-existent in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

**Questions:**

- ① How did God miraculously look after the Israelites during their journey through the desert? *Save them from the desert*
2. Explain the circumstances by which the rule of kings started in Israel. *Let people elect*
- ③ Explain the circumstances by which David wrote Psalms 51. *King David*
4. How did Jerusalem and Judea come into non-existence by 6<sup>th</sup> century BC? *Nebuchadnezzar*

**Fill in the blanks:**

1. Capital of Israel was *Jerusalem*.
2. Capital of Judea was *Jerusalem*.

**Memory Verse:**

*Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

**LESSON 3**

**YAHWEH THE TRUE GOD (CONTINUATION)  
PERIOD OF EXILE (BC 586-516)**

Most of the people who were taken as prisoners by the enemy kings from the land of Canaan to Babylon engaged themselves in farming and business. One group of people was attracted to idol worship and they rejected the true faith. Few people like Daniel were favored by the king and held offices in the government. Most of the people lived a life of unhappiness and despair. Prophet Ezekiel lived amongst such people comforting and encouraging them to lead a pious life. Under the shade of trees and riverbanks, they used to get together to worship and pray.