

Lesson 14

- Nothing in the Old Testament is excessive
- God will not desert his people
- The church: a community

Nothing in the Old Testament is excessive

Lesson 14a

Nothing in the Old Testament is excessive

Sometimes when we read the Old Testament we come across passages that do not immediately make sense to us.

Examples of this are the long genealogies full of difficult names. It is very tempting to skip these passages. However, these passages and other seemingly obscure parts of the Old Testament do have a function. They tell us of God's faithfulness and announce the coming of Jesus and his work of salvation.

We will use a few examples to try and explain that nothing in the Old Testament is excessive.

Genealogies: warning and good news

In Genesis 4:17-26 we find two brief genealogies, those of Cain and Seth, the sons of Adam and Eve. It might seem odd to include the genealogies of two sons of the same father. However, they both lead completely different lives. Cain and his descendants live a life without God whereas Seth and his descendants live a life with God.

The difference between the two families is very clear from their way of life. After Adam and Eve had to leave paradise, the struggle for survival had started. From that time man is given over to sin, illness and death.

The descendants of Cain try to manage themselves. They think they can cope without God. They seek strength in their unity. Even during Cain's life the first villages come into existence. In these villages the people feel comparatively safe. Cain's descendants believe in the survival of the fittest. Lamech is a typical example of this attitude. Whoever touches him will have to die.

This attitude makes people hard on one another. At the same time their lifestyle seems to make them flourish. They reach a high level of sophistication when it comes to crafts, art and culture. They are things make life easier and more pleasant.

However, Cain's descendants do not thank God for their prosperity. They have forgotten about God and only live for themselves.

It seems there is very little of interest to say about Seth's descendants. Unlike the descendants of Cain they contribute very little to the development of the arts and general culture. The bible tells us only one thing about the descendants of Seth. They call on the name of the Lord. They also get together, not to protect one another but to seek God's help and to thank Him for everything He does and gives. They admit that in everything they are dependent on God and they turn to Him for everything. They do not take justice into their own hands but rather have a desire for God to rule over their lives.

The two genealogies show two different ways of life. The division has been there ever since man's rebellion against God until this very day. There are people who rely on themselves in this life and people who know that only God can save their lives.

In the bible we repeatedly come across these two ways of life as they appear in the genealogies in Genesis 4. They form the theme of Psalm 1:

Psalm 1

*'Blessed is the man
Who does not walk in the council of the wicked
Or stand in the way of sinners
Or sit in the seat of mockers.
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in season
And whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.*

*Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
That the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement,*

*Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.'*

In the first book of Chronicles we find another genealogy. It runs from Adam to Abraham. At first sight it seems an ordinary genealogy. However, careful reading of the first verse will show that Cain's descendants are no longer part of the genealogy. After the flood they have disappeared from the earth. God shows that for the preparation of the future He does not need those people who thought they did not need Him.

Although the punishment of the flood was severe, it did not wash away all the sin from the earth. People remain sinful and some of the names in the genealogy are reminders of that, like Noah and Ham.

Something else the genealogy shows is that the number of people who want to serve God is small. Many of the families forget God and are not interested in the coming salvation. Nevertheless, the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1 shows us that God's work continues. The Saviour will be born from Abraham's family and when He has done his saving work all people on the earth will be able to call on that salvation.

At first sight genealogies might be no more than boring lists of names. However, they do contain a message for us. All those names should remind us of other stories in the bible and the way the people in the time of the bible chose to live: with or without God. They remind us that even people who have a desire to live with God turn away from Him again and again. The genealogies show us very clearly that salvation from sin and death is not possible through any man. At the same time they show us God's goodness and his willingness to always continue with sinful people. He made sure the line to the coming Saviour would not be interrupted. He held history in his hands so that his Son could be born and so that He could save us.

The tabernacle: God wants to live with his people

We have looked at the function of genealogies. However, there are other parts of the Old Testament that seem excessive, for example the detailed description of the building of the tabernacle. When the people of Israel are on their way to the land of Canaan God makes a covenant with them at mount Sinai. After God has given the Ten Commandments to the Israelites Moses climbs mount Sinai to meet God. During this meeting God tells Moses that He wants to live with his people and the people will have to build a tabernacle for Him.

In Exodus 25-28 we read a detailed description of what God wants the tabernacle to look like. The description is so minute that it is easy for us to picture it. God prescribes the smallest detail including the number of rings and hooks on the curtains. Every object that is to go into the tabernacle is to be made exactly as God prescribes it.

These detailed prescriptions tell us that it is not up to the Israelites to decide how they want to serve God. God decides what his tent and the objects in it should look like.

Exodus 35-39 seems an exact repetition of Exodus 25-28. These chapters describe how the tabernacle and the objects for it are made. It is almost literally the same as what we read in chapters 25-28. We can tell that God's instructions have been followed neatly. We might think this repetition is excessive. Would it not have been enough to say that God's instructions were followed?

However, even this repetition is important. It shows us that the Israelites were obedient to God. They make everything exactly as God told them to. They show that they want to serve God the way He wants.

It was not always like that. In Exodus 32 we read that the Israelites did come up with their own ways to serve God. During Moses' forty days on mount Sinai with God, they made a golden calf. The calf was supposed to be an image of God. That way the Israelites wanted to have God within reach. But that was not how God wanted to be served.

Nothing in the Old Testament is excessive

From Exodus 35-39 we can tell that the Israelites repented from that attitude. They now keep to God's rules. They build the tabernacle exactly according to God's instructions. When they have finished, God comes to live with them.

It turns out that the detailed prescriptions for the building of the tabernacle and almost literal repetition of it when it is built, serve to bring us a message. We learn that it is God who decides how believers should serve Him. We also see that God blesses people who serve Him in the right way. He wants to live with them. In the time of the Old Testament God lives with his people in the tabernacle, now He wants to live with us through his Holy Spirit.

The division of the land: God provides for his people

Another example of information that seems excessive to us is the detailed account of the division of the land of Canaan in the book of Joshua. In chapter 13:1-7 we read how God tells Joshua to divide the land between the different tribes of Israel, even if the land has not been conquered yet. The chapters 13-21 describe which part of the land will go to which tribe. The borders are carefully determined with a list of villages and towns.

We might think that it would have been enough to mention after verse 7 that Joshua indeed divided the land between the tribes as he had been told. However, a passage like this one shows us what God is like. First of all it shows God's reliability. He promised to Abraham:

Genesis 17:8

'The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.'

Abraham does not live to see that moment but the promise is true to his descendants. For that reason the land is called an inheritance. Even before the land has been conquered the inheritance is divided. Suitably, the account of the division of the land ends with the words:

Joshua 21:45

'Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.'

From the detailed account we see how God provides for his people. He pays attention to every single tribe. There are large parts that still need to be conquered, but after that God makes sure that none of the tribes lack anything. The country is divided fairly; every tribe receives what it needs.

Good attention required

From the examples that we looked at we see that we should not skip seemingly excessive passages. They require our attention. We should ask ourselves: why would God want to repeat this? Or: Why does God want to go into such great detail? It might be the fulfilment of a promise or a special lesson God wants to teach us.

Everything in the Old Testament is there because God wants us to know Him better. Even in passages that do not seem interesting enough to read at all, we discover something about God. In this lesson we have seen how He leads history, that He wants to live with us and that He provides for his children. If we realise that God did not spare his own Son to save us from sin and death, what more do we want than to get to know Him?

Questions

1. In Ezra 2 we find a list of names of people who return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Many of the people on the list will later have to do service in the temple.
 - a. Why is it important that someone can prove from what tribe he is with a genealogy? Read Exodus 28:1 and look up lesson 9a.
 - b. What can we conclude from Ezra 2:59-62 about the way in which the people who return to Israel want to live their lives?

God will not desert his people

Lesson 14b

God will not desert his people

Because the Israelites did not repent despite the many warnings of the prophets, God punished them. They were taken into exile to Assyria. Eventually also the Judeans have to go into exile.

Judah's captivity

The Judeans ignore God's prophets. They do not turn from their ways. God's patience lasts for centuries but eventually He decides to punish them. He uses Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon to do so.

Nebuchadnezzar attacks Judah and conquers them. For a few years the Judeans pay taxes to him but then they begin to protest. Nebuchadnezzar's reaction is fierce. He robs the temple and the king's palace of everything and captures all people of any importance. He takes them to Babylon, the capital of his empire, which is the present day Iraq.

Only the poorest people stay behind in Judea.

Nebuchadnezzar appoints Zedekiah, a descendant of David, as king over them. Zedekiah is a king who does what is '*evil in the eyes of the LORD*', just as his father had done before him.

It turns out Zedekiah has not learned a lot from what has happened. Eight years later he too rebels against Babylon and again Nebuchadnezzar takes measures. He completely destroys Jerusalem and the temple. The people who had not been taken into exile yet are now also taken to Babylon.

Zedekiah is punished severely. The last thing he ever sees are his sons being killed in front of his eyes and then his eyes are taken out and he is put into chains and taken to Babylon.

God promises salvation

It looks like this is going to be the end of the people of God.

The inhabitants of Israel and Judah have been taken away from their land. You would expect that God's people would now slowly mingle with other people and disappear.

However, centuries before the captivity, God had told his people that there would be a future for Israel. The exile would not be the end. Prophets like Isaiah and Amos had not only predicted God's punishment but also spoken about the time when God would be satisfied. God gave them a vision beyond the captivity.

Isaiah could already speak words of comfort to God's people. The punishment would have an end:

Isaiah 40:1-2

*'Comfort, comfort my people,
Says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
And proclaim to her
That her hard service has been completed,
That her sin has been paid for,
That she has received from the LORD's hand
Double for all her sins.'*

Jerusalem: the people of God

As we saw in the last lesson, the book of Isaiah begins with a court case. Heaven and earth are witnesses when God accuses his people. However, heaven and earth will also be witnesses when Jahweh's favour is on his people again and when He comforts it:

Isaiah 49:13

*'Shout for joy, O heavens;
Rejoice, O earth;
Burst into song, O mountains!
For the LORD comforts his people
And will have compassion on his afflicted ones.'*

The prophet Amos also announces salvation after punishment:

Amos 9:14

*'I will bring back my exiled people Israel;
They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink their wine;*

They will eat gardens and eat their fruit.'

God holds his people in his hands

The prophets have not only announced salvation in the ages before the captivity. Also during the captivity God shows his love for his people. Even then He sends his prophets. Ezekiel is an example. He tells the people in Babylon that their captivity is only temporary. God promises:

Ezekiel 36:24

'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.'

Ezekiel warns the people that God will not bring them back to their land because of their own goodness. Rather, He wants to show his power and holiness to the other nations. When they went into exile the Israelites had dishonoured God's name. The nations had mocked and said: 'They are the people of Jahweh but they have to leave their country. Obviously, the gods of Babylon are stronger than Jahweh'. It was painful for God to see his name defiled like that. When God brings his people back it is not because of the goodness of his people but moreover for the honour of his name.

Ezekiel predicts moreover that God will do more than simply bring his people back. He will make them new people. He will give them a new heart. They will receive a warm heart of flesh rather than a heart of stone. They will have a different attitude towards God and towards each other. God promises:

Ezekiel 36:27-28

'And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.'

Daniel

Another prophet who lives during the time of captivity is Daniel. Daniel is brought to Babylon when he is very young. Together with three of his friends he receives an important position in king Nebuchadnezzar's palace.

Read: Daniel 2

2:4 *Aramaic*: This is the beginning of a passage that is originally written in Aramaic, a language related to Hebrew.

King Nebuchadnezzar has an upsetting dream. He thinks the dream might have an important message and he therefore bids all astrologists and other people who are able to tell the future to come to him. He wants them to explain his dream and not only that, they have to tell the king what his dream was. If they cannot do so, the king will know that they are unreliable and they will be killed.

No one is able to tell the king what he has dreamed. The king wants to kill everyone, also Daniel and his friends. However, God stops him. He enables Daniel to tell king Nebuchadnezzar his dream and explain its meaning. The dream shows that there will be an end to the Babylonian empire. Another empire will take its place. But that empire and all the ones to follow will also come to an end. Eventually every empire in the world will be defeated by God's empire.

Nebuchadnezzar is impressed, not just by Daniel but also by Daniel's God. He understands that Daniel's God is the one who reigns over everything and everyone.

The return

God's promise to Daniel and the other prophets is fulfilled. After seventy years, the Babylonian empire is defeated by the Persians. God uses Cyrus, the king of Persia, to bring his people back to their own land. It happens exactly as Isaiah had predicted.

Read: Ezra 1:1-11

Everyone who belongs to God's people can go back to their land. Not only the people of Judah but also the people of Israel. The Persian Empire includes the empire where the Israelites had been taken to a few hundred years earlier. God makes sure his people do not return with empty hands. King Cyrus tells his people to give the Israelites gold, silver,

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goods and livestock. Besides, they voluntarily give objects for the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus makes sure that everything that Nebuchadnezzar had stolen from the temple in Jerusalem is returned.

Not all the Israelites go back to Jerusalem. Many of them were born in Babylon and feel at home there. They want to stay. The people who do go are very grateful to God. To them it is like a dream. And not only they are overwhelmed but also those people who thought that the God of Israel was less powerful than the gods of Babylon. We know this from a song that Israelites would sing about it:

Psalms 126:1-2

*'When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion,
We were like men who dreamed.
Our mouths were filled with laughter,
Our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
The LORD has done great things for them'*

Rebuilding the temple

Almost 50,000 Israelites return to their country under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a descendant of David and the high priest Joshua. Very soon they make a start with the rebuilding of the temple. They build an altar so that the priests can bring sacrifices again. Then the foundation of the temple is put in place. When that is done, the people celebrate. They make music and sing to thank and praise God. Far and wide people can hear the joy of God's people over what their God has done.

However, soon after this day of celebration, the building work comes to a halt. The Samaritans*, people who lived in the country while the Israelites were in exile, obstruct the building work on the temple.

After a few years God sends the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to his people. He calls the people to continue the rebuilding of his temple: 'You live in beautifully built homes while God's house is a ruin! How can you do that? Go to the mountains, chop down some trees and continue to build!' The

people listen and start with new fervour. A few years later the temple is finished and the people celebrate.

Rebuilding the city walls

Although the temple has been rebuilt, Jerusalem is still a city without walls. Any enemy could effortlessly take the city. The nations surrounding Israel mock the Israelites because of it. Then God causes Nehemiah, an Israelite who works for the Persian king, to be appointed as governor over Judah. The king of Persia allows him to go to Judah and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah does a thorough job. Together with other Israelites he begins the rebuilding of the walls and the gates. Despite people's mocking (that wall would collapse if a fox would jump on it!), despite resistance and despite the bad rumours that people try to spread about the Israelites with the Persian government, the Israelites manage to rebuild the walls in no time.

When the walls are finished Israel has a safe place to live again and the people know it. The completion of the walls is celebrated with a party that lasts for a whole week. During the celebration a teacher of the law called Ezra reads for hours from the first five bible books containing God's law. He reminds the people that they are only truly safe when they keep God's law.

The listeners are impressed. They are sad about the things they have done wrong in the past and confess their sins to God. All the people who are serious about the covenant with God swear an oath to keep God's commands. This way the Israelites make a new start with their life in the service of God, their true King.

Waiting for the Saviour

Israel is back in the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. Nevertheless, that does not automatically mean an end to all difficulty. The Israelites do not have their own king. Their desire for the promised Saviour increases.

God has told his people about Him through prophets like Isaiah and Micah. The people in this time know much more than their ancestors Adam and Eve did. Micah says for example:

Micah 5:2

'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.'

From these words of Micah the Israelites know a few things about the future Saviour. He will be born in Bethlehem, where David was from. He will, like David, be a descendant of Jacob's son Judah. He will be king over Israel and He will be more than an ordinary man. His origins are from of old, which cannot be said of any ordinary man.

The prophets have predicted more about the promised Saviour, but no one knew when He would be born. All the Israelites could do was wait in expectation.

In the next lesson we will look at the coming of the promised Saviour.

Questions

- 1a. What do the foreign nations think about God during the time when the Israelites are in captivity? Read Ezekiel 36:19-21 and Daniel 2:47. Explain these two different reactions.
- 1b. What is their reaction to Israel's return?
- 2a. The captivity is a punishment.
- 2b. The captivity is meant as a medicine.
With which statement do you agree? Explain.
3. Through his prophets God made things known about his promised Saviour.
 - a. What could the Israelites know from Isaiah 9:5-6?
 - b. What could they know from Isaiah 53:5-7?

The church: a community

Lesson 14c

The church: a community

In this lesson we will first discuss why the Apostolic Creed calls the church a communion of saints. Then we will look into how we know if a church is a good church.

The communion of saints

The Apostolic Creed calls the church a 'communion of saints'. What does that mean? Two things:

- The church is a community of people who belong to Jesus Christ.
- The church is a community of people who belong to each other.

Belonging to Jesus

The church is a community of people who belong to Jesus Christ and turn to Him for their salvation. Due to the work of Jesus, God no longer counts these people as wicked and guilty. Because of their relationship with Jesus they are counted as holy by God. They are people who are on God's side and are like Him.

Holy people are not perfect and neither are they hypocrites who pretend to be good. They are people who in themselves are just as bad as everyone else but who have been washed with the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus they are clean.

There is a very strong relationship between Jesus and the church. The bible compares it to the relationship between a husband and a wife. Just like in a good relationship a husband would do anything for his wife, so Jesus would do anything for the church. He even gave his life for the church. Just like a husband and a wife love one another and share everything, so Jesus and the church share everything. Jesus does not keep what He has earned for Himself, but rather He gives it to the

church. Everyone who belongs to the church will have part in what Jesus has earned. Jesus promises:

- Forgiveness of sins
- The resurrection of the body
- Everlasting life

(These three aspects will be discussed in lesson 17c).

This is not everything. Jesus gives more to his church. Every member of the church receives special gifts. They can be a variety of different gifts. Some people receive a lot of wisdom, others are good leaders; some people have a lot of money and others a lot of time. All those things are gifts from Jesus Christ who gives them via the Holy Spirit to the church. We understand why the church members receive these gifts when we look at the other aspect of being a church: the members form a community together.

Belonging together

The church is not only a community of people who belong to Jesus Christ; it is also a community people who belong to each other. That explains why Jesus gives the members of the church all these different gifts, to help one another. Christians should not enjoy their gifts in isolation. They need to consider how they can help others with their gifts, whether it is money or spare time, a gift to listen, to explain the bible or to work with their hands.

The bible compares the church to a body. Just like the different parts of a body form one living unity together, so Jesus and the church form one unity. Jesus Christ is like the head of the body and the church like its members. Jesus rules over everything. He leads the church. The members of the church are like the other members of the body. Some people are its hands; others are ears, eyes or feet.

In a body every member has its separate function and every member needs to be in place. The same is true for the church. Every believer is different. Everyone has received different gifts. Every gift is important and everyone can use his gift in the church. Every member is needed for the church to function as a whole. The church members need one another to form the body of Jesus together.

Which church?

From the bible we know that it is vital for a believer to belong to the church. But which church should you choose? There are hundreds of different churches. What is a good church? Where should you be to serve God? Or does it not matter as long as you feel at home?

Many people believe it does not matter much what church you belong to. They say: 'We all believe in the same God. When you get to heaven God will surely not ask you what church you belonged to.'

Some people even believe it is a good thing that there are so many different churches. Everyone experiences his faith in a different way. Some people like to sing a lot in church; some people are very modern, some like old fashioned preaching. Everyone is different and everyone should be able to go a church where he feels at home.

What the bible says about the church

However understandable this way of thinking about the church is, it is not right. The bible does not say anywhere that it is good that there are numerous different denominations within the church.

On the contrary, Jesus, the head of the church, prayed that the Christians would be united the way He and his Father one. There should be one flock of sheep under the leadership of the one Shepherd, Jesus.

This implies that Christians should never be happy about the existence of so many different denominations. They should do everything to end the separation and come to unity.

On the other hand is the bible very clear about the fact that unity should never be achieved at the expense of faithfulness to Jesus. A church that wants to be faithful to Jesus Christ will not be able to form a unity with a church that does not want to follow Jesus. It is possible for a church not to follow Jesus. To use the illustration of the shepherd and his flock again, a shepherd can lead his flock in the wrong way. This can be fatal for the sheep that are under his care. The same way a church can go the wrong way under the influence of bad leaders. We will look at a few examples from the bible.

Bad shepherds

In the time of the Old Testament the priests were responsible to show the Israelites, the members of the church, how they should serve God. However, sometimes there were priests who did what God had explicitly forbidden. That way they gave the people of God the wrong example.

The same was true for the kings of Israel. They were to be examples to the people in the worship of God. Some kings were good examples. However, many kings lived as if God did not exist. They brought the people onto the wrong track. Under the influence of priests or kings who were disobedient to God, it would often go wrong with God's people. A large part of the flock would go the wrong way under the leadership of a bad shepherd.

The good shepherd

In Jesus' time it was no different. Jesus was often angry with the religious leaders of his time. He accused them of being bad shepherds who did not take good care of the flock. In front of these people Jesus would say: '*I am the good shepherd*'. He did not only say so, He also showed it to be true. He gave his life to save his sheep from destruction.

Faithful shepherd under Jesus' authority

In the last lesson in the c-series, we already talked about shepherds who lead the flock under Jesus' authority. The bible sets certain criteria for these people. The men who lead the

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church should be faithful to their calling. They should not preach their own insights to the church members but tell them what the bible says. Nothing more and nothing less.

Responsible church members

Sheep are not very intelligent. They follow their shepherd even if he goes the wrong way. Church members should be different. They are very well able to judge their leaders. From the bible they can know if their pastor is speaking the truth or if he proclaims things that are not according to the truth of the bible. A pastor who does not take certain parts of the bible seriously or who calls things right that God has called wrong, is not a good shepherd. It can be fatal to follow such a shepherd.

Looking for a church

We often judge a church by its members. Are they friendly, are they honest, are they hospitable? This is not surprising. We expect from Christians that they live the way God has told them to in the bible.

On the other hand, we should not forget that also Christians have to struggle every day against their own bad nature. Satan continually tries to lay his hands on them. That is why Christians often do not live up to the high standards that God has given them. Even in a church are people with an unpleasant character and people who make or have made bad mistakes. They should be fighting against it but that it not always visible to the outside world.

It is important what the people in a church are like but it should not determine everything. It would therefore be wrong to only look at the people when you are looking for a church. That way you could end up going to a church that is going in the wrong direction only because the people are friendly.

Three characteristics

What then determines if a church is a good church? How can we recognise the church of Jesus Christ? From the bible we can tell that there are three characteristics that church should have:

1. The bible is treated well.
2. The sacraments*, baptism and communion*, are used in the right way.
3. Discipline is practised

We will now look at the first characteristic. In the next lesson we will look at the two other characteristics of a good church.

Treating the bible well

The first question to ask about a church is whether they treat the bible in the right way. That is a determining factor. Both other characteristics are really derived from this one. What is the right way to treat the bible? God tells us in the bible. The church should accept the whole bible from beginning to end as the word of God. Nothing should be added to it and nothing taken from it.

In the church of Jesus Christ the bible should have decisive power on every point. For a pastor and the elders that means that they should explain the bible in an honest way. They should not use it to support their own opinion but let the bible speak for itself. They should not take passages out of their context but let the bible speak as a whole. When a pastor preaches, he should be able to say: 'This is what God wants from us. The bible tells us so in these passages'.

The fact that the bible should have decisive power in the church also means that the church members should listen to it. They need to obey what God asks from them in the bible.

In the next lesson we will discuss the other two characteristics.

Questions

1. The church can be compared to a body. Explain. Read also 1 Corinthians 12:27, Colossians 1:18 and Romans 12:4-8.
- 2a. If the church that you belong to goes the wrong way, you should leave it and find a church that does follow Jesus.

2b. If the church that you belong to goes the wrong way, you should not leave it. Would you leave an ill mother alone? With which statement do you agree and why?