

MAJOR CONTROVACIES IN MARK.

JESUS ASSOCIATES WITH THE OUTCASTS

The call of Levi: 2: 13 – 17

- In the Jewish community, those who collected taxes for the Roman government were always seen as sinners. Therefore, they were always discriminated.
- Mark presents Jesus with Levi who was considered to be an outcast by the Pharisees.
- After teaching the people Jesus was moving and saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. He requested him to follow Jesus and Levi did so.
- This incident earned Jesus a situation of unpopularity before the Jewish leaders for he associated with dishonest people.
- Jesus visited Levi house and had a meal with many tax collectors, other sinners and His disciples.
- This angered the scribes and the Pharisees who saw Jesus eating with these people. To them it was unlawful since it could result into personal defilement.
- The Jewish leaders said to his disciples why Jesus who was taken as a man of God was eating and drinking with sinners.
- To them Jesus was degrading himself to the level of those he mixed with.
- Having heard them Jesus told them that those who are well need no doctor but the sick.
- This meant that Jesus was aware of the sinful nature of the people he dined with but had power to save them from their sins.
- He concluded that he had not come for the righteous but for sinners to repent.

IMPLICATIONS/SIGNIFICANCE/MEANING OF THE EVENT

1. Jesus does not discriminate, he welcomes and associates with all people regardless of their status.
2. It illustrated the grace and wisdom of God as revealed through his son Jesus.
3. It showed that the call to God's kingdom is a free gift that Jesus gives those he wants.
4. It established Jesus as a messiah i.e. the one who had come to save people even from their sins.
5. The meal opened up a new relationship between sinners and God as well as a kind of fellowship believers would get by accepting Christ.
6. It manifested the coming of the kingdom of God on earth by Jesus reconciling with man the sinner.
7. It showed that the new teaching/faith involved self-denial and sacrifice. Levi left his highly paid job and followed Jesus.
8. It showed that Jesus' main role was to call sinners to repentance. That is why he did not go to associate with the respectable but the wicked.

9. It showed that God chose the despised to be agents of change while establishing His spiritual kingdom.
10. It manifested the divine powers Jesus had by calling Levi and he accepted to follow him.
11. Jesus' love, mercy and compassion are shown in this incident for he accepted to dine with the despised in society.
12. The event also established Jesus as a human being for he feasted with other people at Levi's house.
13. Jesus' action and response fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures. Isaiah 11: 3-9 God's act of calling sinners in O.T e.g. Abraham, Moses etc.
14. The attitude of the Jewish leaders indicated their failure to understand the messianic identity of Jesus.
15. His association with sinners meant that Jesus had power to prevent sin from defiling him and those who believe in him.
16. This incident established Jesus Christ as a spiritual messiah rather than a political messiah.
17. It established Jesus as one who had come to perfect the Mosaic Law and change people's attitudes towards others.
18. It showed that Jews hated tax collectors because they worked for their enemies the Romans and any one associating with them was taken as an enemy of the Jewish nation.
19. It showed that the kingdom of God is for those who are ready to repent and turn back to God rather than those claiming to be righteous.
20. It meant that the teachers of the law had no love for sinners and could not help them leave their sinfulness yet they claimed to be religious leaders.
21. The event increased conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders because to them it was improper for a righteous man to contaminate his righteousness by associating with evil people.
22. It meant Jesus' humility and humble ministry as he was able to dine with those societies despised as outcasts.
23. It showed the cost of discipleship as Levi was able to leave his highly paying Job for the sake of becoming Jesus' disciple.
24. The call of Levi was a way of spreading the good news to those who best needed it. Many tax collectors and other public sinners gathered at Levi's home for conversion.
25. It showed the need to respond to God's call positively irrespective of one's status. When Jesus requested Levi to follow him he did not look back.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS/ APPLICATION TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians should accept God's call just like Levi accepted Jesus' call.
2. Christians ought to associate with all categories of people just like Jesus associated with tax collectors.

3. They should strive to help people to turn away from their sins by helping them to repent just like Jesus helped Levi.
4. Christians especially leaders pay visits to people who are neglected in society like the prostitutes. This might help them change.
5. They are called upon to feast/share meals with others without considering their status just like Jesus did at Levi's house.
6. They are called upon to repent and turn back to God because that is why Jesus came on the earth.
7. Christians ought to have love for others and carry one another's burden just like Jesus loved Levi.
8. Christians should pray for God's wisdom so as to understand His salvation plan better not like the Pharisees who failed to understand Jesus.
9. Christians ought to work for the perfection of society laws that appear to be unfair to the people. Just like Jesus perfected the mosaic law of relating with sinners.
10. They should be ready to sacrifice and leave their income, jobs for the sake of the Gospel, just like Levi left his tax office for the sake of Jesus' call.
11. They are called upon to do what is good to all the people rather than fulfilling the requirements of the law.
12. Christians ought to associate with the unbelievers so as to change them, just like Jesus associated with Levi.
13. Christians should make an immediate response when they are called by God just as Levi responded without hesitation.
14. Church leaders should help the spiritually sick people by bringing them closer rather than condemning them, just like Jesus did.
15. They should preach the gospel less discrimination that is to all people of different classes the rich and the poor.
16. They should be ready to risk their reputation in the process of extending salvation to the sinners and the despised. The Pharisees blamed Jesus for associating with outcasts at Levi's home.
17. Christians ought to be accommodative in life the way Jesus accommodated Levi and other public sinners.
18. Christians ought to extend God's grace and mercy to other people just like the way they received Christ by grace.
19. Christians should treat people with respect even when they are below their levels for all people were created by God unlike the Pharisees who blamed Jesus for associating with outcasts.
20. Christians should humble themselves so as to be used by God in the way Jesus was humble enough to call Levi the tax collector.
21. They should have faith in Jesus Christ and accept him as the messiah who came for their salvation.

NB FOR SIGNIFICANCE TO CHRISTIANS USE LESSONS BUT CHANGE QUALIFIERS.

E.G. It encourages Christians to help the spiritually sick just like Jesus associated with the public sinners.

NEW CLOTH AND NEW WINE

The question about fasting 2: 18 - 22

- This was yet another controversy/conflict between Jesus and religious leaders of the time.
 - Fasting was a major activity usually done on the atonement day. It was compulsory for all religious leaders to fast failure of which meant ungodliness.
 - The disciples of the Pharisees and John asked Jesus why his disciples were not fasting.
 - Jesus defended his disciples using two parables. To him, the friends of the bride groom cannot fast when the groom is with them.
 - The days of fasting were to come when the groom was to be taken away from them.
 - The two parables were about not mixing the old and rigid practices of Judaism with the good news of the kingdom of God.
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- Thus it was useless to sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment otherwise the new piece will pull away from the old and the tear will be made worse.
 - Jesus also responded that no one can put new wine into old skins because the wine skins will burst.
 - Therefore, to Jesus it was unnecessary for the disciples of the new order and covenant to fast by following the old order.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT

1. It showed that God's relationship with the people could best be expressed in marriage.
2. It meant that Jesus had come as a perfectionist of the old order.
3. Jesus' messiah ship is portrayed in the title of the bridegroom who was present.
4. Jesus' divine powers are expressed in this incident i.e. His presence is enough to make his followers rejoice.
5. The human nature of Jesus is shown in this incident i.e. time will come for Jesus to go and the disciples will fast.
6. It meant that Jesus had come with a new teaching which was to be adopted by all those who accepted him. That is why his disciples were not fasting.
7. It meant that the kingdom of God had arrived and people just needed to rejoice rather than being in sorrow.
8. The disciples are shown as guests on the feast of the groom, i.e. disciples were called by Jesus to join in the establishment of God's kingdom.

9. Jesus was ready to set aside the demands of the Mosaic Law which were not important during the spread of the good news.
10. This incident showed lack of understanding of Jesus' personality by the Jews and religious leaders of the time i.e. the question asked.
11. Jesus' answer was an indirect prophetic way of pronouncing his death i.e. they will fast when the bridegroom is taken away from them.
12. The incident showed the continuous struggle between Jesus and satanic powers, that is the Jews struggling to make Jesus apply their man made laws.
13. The wine parable fulfills the Old Testament scriptures especially of Isaiah and Amos who predicted much wine during the messianic era.
14. It exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who paid more attention to religious rituals rather than God's demands.
15. Jesus' answer outdated the importance of fasting in the salvation theme.
16. These parables also manifested the incompatibility of Judaism with Christianity a new faith brought by Jesus.
17. These parables called for flexibility of the people when dealing with issues pertaining the kingdom of God.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

1. Christians should have faith in God rather than concentrating on religious rituals that are insignificant in the situation.
2. Christians should separate their traditional practices and rituals from the requirements of Christianity because they cannot be put together.
3. They should accept change and have flexibility when dealing with matters of faith.
4. They should accept Jesus as their savior for he saved them from the Jewish restrictions.
5. Christians should fast for their spiritual strength just as Jesus promised that fasting will be part of the practices after his departure.
6. They should prepare to receive the bridegroom at the end of time where they will feast with him.
7. Christians should follow what God requires out of them rather than what other Christians and their leaders are doing.
8. They should consult their religious leaders in situations of confusion on religious teachings and practices Just like the people who consulted Jesus.
9. They should recognize the presence of Jesus amidst their lives and gatherings and act according to Jesus' demands than their thinking.

SABBATH CONTROVERSY OBSERVANCE (Mk 2: 23 28)

- Another controversy arose over the purpose of the Sabbath where Jesus held a view different from that of the Pharisees.
- Due to hunger, when the disciples were passing through the corn fields, they plucked the heads of grain and ate them.
- This action was considered as unnecessary work on the Sabbath by the Pharisees. So the disciples were accused of breaking the Sabbath laws.
- The Pharisees asked Jesus as to why His disciples were doing what was unlawful on the Sabbath.
- Not working on the Sabbath was one of the many laws observed by the Jews.
- This therefore meant that Jesus was encouraging his disciples to break the law – something which identified him as a law breaker.
- Jesus reminded them of David and his men who were hungry and went into the house of God during priest Abiatha's time and were fed on the sacrificial bread which is supposed to be eaten by priests.
- Jesus meant that David broke the law by eating consecrated bread because of the necessity to save life. Thus to Jesus life is better than ritualism.
- Therefore, Jesus declared that the Sabbath was made for the good of man not man for the Sabbath, which meant that anything to help man in need is above ritual observance.
- Jesus concludes with a great claim of having divine authority over the Sabbath. Thus the son of man is the lord of Sabbath.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT

1. It manifested Jesus divinity i.e. Jesus being from God hence a son of God because he could change even the law.
2. Showed Jesus as a messiah i.e. the one who had come to save people from condemnation of the law.
3. It implied that man's life was better than keeping human restrictions from the story of King David.
4. Established Jesus as a teacher and interpreter of scriptures. By teaching the Pharisees the Old Testament scriptures.
5. Jesus was shown as being with divine authority over the Sabbath.
6. This event exposed the Pharisees' lack of understanding of Jesus' identity.
7. It meant that Jesus had come to perfect the law of Moses.
8. It increased the hostility between the Pharisees and Jesus which later led to Jesus' death.
9. Implied that the needs of man were more important in the face of God than ritual observance.
10. Established Jesus as a perfect judge by not condemning the disciples for their action.
11. Showed Jesus as an observer of the law of Moses, i.e. He did not deny the existence of the law but was against the understanding of the purpose of that law.
12. It revealed that in the new age of faith the Mosaic law had become less important.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians need to follow Jesus if they are to be free from the demands of the law.
2. They ought to take life more important than ritual observance.
3. Ought to have/make the right interpretation of the law as Jesus was.
4. Christians ought to have knowledge of the scripture just like Jesus referred to David.
5. Christians should make the best use of the Sabbath because it was made for their good.
6. Christians ought to exercise their freedom and do what they feel is pleasing God instead of being controlled by church traditions.
7. Christians ought to look at and accept Jesus Christ as their saviour.
8. They should ask their religious leaders spiritual matters they fail to understand rather than blaming them.
9. They should also mind about their physical welfare amidst busy religious programmes.
10. Christians should use scriptures to explain and solve different controversial issues in their daily living.
11. They should accept Jesus as being above all restrictions for he is the lord of the Sabbath.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT (Jesus called Beelzebub)

- It happened when Jesus had too much work that he could not eat, his family members went to lay hold of him, for they said he was out of his mind.
- The scribes said that he had Beelzebub i.e. the prince of Demons and it's by this power that he casts out demons.
- Jesus responded to them in two parables i.e. the division of the house/kingdom and the plundering of a strong man's house.
- He concluded by saying that all sins are forgiven but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.
- He said that because they were saying that he was using the evil spirit to perform miracles.

SIGNIFICANCE/AMPLICATIONS

1. It identified Jesus as a human being i.e. getting tired, hungry and having a family.
2. The divine powers of Jesus are exhibited.
3. The role of the Holy Spirit is shown in Jesus' response.
4. It showed that Jesus' activities were guided by the Holy spirit from the father.
5. The parable of plundering the strong man's house meant that Jesus was more powerful than the devil.
6. This incident called for unity among people of the same faith.
7. The words from the scribes increased conflicts between Jesus and religious leaders of the time.
8. Their words showed lack of understanding of Jesus' personality.
9. It meant that Jesus was above demons which the scribes associated with him.

10. He wanted to alert them that instead of minding about him they should mind about their spiritual needs.
11. Jesus' love for human beings is shown in this incident for he worked without resting.
12. It showed that one's spiritual welfare was more important than the physical welfare.

NEW KIND OF KINSHIP 3: 31 - 35

- When it was heard that Jesus had gone mad, Jesus; family members i.e. (mother and brothers) came to take charge of him.
- They sent a message calling him out of the big crowd he was teaching. But Jesus' answer established a new kind of kinship not based on blood but on faith in God.
- That is "whoever does the will of God is my brother, sister and mother".
- Mark does not mean that Jesus had been rejected by family members but rather they had misunderstood him. His works were too extra ordinary that they thought he had gone mad.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Spiritual relationship is more important in the face of God than the natural relationship.
2. It showed Jesus' determination to first do the work of God before fulfilling the duties of his natural family.
3. It manifested that having faith in Jesus Christ was of a great value than natural relationships.
4. Shows that sometimes God's work involves rejection and false accusations among the people one is called to work.
5. It exhibited the lack of understanding of Jesus' personality by even his family members as well as religious leaders of the time.
6. It implied the divinity of Jesus Christ especially in his response i.e. "For whoever does the will of God is my brother, sister & mother"
7. It marked to the beginning of a new family of the people of God which was to base on obedience to God rather than nature.
8. Shows Jesus as a suffering servant. He could not leave the work of God in order to meet the need of his family.
9. Shows the intimate relationship Jesus had with his mother and family members i.e. a mere hearing that Jesus was in trouble was enough to make all of them come to help him.
10. It showed that Jesus had come to unite the people by forming a new family which is not based on blood.
11. It brings out properly the humanity of Jesus Christ for Jesus' mother, brothers and sisters are presented by Mark.
12. It revealed to Jesus' disciples the cost of discipleship i.e. living a new life, go out to preach, part with family ties, go without eating etc.

13. It showed Jesus being indiscriminative by taking other people in the same way he was taking his family members.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians should serve God whole heartedly just like Jesus did.
2. Christians ought to leave their families for the sake of preaching the word of God just like Jesus did.
3. They should treat all the people equally because they belong to the same family of God.
4. They ought to get concern when their family members get problems just like Jesus' family came to take charge of him.
5. They ought to carry out missionary journeys i.e. preach to far areas where there are no relatives.
6. Christians need to be free from any family influence for the sake of the Gospel i.e. they ought to denounce family members and friends if they stand in the way of the gospel.
7. Christians should work for the unity of the church just like Jesus united those who had accepted his word.
8. They ought to have faith and accept to do God's will if they are to be members of the family established by Jesus.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES ON JEWISH TRADITIONS (What makes man clean)

7: 1 – 23

- The Pharisees were ready to reduce Jesus' popularity before the public. They were concerned with ceremonial defilement by the disciples. They felt that Jesus did not encourage the disciples to observe the Jewish traditions.
- The traditions of elders demanded that a person's hands should be washed in a particular way not for hygienic reasons but to remove ritual uncleanliness as a result of getting in contact with Gentiles.
- They also had other laws concerning washing of dishes and other utensils. The Pharisees then asked as to why the disciples were eating with unclean hands.

Jesus responded to them by making the following points:

- They were hypocrites. He affirmed that the tradition of elders had lost their spiritual significance. With their lips they confessed God but their hearts were far away from him.
- They teach man made rules as though they were laws of God. God's laws are set aside in order to obey the laws of man.
- Jesus gave an example of the law of Corban (everything belonged to God). According to this law a son would dedicate everything he has to God and giving anything to anybody be it parents was illegal.
- People were ignoring their obligation to parents as the law of Moses required, i.e. honour your mother and father.
- The religious leaders were not only teaching to dishonor the 4th commandment, but they also tempered with other laws.

- To Jesus, there is nothing that goes into a person that makes him unclean rather it's what comes out of him.
- This meant that all foods are fit to be eaten because they enter the body and then pass out but not in the heart.
- According to Jesus it's people's evil speeches, acts and evil attitudes which defile a person because they come out of a person's heart.

SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' RESPONSE

1. It shows that nothing external can defile a man but only man's inner thoughts.
2. It shows that the inner thoughts of a man are reflected in a person's actions.
3. It gives Christians freedom not to be so rigid on the Jewish laws. Thus it makes man to be free from enslaved by the Jewish law.
4. It shows Jesus as a follower of the law given by God through Moses by referring to the 4th commandment.
5. Shows Jesus as a reformer of the unfair Jewish rituals by separating body impurity from spiritual impurity.
6. Jesus' response establishes him as a savior the one who had come to liberate people from unfair laws.
7. It shows that Jesus was interested in not the ritualistic practices. The Pharisees observed the laws when their hearts were not sincere to God.
8. It meant that all foods can be eaten without affecting someone's spirituality.
9. It showed Jesus as a divine being i.e. son of God because he used divine authority to approve all kinds of food clean.
10. Jesus' answer increased the conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus which contributed to his death.
11. It showed clearly the difference between Jesus and the religious leaders of the time while the Pharisees were interested in rituals Jesus was interested in people's hearts.

THE QUESTION ABOUT PAYING TAX Mk:12;13-17

- It was yet another occasion when some Pharisees and members of Herod's party went to trap Jesus by his own words.
- They praised him as a teacher who tells the truth without paying attention to anyone's status.
- They posed a question. "Tell us is it against our law to pay taxes to the Roman emperor?"
- Jesus knew their trick, that they were trying to trap him. So he requested for a silver coin to be handed over to him.
- When it was brought, he asked them whose face was on it and their answer was "the emperor's".
- Jesus concluded "well then pay the emperor what belongs to the emperor and pay God what belongs to God."

SIGNIFICANCE

1. The answer identified Jesus as the wisdom of God because he answered to their satisfaction.
2. It showed that Jesus was not against the authorities of the time and their laws, but rather the evils they were doing.
3. It established a difference/line between the political offices and spiritual offices to which people were to be loyal.
4. It increased the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders when Jesus jumped their set trap.
5. It showed that Jesus was the truth who was sent to tell the people about God's will i.e., The Pharisees recognized him as a teacher of the truth.
6. It showed that Jesus had respect of the earthly authority because he encouraged the people to pay tax.
7. Exposed the omniscience of Jesus because he knew that the Pharisees were trying to trap him.
8. Jesus' answer identified him as a spiritual messiah rather than a political one.
9. The answer Jesus gave showed the perfection of the kingdom of God. He answered to their satisfaction and they were all amazed.
10. It showed that Jesus was a law abiding teacher by telling people to pay tax to the authorities.
11. Jesus' answer proved his innocence as it was an encouragement to the people to respect the authority
12. It showed the need to serve both the state and God.

LESSONS (Research)

CONFLICTS AND CONTROVERSIES JESUS HAD WITH PHARISEES IN MARK

1. The claim of Jesus to have authority especially on the Sabbath and law i.e. when the disciples picked corn on the Sabbath, 2:23 ff
2. The Pharisees in another incident accused Jesus of blaspheming 2:7
3. In the incident when Jesus forgave the sins of man who was paralyzed. 3: 1 -6
4. Calling Jesus, the prince of demons was another incident where the Pharisees conflicted with Jesus. 3: 20 – 30
5. Jesus challenged and exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Mk. 12: 38 – 40
6. When Jesus associated with people believed to be outcasts for example the call of Levi. 2: 13 – 17
7. In the incident where Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on Sabbath.
8. The claim of Jesus as the expected messiah, during his trial by chief priest. Mk. 12: 35 – 37 Mk: 14: 61 – 62
9. Jesus had a large following. Many people began to follow Jesus during his ministry.

10. Jesus' teaching and deeds appeared contradictory with some aspects of the Jewish law.
(working on the Sabbath) divorce Mk:10
11. The question about fasting was another area of conflict where the disciples of Jesus were not fasting while those of John and Pharisees were fasting 2: 18-22
12. Failure of the disciples of Jesus to wash their hands before eating was another area of conflict. 7: 1 – 13
13. The event of Jesus cleansing of the temple was also another interesting area of conflict. 11: 15 – 19
14. Jesus humble back ground e.g. was a son of a carpenter which even led to his rejection. 6: 1 – 6
15. The parables told by Jesus Christ were areas of conflict with the Pharisees e.g. the parable of the wicked tenants. 12: 1- 12
16. Jesus powers to perform miracles were also a source of conflict with the Jewish authority. 11: 27 - 33
 - **Analyze the controversies Jesus had with the Pharisees in Mark's Gospel**
 - **Examine the causes of conflicts and controversies Jesus had with the Pharisees in Mark's Gospel.**

CAUSES OF CONFLICTS AMONG RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

- Lust for money/wealth
- Getting interested in same man/woman
- Questions over power to perform miracles
- Unfair promotions in church
- Differences in ways of worship
- Discrimination in church
- Differences in political ideologies
- Doctrinal differences e.g. whether to marry or not
- Educational differences
- Family planning methods
- Permissiveness. Some religious leaders leave their flock to dress in any style.
- Controversial issues like homosexuality and lesbianism i.e. supporting immorality.
- Different views on women position in churches
- Differences on days of worship
- Lust for power.

HOW JESUS RESPECTED THE JEWISH LAW IN MARK'S GOSPEL.

1. After healing the man with a dreaded skin disease, Jesus instructed him to go to the priests for examination which was a requirement of the Mosaic law. Lev.13:20.

2. Jesus also instructed the leper to go and offer a sacrifice which was supposed to be offered as sin offering according to the law.
3. Jesus always observed and attended the Sabbath celebration in the synagogues especially at Capernaum.
4. During the Transfiguration of Jesus Moses appeared and stood beside Jesus an indicator that he was in line with the Mosaic law.
5. Jesus encouraged the Jews to give respect to God and to authority. That is, give to the Emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to Him.
6. Jesus cleansed the Jewish temple an indicator that he had respect for the Jewish law about keeping the Lord's temple pure.
7. When he was responding to the Pharisees about divorce, Jesus referred to the Jewish scriptures in the book of Genesis. This showed that he was in respect with God's requirements.
8. When he was choosing his disciples, Jesus chose only 12 disciples who were Jews to represent the 12 tribes of Israel.
9. Jesus participated in the celebration of the lord's supper which was a Jewish ritual to be celebrated by law.
10. Jesus blamed the Pharisees of breaking God's commandments in respect of man-made laws. He gave an example of the fourth commandment of respecting parents.
11. When Jesus was healing a man with a withered hand, he referred to the Sabbath law by asking his audience what the law required them to do.
12. Jesus blessed the children the parents brought to him which was a Jewish custom. Thus he was in agreement with the Jewish law in this state.
13. When Jesus was asked by the rich young man on what to do in order to enter in God's kingdom, Jesus requested the man to keep the ten commandments.
14. When the Syro-Phoenician approached Jesus for help in order to heal her daughter, Jesus openly to her to first leave the children eat showing that he was in line with the Jewish belief of being superior.
15. Jesus also appreciated the widow's offering as tithes which was the Jewish custom.
16. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, he gave them love of God and the love of a neighbour which was in line with the law of love in the Old Testament Deut.6:5
17. Jesus accepted to be anointed at Bethany which was a Jewish ritual

HOW JESUS CONTRADICTED WITH THE JEWISH LAW.

1. Jesus associated with the outcasts like the leper tax collectors which was against the Jewish law.
2. Jesus allowed his disciples to work on the Sabbath where they picked corn and ate but the Jewish law was against any work on the Sabbath.
3. Jesus also allowed his disciples to eat with ritually unclean hands which was against the Jewish law.

4. Jesus also worked on the Sabbath when he healed a man with a paralyzed hand yet the law restricted any one to work on the Sabbath.
5. Jesus also supported his disciples for not fasting yet fasting was a very important religious ritual among the Jews.
6. He declared all foods clean for eating hence contradicting with the Jewish law about clean and unclean foods in Leviticus.
7. Jesus refused to go with his mother when she came to withdraw him from the public when people said that he had gone mad. This was a kind of disrespect to the mother.
8. He accepted to be crucified on the cross yet in the Jewish law this was a curse.
9. Jesus also opposed the teaching of Moses on divorce by emphasizing permanence in marriage.
10. He sounded blasphemous by claiming to have powers to forgive sins yet in the Jewish Law He was only God with powers to forgive sins.
11. Jesus associated with the Gentiles yet the Jewish law was against it.
12. His claim to be Son of the most high sounded illegal among the Jews.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY LEAD CHRISTIANS TO DISOBEY THE STATE

LAW

- If the laws encourage abuse of people's rights like detention without trial, persecution of the innocent people the Christians may not respect such a law because Jesus teaches us to be peace makers in the beatitudes.
- If the law promotes dictatorship which results into bad governance, a Christian may not obey such a law.
- When the law promotes injustice like discrimination, racism, tribalism then a Christian may not respect such a law. Jesus said do to others what you want others to do to you.
- When the law encourages exploitation of citizens or misuse of government resources for the interest of the minority then the Christian may not obey such a law. Prophet Amos attacked the Israelites for exploiting the poor.
- If the law denies a Christian freedom of worship it should be rejected by Christians because it contradicts with the bible. To St. Paul Christians should practice their freedom they acquired by accepting Jesus.
- Christians may reject laws when they encourage hatred among citizens because God's intention for man is love for one another. Jesus gave the commandment of love of a neighbour as you love yourself.
- If the law promotes immorality like divorce, prostitution, homosexuality etc. then Christians should reject such laws. St. Paul taught that our bodies are temples of the holy Spirit and should be kept holy.
- When the law promotes imbalance in society and economic development based on tribalism, then Christians should reject such laws. Jesus treated all people equally.
- If the laws support termination of people's lives because to Christians it is only God with authority over people's lives.
- If the laws condition Christians to worship other gods which makes Christians sin against their God who commanded them to worship no other God apart from Him.

- If the laws encourage gender inequality yet the gospel calls for equality among all people.
- If the laws are destructive to family relationships that is denying parents their responsibility over their children.

JESUS USES PARABLES

- A parable refers to putting one thing alongside another by a way of comparison or illustration. OR it is a developed simile which explains something by comparison.
- In this case it is a brief story of popular and spiritual wisdom used by Jesus to put across heavenly message to the people for interpretation/understanding. In each vivid story told by Jesus, there was spiritual truth about which the heaven could think for the rest of his life.

PURPOSE OF PARABLES IN JESUS' MINISTRY/WHY JESUS USED PARABLES. /SIGNIFICANCE OF PARABLES.

1. Jesus used parables to distinguish himself from the rest of teachers of his time. By using parables Jesus appeared unique from the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees.
2. They were used to enhance easy understanding and memory of his teachings. They were easy to remember because they were composed in ordinary language.
3. Jesus used parables to avoid direct verbal confrontation with the teachers of the law especially in those he indirectly referred to them.
4. He wanted to be clear and make abstract ideas about the kingdom of God known e.g. the parable of the mustard seed.
5. Jesus used parables to attract many people to listen to him. This is because they were too interesting to hear.
6. Jesus wanted to relate the daily experiences with spiritual realities for proper understanding, e.g. the parable of the sower.
7. Jesus used parables to show that the kingdom of God had arrived thus it was a way of calling people to it.
8. They were intended to find out those who were serious and sincerely seeking the truth.
9. Through parables Jesus would reveal his messianic identity. This is clearly shown in the parable of the wicked tenants.
10. He wanted to show how people react differently to the word of God. For example, in the parable of the sower.
11. Parables aimed to divide the hearers into those who were true seekers of the kingdom of God and those who were not.
12. Jesus wished to show that acquiring faith was a gradual process and the spread of the gospel was to be gradual, e.g. mustard seed.
13. Parables showed that Jesus was in line with the Old Testament since parables were a common method of teaching used by the Old Testament prophets.
14. Jesus wanted to provoke serious thinking from his listeners. He intended to challenge the minds of his audience.

15. Jesus wanted to encourage people to continue working for the kingdom of God and success e.g. parable of the sower.
16. They exposed the lack of understanding of Jesus' disciples e.g. parable of the sower.
17. Parable portrayed different aspects about the kingdom of God in a simple way.
18. By using parables Jesus wanted to challenge the decision taken by listeners about the ministry of Jesus.
19. Parables demonstrated that God and the truth are often found in every association of life.
20. Jesus used parable to alert his listeners to practice their religion in their daily life.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: 4: 1 - 9

Meaning/interpretation significance of this parable.

1. The sower refers to the preacher (Jesus Christ) and the seed refers to the word.
2. Seeds that fell along road side are those people who hear the word of God but later Satan takes it away from their heart.
3. The bird in this parable is Satan who confuses the gospel hearers and they forget and abandon the word.
4. The sunshine and the thorns imply temptations and hardships exposed to believers.
5. The ground/soils refer to different people who receive the message of the good news differently.
6. Rock grounds are people who receive the word with happiness for a short time and when persecution comes for the word's sake they immediately stumble.
7. The thorny grounds are those people who receive the word but because of their lust for material world, it is choked and the word becomes unfaithful.
8. Fertile grounds are those who hear the word of God, understand it and bear fruit from it.
9. This parable warns people against allowing Satan's interference in their way of salvation as it can make them leave the truth.
10. Parable shows different ways in which people react to the gospel.
11. The parable shows that success or benefit from Jesus' teaching was to depend on people's attitude towards the gospel.
12. The parable shows the people who hear the gospel & take it get different benefits from the same gospel, i.e. seeds bearing fruits some 50, 60 and 100.
13. It called up the disciples to work hard and bear good fruits while expanding God's kingdom.
14. It pointed to the many people who were to accept Jesus' ministry as a result of preaching. (i.e. Jesus' harvesting)
15. It also showed that the good news must continue to be preached in faith, whatever kind of people the preacher is faced with.

RELEVANCE/LESSONS

1. Christians preachers should persistently preach/sow the word of God despite the disappointments experienced.

2. Christians ought to invite all the people to God's kingdom without minding about those who refuse to respond.
3. Christians are challenged to examine themselves by finding out what type of soils they are.
4. They ought to take in the word of God preached to them even when they face problems or lured by worldly desires to fall away.
5. Christians should have the right attitudes towards preachers and the message preached.
6. They are expected to bear fruits of the gospel. They accepted and these include, humbleness, kindness, love etc.
7. They ought to resist all Satan's way which might eat up the gospel seed sown among them. (birds & seeds along the roads)
8. Christians should desist temptations from worldly pleasures. These may obscure the Christians commitment to Christ Jesus.
9. Christians ought to keep their soils fertile by responding positively to the word of God so as to harvest heavenly rewards.
10. The parable invites Christians to preserve their faith even if they are amidst persecution.
11. Christians are called upon to exercise the good fruits by putting the gospel message into practice.

significance of this parable to Christians today

1. It helps Christians preachers to persistently preach/sow the word of God despite the disappointments experienced.
2. It helps Christians to invite all the people to God's kingdom without minding about those who refuse to respond.
3. It helps Christians to examine themselves by finding out what type of soils they are.
4. It helps Christians to take in the word of God preached to them even when they face problems or lured by worldly desires to fall away.
5. It teaches Christians to have the right attitudes towards preachers and the message preached.
6. It teaches Christians to bear fruits of the gospel. They accepted and these include, humbleness, kindness, love etc.
7. It helps Christians to resist all Satan's ways which might eat up the gospel seed sown among them. (birds & seeds along the roads)
8. It helps Christians to desist temptations from worldly pleasures. These may obscure the Christians commitment to Christ Jesus.
9. It helps Christians to keep their soils fertile by responding positively to the word of God so as to harvest heavenly rewards.
10. The parable helps Christians to preserve their faith even if they are amidst persecution.
11. It teaches Christians to exercise the good fruits by putting the gospel message into practice.

12. It helps Christians to accept Jesus Christ as the good news and live by what he requires out of them.
13. It encourages Christians to repent and change the kind of soils the word of God is sowed so as to bear good fruits.

A MUSTARD SEED 4: 30 – 32

- Jesus again uses another parable in which he likens the kingdom of God to a mustard seed which is smaller than all the seeds on earth.
- However, when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, it brings out large branches so that the birds of the air may rest under its shade.

IMPLICATIONS

1. The mustard seed implies the word of God.
2. The one who sows refers to Jesus and his disciples who were preaching.
3. Smallness refers to the humbleness and the insignificance of the sowers of the word of the kingdom of God.
4. Branches are the many churches united in Christ.
5. The large tree refers to the kingdom of God which will expand throughout the whole world.
6. The birds refer to all categories of people i.e. Gentiles who were to join the kingdom of God as it is extended to them.
7. The shade meant peace, joy, happiness, harmony and resting enjoyed by those who accept to join the kingdom of God.
8. It meant that the kingdom of God would start from a humble beginning.
9. God makes those serve him useful so that their works multiply and are felt by many people.
10. It meant that the word of God was to expand and be kept in all circumstances though some people had ignored it.
11. It meant unlimited spread of the word of God. It should be spread to all nations i.e. universal nature of God's kingdom.
12. The parable invites believers to respond to the word of God with faith.
13. It shows that the number and nature of preachers of the word will not affect the fruits from the word.
14. It pointed to the growth of the kingdom of God amidst persecution and temptations and rejection.
15. Jesus was telling those who were under rating his ministry because of his humble background that it was to continue.
16. It meant that the results of the work of God cannot be judged or realized at their initial stage. It is a gradual process but with great effect in community.

17. It is a source of encouragement to the persecuted because of the gospel to continue for their work will be felt.
18. It pointed to peace, harmony, joy found in heaven which will be enjoyed by Christians at the end of the world.

LESSONS

1. Christians are called upon to humble themselves for the kingdom of God.
2. They ought to spread the good news to all the people without discrimination.
3. Christians are expected to listen to the preachers of the word even if they may appear insignificant, poor and humble.
4. They should give the same treatment to all the people in the church as the tree provides a shade to all birds of the air,
5. Religious leaders ought to solve the spiritual problems of their flock so as to create peace in their hearts.
6. Christians should work for the growth of the kingdom of God amidst persecution and rejection.
7. Christians ought to respond to the word of God with faith.
8. Christians ought to find peace and rest in Jesus Christ's kingdom by accepting the word preached to them.
9. They are called upon to preach to all kinds of people irrespective of tribe, sex and colour, so as to expand the kingdom of God.
10. Christians ought to remain united in Jesus the foundation as the branches of the mustard tree are on the stem.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENNANTS. Mk. 12: 1 – 12

- In this chapter Mark presents Jesus telling a parable about what was going to happen on him soon.
- He compared what was happening to the master who had a vine yard, servants, workers in the vine yard and the son.
- This parable had meanings which are clear than the first short parables which can be shown as below.

IMPLICATION/MEANING (why)

1. The vine yard stands for the Jewish nation
2. The owner of the vine yard was God
3. Plants is the good news of repentance.
4. The tenants were the unfaithful Jews and Jewish leaders, i.e. Pharisees, priests etc.
5. The servants/slaves were the Old Testament prophets sent to by God and they refused to listen to them.
6. The parable meant the old covenant the Jews had made with God through Moses.
7. The owner giving it to other people meant God was going to extend his blessings to the Gentiles who were ready to welcome Jesus.

8. Meant that though the Jews had rejected Jesus' he was going to become the foundation of the new faith.
9. The parable was a target to the Jews who relieved the prophets and refused to repent.
10. It meant that Jesus was going to be killed by the Jewish leaders themselves who had been given authority to pester the people till his coming.
11. It was used to show the destruction which was to befall the wicked and selfish people.
12. It showed that the heavenly glory was to be possessed by those who were ready to accept Jesus Christ.
13. It manifested Jesus as a messiah who had come to save people from their sins.
14. The parable showed God's enduring love for his people who he wanted to liberate i.e. He kept on sending the servants.
15. Jesus aimed at criticizing the religious leaders of the time who were misguiding people and persecuting God's messengers.
16. Jesus was prophesying his suffering, persecution and death that were being organized by Jewish religious leaders.
17. It showed how Jesus was to triumph despite the rejection, persecution and death.
18. It showed the nature of the reception people had given to the kingdom of God as established by Jesus.

How this parable fulfills the Old Testament scriptures? (12marks)

1. The parable of the vineyard as told by Jesus fulfills the song of the vineyard in Isaiah chapter 5;
2. The rejected stone Jesus talks about fulfills the psalmist rejected stone which became a corner stone.
3. The servants in the parable fulfills the Old testament prophets who were sent to warn the Israelites. These include Isaiah Jeremiah, Elijah Amos etc.
4. The tenants are reminiscent of the unfaithful Jews and Jewish religious leaders of the Old Testament.
5. The master is in line with the book of genesis where God is Given as a creator and a master of the universe.
6. The son of the vineyard owner fulfills the lord's servant as given by Isaiah chapter 42;
7. The persecution of the servants is in line with the harassment and mistreatment the Old Testament prophets faced under their leaders. E.g. Jeremiah was persecuted by purshur the priest, Amos by Amaziah and Elijah by Ahab the king.
8. The hedge fulfills the Sinitic Covenant God had made with the Jews to protect them as his own people.
9. The planting of the vineyard fulfills the concept of election in the book of Deuteronomy 11; where Israel was chosen as a people of God.
10. The judgement of the workers in the vineyard fulfills the Old Testament law of retribution in the book of Deuteronomy.

11. The harvest time and the coming back of the master fulfills the day of the lord as prophesied by Prophet Amos.
12. The wine press built by the master fulfills the idea of the Temple in the Old Testament built as a place to purify the Israelites.
13. The killing of the son of the master is in line with the suffering servant in Isaiah who was killed though innocent.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians ought to accept the messengers of God sent to them.
2. Preachers of the word are called upon to preach the gospel despite the persecutions they may face.
3. Christians are called upon to repent their sins and change the way they live.
4. Religious leaders ought to bring the people back to God rather than misleading them.
5. Christians ought to do good to fellow Christians not like the wicked tenants who killed the servants.
6. They ought to accept Jesus in their hearts and this should be shown in their actions not like the tenants who rejected the son of their master.
7. They ought to have faith in Jesus because he is a son of God who purposely came for them.
8. The church should ex-communicate the un exemplary religious leaders and replace them with those ready to serve as God replaced the tenants.
9. Christians should strive to be reconciled with fellow Christians and God. This was the purpose of sending the servants.
10. Christians are expected to love their God as God loved them by sending his only son to them.
11. Christians should give way to the spread of the good news rather than being obstacles to the spread of the good news.
12. Christians ought to prepare for God's judgment at the end of the time.
13. Religious leaders ought to be open to others who are trying to sabotage the religious programmes aimed at enhancing the gospel.
14. They should be ready to die for the sake of the gospel as Jesus was ready to shed his blood for the liberation of the people.

JESUS IS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

- Mark begins the sixth chapter by showing Jesus being rejected by his own people in his home town.
- They could not believe that Jesus Christ a son of a carpenter would preach with divine wisdom and make mighty works.
- This happened when Jesus went back to his home town and entered a synagogue on the Sabbath.
- Jesus' response was that a prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives and his own house.

WHY A REJECTION

1. Jesus taught with authority and great knowledge which made them astonished with the way he was analyzing scriptures.
2. They wondered the source of Jesus' wisdom yet he was uneducated.
3. Jesus' family was known to be poor they could not expect it to produce a prominent religious figure.
4. They were ignorant of Jesus' divine origin. They thought that Jesus was born by human parents.
5. Jesus was known to have been a carpenter which work was despised and taken to be of insignificant people.
6. Like any other Jews they had been made blind by sin and so had to receive eternal life from God
7. The Jewish expectation of a messiah contradicted with Jesus' personality. To them the origin of a messiah would not be known yet they knew Jesus' background.
8. False information had been spread by the enemies of Jesus that is the Pharisees and teachers of the law because he would do things they could not do.
9. They thought Jesus was seeking cheap popularity because was not known in religious circles.
10. It was a fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures about the suffering servants. Isaiah 53: 3
11. His claim that he has power to forgive sin might have led to his rejection by those who knew his background properly.
12. Jesus used great wisdom when teaching which was not expected of him and this caused a rejection.
13. Jesus was not known to be a religious expert yet he was preaching the good news about the kingdom of God.

REASONS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS REJECTION TODAY

- Open criticisms against political leaders
- Telling the truth to their flock
- Complicated personality of some religious leaders i.e. anti-social
- Low education of leaders.
- Tribalism among the flock
- Sexual immorality by some religious leaders.
- Some religious leaders support immoral acts
- Poor background
- Some people preach false information.
- Association with evil people
- Misusing of church funds
- Language problems
- Failure to live up to the made vows or to people's expectations

- Using church pulpit to promote their political ideologies.
- Some people have natural hatred and envy.

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES: Mk. 6: 7 – 13

- Jesus had been training the disciples for what lay ahead of them although they were still ignorant of what this would be.
- When Jesus called the twelve, he gave them power over evil spirits and he sent them off into the district without him but in pairs.
- He directed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff.
- They were to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics implying that they were to be helped by the people among whom they were to work.
- They were to preach, exercise and heal and were not to waste time arguing with those who did not welcome the good news of the kingdom of God.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MISSION

1. It was a test of apostles' ability by Jesus Christ after a period of intensive training by Jesus Christ.
2. It was a preparation of the disciples for their future work especially after the end of Jesus' public ministry.
3. It reflected the view that the kingdom of God had come and the message about it should spread before it is fully established.
4. It showed the basis on which all future missionary activities were to resolve.
5. It showed that the good news was expected to go beyond the Jewish lands.
6. It showed that those accept Jesus' call share on his authority which was given to him by God.
7. It implied that God's kingdom was spiritual not material i.e. the disciples were not to carry anything.
8. It manifested the condemnation which would fall on those who were not to accept the gospel message.
9. It showed the need to preach to all people without discrimination.
10. It indicated that God's blessings are enjoyed by all those who welcome the good news and live by it.
11. It shows that the kingdom of God is for the humble i.e. the disciples were to associate with only those who were to welcome them.
12. Implied that God's kingdom needs self-denial, sacrifice and discomfort.
13. It implied the need for interdependence in the establishment of the kingdom of God i.e. the disciples were sent in pairs.
14. It showed that it is a responsibility of believers to care for all those who preach the word of God.
15. It pointed to the future rejection and persecution of Jesus' disciples after his departure.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP IN MARK'S GOSPEL

1. There is a need to respond to the divine call of God without hesitation.

2. A need to part with family ties and other earthly relationships.
3. Discipleship involves persecution and suffering Mk. 13. (persecution of Jesus)
4. Earthly properties should not hinder ones call even if it means selling off some. Mk. 10, the rich young man.
5. It involves full participation of catching men for Jesus. When Jesus called the disciples he told them that he will make them fishers of men.
6. Ready to preach the word of God in all circumstances. That is why Jesus told them not to carry any extra tunic but go and work.
7. Discipleship calls for servant hood and humbleness i.e. Jesus told his disciples that whoever wants to be the greatest must place himself last and be a servant of all.
8. Disciples had to learn to live by God's providence i.e. do not take anything.
9. They had to take time to learn from their master what they were to preach.
10. Had to restrict their rights for the sake of the gospel.
11. They had to work without resting to fulfill the needs of the community. Mk. 3: Jesus himself worked without resting for the sake of redeeming people.
12. Discipleship means one should be prepared to face temptations while going to preach. Jesus himself resisted temptations.
13. Ready to die for the sake of the gospel as Jesus died and told the disciples not to fear the one who kills the body.
14. Be ready to be rejected by society, Jesus was rejected by his own village mates.
15. Moving long journeys for the sake of the gospel. Jesus moved from area to area.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians ought to spread the goodness all the people without discriminations.
2. They ought to involve themselves in the missionary work so as to expand the church.
3. They should accept to work anywhere if they are sent by church leaders just like the disciples accepted to do so.
4. Preachers of the gospel should depend on each other and help each other when executing their work, the disciples were sent in pairs.
5. They ought to depend on God for their provisions rather than depending on their own strength and wisdom. Disciples were told not to take anything.
6. Christians are expected to give material help to church leaders who are sent to work in their communities.
7. Religious leaders ought to share authority with their disciples i.e. delegation of power so as to quicken the spread of the gospel.
8. Christians should undergo some training before they fully engage in the spread of the gospel.
9. They ought to obey God when called to serve. The disciples did not refuse the work.
10. Christians should bless those who welcome them, accept the word preached to them and provide to their needs.
11. They ought to pray for the sick and exorcise demons in the name of Jesus Christ.

12. They ought to remain calm during the time of rejection and persecution by those who refuse the gospel.
13. Christians are expected to disassociate themselves from those people who undermine the gospel.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IS MURDERED MK: 6: 14 -29

- This tragedy occurred when John the Baptist had been put in prison by Herod as a result of condemning him of incest.
- Herod visited his brother Phillip and decided to covet his wife Herodias which John condemned as unlawful.
- This caused hatred of John the Baptist by Herodias and wanted to kill him for the security of her marriage.
- But it could not happen because Herod feared John the Baptist because he knew that he was a holy man.
- The opportunity for Herodias was alerted by a feast organized by Herod for his officials and nobles.
- Herodias daughter danced when entertaining the visitors and pleased the father so much that he requested her to ask for anything she wanted and would be granted.
- Failure to know what to ask, she went to her mother who requested her to ask for the head of John the Baptist.
- On her mother's advice she asked for John the Baptist's head to be brought on a platter.
- Herod was sorry but because he had already made an oath in the presence of visitors, he implemented the daughter's request and John the Baptist was beheaded.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1. Herod Antipas act of coveting and marrying Herodias wife to his brother Phillip.
2. The condemnation of the act by John the Baptist made him to enter a direct conflict with royal circles, which contributed to her death.
3. Herodias keeping a grudge against John the Baptist due to condemnation of her marriage to Herod.
4. Herodias thirsted for John the Baptist's blood not only for revenge but as a measure for security to herself.
5. Salome's dancing styles which moved the father Herod who thought of rewarding the daughter contributed to John the Baptist's death.
6. Herod's unprincipled oath/vows of giving the daughter whatever she would ask from him contributed to the death of John.
7. The girl's failure to choose what to ask for made her to go to the mother who advised her to ask for John's head.
8. Unforgiving nature of Herodias made her to condemn John the Baptist to death.
9. Herod's failure to challenge Salome's request due to his conservatism and lack of firmness to say no to the girl's demand.
10. Herod did not want to disappoint his guests by refusing to grant the girl's request.

11. Over excitement on the part of the king who under the influence of dancing made an uncalculated/unprincipled promise.
12. The guests' adamancy and lack of concern. They would have intervened and stopped Herod from having John beheaded.
13. It was God's will; John had come to prepare the way for Jesus' coming may be God wanted to end his mission.
14. By that time John had been put in prison a situation which made his beheading easy because was already under the enemy's hands.
15. John had finished setting the stage for Jesus, he had played his role as a herald for the messiah thus it was good enough for him to go.
16. John the Baptist stood for the truth among the people who hated the truth no wonder that he was killed for telling the truth.
17. Jesus' reluctance to set John free made his death inevitable. Jesus had divine powers which would help to set John free.

LESSONS TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS

1. They ought to have courage in the lord as John the Baptist had.
2. They should expect opposition from people who do not want to hear the truth.
3. They ought to endure persecution as John the Baptist did.
4. They learn to point out the wrong things in society without fear.
5. Religious leaders ought to be humble the way John was.
6. They are expected to be the mouth piece or defenders of the weak as John the Baptist was.
7. They should speak out the truth for whatever cost it may take them.
8. They ought to fight against evil in society rather than compromising with it.
9. They ought to give society direction because they act as the light of the world as John did.
10. They should attack the political systems which are unfair just like John who attacked Herod's act.
11. They should desist from intimidation by political leaders, John accepted to be taken to prison for the truth.
12. They ought to preach the message of faithful news among married people and condemn those who are unfaithful just like John.
13. Should accept the will of God in all situations, John though had powers, he accepted to be beheaded.

To Christians? NB Look at all personalities involved and draw lessons from them.

PETER'S DECLARATION OF JESUS AS CHRIST Mk 8:27-30

- This happened when Jesus and his disciples were on their way to the towns of Caesarea Philippi.
- Jesus wanted to know what the people think about him. Thus he asked his disciples "who do men say that I am?"

- It was confirmed that people had different views about him i.e. John the Baptist, others Elijah while others referred to him as one of the prophets.
- Then Jesus turned to them and asked who do they think he was Peter was quick to answer that he was the “Christ”
- But Jesus warned them strictly not to tell anyone about him.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Open messiah ship of Jesus is shown in this event.
2. By asking Jesus was assessing the extent to which his public ministry had been understood by people.
3. It showed the difficulty in understanding Jesus’ true personality and his role for people had different views on who Jesus was.
4. It showed Peter as a central figure (leader) among the disciples of Jesus i.e. Peter answered on behalf of others.
5. It was an occasion when for the first time the disciples understood Jesus and his ministry.
6. People’s association of Jesus with strong men of God i.e. Elijah, John the Baptist etc. was an indicator that Jesus also had a strong bond with God.
7. The incident marks the end of the first half of Mark’s gospel and opens up a new phase where Jesus was to suffer, die and resurrect.
8. It emphasized the messianic secrecy of Jesus Christ by warning the disciples against disclosing that he was the Christ.
9. It was a test of the disciples’ faith in Jesus.
10. The incident also proved a divine or spiritual insight which Peter had received.
11. Jesus used this chance to give a clarification on his mission and a type of a messiah he was.
12. It signified that the ministry of Jesus was universal for Peter’s confession of Jesus as a messiah took place in the Gentile land of Caesarea Philippi.
13. It fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of the suffering servant because after Peter had declared Jesus a messiah, Jesus taught them about his coming suffering and death.
14. It identifies the emotional sentiments people held about Jesus. That is some call you Elijah, others one of the prophets and others John the Baptist.
15. It showed the spiritual blindness of Jesus disciples about the true identity and mission of Jesus Christ. Peter rebuked Jesus Christ when he was talking about his suffering and death.

ROLE OF PETER/ PETER AS A LEADER OF THE DISCIPLES IN MARK

1. Peter confessed that Jesus was the messiah at Caesarea Philippi when Jesus asked the disciples who they thought he was.
2. Peter led other disciples to look for Jesus early in the morning when Jesus left the house of Peter’s mother in law for a private communication with God.
3. Peter was the only disciple whose relative was healed by Jesus. Jesus visited the house of Peter mother in law and healed her of fever later she served them with food.

4. Peter is the only disciple who promised total loyalty to Jesus that he would never leave him even when other disciples deserted him.
5. During the transfiguration, He was Peter who suggested the building of three tents one for Jesus one for Moses and one for Elijah.
6. According to Mark Peter was the only disciple who followed Jesus after his arrest and witnessed Jesus' trial by the Sanhedrin council.
7. Peter assured Jesus on behalf other disciples that they had left everything in order to follow him and inquired what they were to get in return.
8. Peter reminded Jesus of the cursed fig tree which had got dry a day after when Jesus and his disciples were passing in that land.
9. Peter was the first disciple to accept to follow Jesus when he was with his brother Andrew fishing. They left their nets and followed Jesus less asking any question.
10. Peter's name is mentioned first on the list of the disciples chosen by Jesus and on top of Simon he was added another name Peter by Jesus himself.
11. Peter's name is also mentioned first among the three disciples who witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter by Jesus Christ.
12. Peter was among the three disciples Jesus chose to be watchful when he was having his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane.
13. When Jesus found the disciples asleep during the Gethsemane incident, Peter was the only disciple blamed by Jesus and requested to keep awake and pray so as to fight temptation.
14. The Angel of God instructed the women who had witnessed the empty tomb to go and inform the disciples especially Peter about Jesus' resurrection.
15. Peter is the only disciple who denied Jesus three times during Jesus trial by the council when he was identified by the slave girl and other people that he was one of Jesus' disciples.
16. Peter was the only disciple who rebuked Jesus when Jesus was talking about his coming suffering and death in the hands of his enemies.
17. Peter led others to interrupt Jesus when he was having his private prayer early in the morning.

MARK AND THE MESIANIC SECRECY

1. The term messiah means the anointed king of Israel, most Jews at the time of Jesus expected a great king from the line of David (2Sam 7: 16) who would deliver them from the Romans and there after restore the kingdom of Israel over the entire world.
2. On the contrary Jesus' personality as shown by Mark made his Messiah ship a secret. That is scholars refer to Mark's gospel as a gospel of messianic secrecy. Mark presents Jesus hiding his messianic identity in the following ways;
3. The healing at Capernaum when the evil spirits identified Jesus as a messiah. Christ ordered them to be quiet MK. 1: 25
4. In the event of healing several other people, he would not let demons speak because they knew who he was 1:34
5. When he healed a leper he ordered him not to tell anyone about it 1: 40 – 45

6. On raising Jairus' daughter from the dead he ordered Jairus not to tell anyone of it. 5: 21 – 43
7. While administering his healings, he would do it in isolation of the crowd e.g. the healing of a deaf mute, raising of Jairus' daughter etc.
8. Jesus' association with the out casts and sinners e.g. tax collectors was intended to hide his true nature.
9. When the Pharisees asked Jesus for a miracle to show that God approved of his work, he refused. 8: 11 – 13.
10. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone.
11. Jesus' use of parables was to hide the fact that he was a messiah.
12. Jesus' humble background hides the fact that he was a messiah because a messiah was characterized by plenty.
13. After the transfiguration incident Jesus instructed the three disciples not to say what they had seen until he is risen from the dead.
14. On healing the blind man at Bethsaida he sent him away and ordered him not to enter his village.
15. Jesus does not use divine titles in Mark's gospel i.e. he calls himself son of man.
16. In the synagogue a man with evil spirit was ordered to be quiet.
17. Mark does not give the genealogy of Jesus Christ i.e. (lineage of his birth)
18. When refused at Nazareth Jesus is referred to as a son of a carpenter.
19. Jesus' temptation in the desert was a sign of hiding his messiah ship.
20. Mark presents Jesus being baptized as any other sinner purposely to hide the messiah ship of Jesus.
21. The passion narratives as given by Mark i.e. the suffering and death hide the fact that Jesus was a messiah.
22. He would instruct his disciples secretly about the kingdom of God. 4: 10 – 21. All this was to hide the fact that he was a messiah.
23. Sometimes Jesus would withdraw even from his disciples so that he makes private communication to his father.

JESUS FAILS TO HIDE HIS MESSIAH SHIP IN MARK'S GOSPEL

(open messiah ship)

1. During the baptism of Jesus, the holy spirit descended to him and the voice confirmed that he was the anointed one of God.
2. The feeding miracles are a clear manifestation of the messianic era and Mark presents Jesus performing two feeding miracles that is the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand as well.
3. Christ himself told the demoniac at Garesa to go back home and tell people what God had done for him. 5: 1- 20.

4. Jesus' healing miracles were an open manifestation of his messiah ship. It is written during the messianic era the lame will walk, the blind will see etc.
5. By the fact that Jesus moved around with disciples was an element of uniqueness hence messiah.
6. When he was touched by the bleeding woman, rather than keeping quiet, he stopped and told everyone.
7. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem openly showed that Christ was the long awaited messiah. 11: 1 – 11
8. His wilderness experience of fasting and being rescued by the angels were a clear manifestation of his messiah ship.
9. The opening verse by Mark shows Jesus as the anointed one of God, i.e. this is the good news about Jesus Christ the son of God.
10. The centurion during Jesus' death after seeing what happened confessed that he was a son of God.
11. When Jesus was casting out demons, they recognized him as a son of God. 1:24
12. During his public ministry the people he was preaching to, got amazed because he taught with authority. 1:27
13. Jesus' messiah ship is clearly manifested in the cleansing of the temple at Jerusalem. 11:17
14. The transfiguration incident in which the voice was heard confirming him as the anointed one of God.
15. Jesus' claim to have power to forgive sins was an indicator of his messiah ship. 2:5
16. His ability to fore tell what was to happen showed that he was the anointed one of God, i.e. predicted Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal and his own death and resurrection.
17. His resurrection, appearance and ascension proved the fact that he was the anointed one of God.
18. Peter also confessed Jesus as the Christ the anointed one of God at Caesarea Philippi.
19. The blind Bartimaeus recognized him as a messiah the one who came from David's house and requested to have mercy on him. 10: 47 ff
20. Those whom he healed and instructed them to keep quiet (not to tell anyone), failed to keep the secret. 1: 45 healing of a leper.
21. During his agony and trial when he was asked whether he was the messiah he accepted i.e. "I am" 14:61 - 62

REASONS FOR JESUS' HIDING OF HIS MESSIAH SHIP.

(Significance of messianic secrecy in Mark's gospel)

1. Due to life history of Jesus Christ, the back ground was not conducive for either Mark or Jesus to reveal his messiah ship. This was due to;

2. Jesus' time had not yet come to reveal his messiahship, this is because everything has its time as planned by God.
3. Early declaration would pull a large crowd around him which would make it hard for him to teach his disciples and prepare them for the mission.
4. Early declaration would lead to Jesus' early death before accomplishing the task the father had sent him to do.
5. The Jews expected a political messiah who was to violently fight against Romans, but Jesus was a spiritual one. This made it difficult to reveal his nature.
6. Jesus aimed at winning only sincere and genuine followers (true seekers of the kingdom of God) by hiding his messiah ship.
7. He wanted to show a difference between him and the religious leaders of the time who wanted cheap popularity.
8. He wanted to associate freely with all kinds of people who would have kept a distance if he mentioned that he was a messiah.
9. Jesus aimed at fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies about the suffering servant.
Isaiah: 53:2 – 3
10. Jesus aimed at showing that understanding the kingdom of God and his mission was a gradual process.
11. Jesus feared to be misinterpreted by the Romans that he was instigating rebellion. This would have led to the eradication of his ministry.
12. He never wanted to be declared by the voices of evil spirits so as not to be associated with Beelzebub.
13. He wanted to show that the only way to salvation was to be humble. That is why he suppressed everything that would show him as a messiah.
14. Jesus' background was known by the Jews yet they expected the back ground of a messiah to be unknown. Thus his declaration would lead to resistance.
15. The Jews would have interpreted it as a blasphemy because it was against their law and would take offence against him
16. It would help him attract people to listen to him as his mission would be little known.
17. The writer Mark also wrote under difficult situation of persecution this might have led him to suppress Jesus' true nature.
18. It is also said that Mark wrote to the Gentiles who had no idea about a messiah. This is why he does not emphasize the messiah ship of Jesus.
19. The fear that Jesus would have been seized and made king by force, made him to suppress his messianic identity.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE MESSIANIC SECRET OF JESUS IS RELEVANT TO THE CHURCH TODAY

TO A BIG EXTENT

1. Christians should live a humble life in their service just like Jesus maintained humility during his service.

2. They should work for God's approval rather than man's approval Just like Jesus refused to perform a miracle to be approved by the Pharisees.
3. They should be approachable to all people irrespective of their status just like Jesus associated with the outcasts in the Jewish society.
4. Christians should keep church secrets from those who might misunderstand them just like Jesus requested those he had healed to keep quiet.
5. They should accept and endure all forms of suffering for the sake of the gospel just like Jesus accepted all forms of persecutions and suffering.
6. They should control their tongues so as to reduce all forms of hostility that might interfere with their road to service.
7. They should put their faith in action by living a practical life rather than words.
8. They should strive to promote peace and harmony by controlling their actions and statements that can distort peace in society.
9. Christians should let other people approve their actions through testimonies rather than testifying about themselves.
10. Christian leaders should guard against cheap popularity.
11. They should maintain order during public worship just like Jesus silenced the man with the evil spirits who had entered the synagogue.
12. Christian leaders should help their flock to discover more about the gospel truth by themselves.
13. Christians should preserve the good name of the church by refraining from direct confrontation with the enemies of the church.
14. They should heal the sick with contagious diseases in isolation Just like Jesus would heal people in isolation of the crowd.

HOWEVER;

15. Instead of keeping quiet in case God has done something good for them, Christians should testify as a way of spreading the good news.
16. Christians should live a decent comfortable life so as to be respected in society instead of living a very poor life just like Jesus lived.
17. They should perform miracles in open for all the people to see and prove the power of God to prevent the audience from doubting the source of their powers instead of isolating themselves.
18. They should proclaim Jesus as the son of God rather than keeping quiet as Jesus would tell demons that tried to tell people who he was.

HOW JESUS FULFILLED THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE JEWS IN MARK

1. Jesus received the holy spirit on Baptism fulfilling the Jewish expectation that a messiah was to have the spirit of God.
2. John the Baptist prepared for Jesus's coming as expected by the Jews.
3. The prologue of Mark John the Baptist accepts that the one coming is greater than him that he cannot untie his sandals.
4. Jesus taught with wisdom expected of a messiah and people always got amazed with his teaching. For example, during the healing of the paralyzed man people got amazed.

5. Jesus performed feeding miracles expected of the messiah. For instance, Jesus fed 5000 people to their satisfaction. Thus fulfilling the messianic sign of plenty of food.
6. Jesus cleansed the temple which fulfilled the Jewish expectations of a messiah.
7. Jesus healed the blind and the crippled such as the blind Bartimaeus and the one at Bethsaida to fulfill the fact that during the messianic time the lame will walk and the blind will see.
8. Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem on a Colt as expected by the Jews and was welcomed as the anointed one from God by the crowd.
9. Jesus' act of forgiving the paralyzed man fulfilled their expectation that during the time of the messiah their sins would be forgiven and wounds healed.
10. Jesus observed the Jewish customs and laws like the Sabbath law and Passover festivals
11. Jesus accepted to have been a king of the Jews as the Jews expected a messiah to be their eternal ruler. This happened during his trial by Pilate and an inscription was put on the cross that he was the king of the Jews.
12. Jesus gave life to those who had died for instance he raised Jairus' daughter which was in line with the expectations that the messiah will give life to the dead.
13. Jesus prophetic proclamations as expected of a messiah. For example, he prophesied of his own death and resurrection, Peter's denial and Judas Iscariot's betrayal.
14. Jesus had knowledge of Jewish scriptures and would teach them to the people as expected of a messiah. For instance, he told the Jews about David and his men eating the consecrated bread when they were hungry.
15. Jesus was raised by God from death as expected of the messiah given by Isaiah 53.
16. He called 12 apostles whom we worked with fulfilling the Jewish expectations of a messiah.
17. Jesus had powers over nature as expected by the Jews for instance, He walked on water to the surprise of his disciples.
18. Jesus was anointed at Bethany fulfilling the Jewish expectations of a messiah being the anointed one of God.

HOW JESUS FAILED TO FULFILL THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE JEWS

1. Jesus was more of a spiritual messiah yet the Jews expected a political messiah to liberate them from the Roman oppression.
2. Jesus lived a humble life in obedience of authority on earth yet the Jews expected a Powerful messiah who was to rule with authority.
3. Jesus was a very poor man born from a poor family yet to the Jews a messiah had to come from a rich background with a lot of material wealth.
4. Jesus associated with the outcasts like when he called Levi the tax collector and dined with outcasts at his home Yet the Jews expected a messiah to be with respectable people.
5. Jesus overlooked some of the Jewish laws and traditions like when he worked on the Sabbath by healing a man with a paralyzed hand yet a messiah was expected to obey the law.

6. Jesus was rejected at Nazareth by his own people because he was doing things non expectant of him.
7. Jesus accepted to be anointed by a woman yet a messiah was a respectable person according to the Jews expected to be anointed by God's prophet.
8. Jesus accepted to be arrested as a criminal yet a messiah was expected to be very powerful and righteous respected by all.
9. Jesus disagreed with the Jews on the mosaic law about foods and defilement yet he was expected to be in agreement with Moses' teachings.
10. Jesus was judged by Pilate yet the Jews expected rather the messiah to come as a supreme judge who was to establish judgement on the earth instead of him being judged.
11. Jesus was handed over to the Romans and remained peaceful instead of him fighting and defeating the Romans violently expected of a messiah.
12. Jesus faced a cursed death by crucifixion on the cross non expected of a Jewish powerful messiah.
13. Jesus lived a suffering life by moving from village to village when preaching to people, getting tired like when they thought that he had gone mad and when he slept in the boat which were not expected of a Jewish messiah.
14. During his death his clothes were divided among the soldiers and he died with the wicked, buried in someone's grave. This made him to lose his dignity which was centrally to the messiah as expected by the Jews.
15. On the cross Jesus made a sufferer's groan non expectant of the Jewish messiah that is "My God my God why have you fore abandoned me".
16. Jesus refused to be called good by the rich young man because it is only God who is good Yet the Jews expected a perfect and good messiah sent from God.

How can Christians act as witnesses to Jesus' messiahship today?

1. Through praying for people freely and help them to know God.
2. Through helping the needy by giving alms, constructing of orphanages etc.
3. Through carrying out successful missionary journeys.
4. Through performing miracles in their churches like healing of the sick, making the lame walk etc.
5. Through guiding and counselling fellow Christians and other people who are facing different problems like marriage problems and they become emotionally stable.
6. By engaging in debates on theological issues with those who were opposing Christianity.
7. Through exercising Holy Spirit gifts like, speaking in tongues, interpreting the tongues
8. By associating with the sinners and help them to repent and turn to God.
9. Through enduring to persecution for the sake of the gospel to the point of death.
10. By composing good Christian songs which help people to praise God during worship.
11. Through constructing worship places to enable people worship God well.
12. By successfully evangelizing through crusades, popular missions and street preaching so as to expand the church.
13. By writing inspiring Christian literature.

14. Through successfully helping in Settling disputes among fellow Christians.
15. By defending people's rights from being abused by oppressive governments.

INSTANCES IN MARK WHERE JESUS' DISCIPLES SHOWED LACK OF UNDERSTANDING/FAITH

1. In the instance when Jesus calmed the storm the disciples wondered who he was that even winds and waves listen to him.
2. The disciples interrupted Jesus when he was having a private communication with God.1;35-39
3. They called Jesus a ghost when he walked on water. It was not until Jesus identified himself that they welcomed him in the boat.
4. They stopped a man who they found driving out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus had to teach them that the man was not against their mission.
5. When Jesus told them the parable of the sower they seemed to have not understood and bothered him to tell them what he was meaning.
6. When traveling with Jesus in a boat and were hit by a strong storm, they woke up Jesus fearing that they were about to get drowned.4;35
7. During the healing of a bleeding woman, Jesus asked who had touched him and the disciples wondered why he was asking for there were many people.
8. On feeding the 5000 thousand the disciples wanted to send the people away claiming they did not have enough food.
9. When Jesus warned his disciples against the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod they did not understand him they thought that he was reminding them of the bread they had left. 8;14.
10. Peter rebuked Jesus when he talked about his death for he was ignorant of the fact that it was the mission which brought Jesus on the earth.
11. The argument which broke out among them on who was the greatest is a clear indicator that they were thinking of the earthly material kingdom Jesus had come to establish.
12. During Jesus' transfiguration the disciples he went with were thrown in complete amazement and Peter suggested that they should build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses and for Elijah showing that they were thinking in terms of material glory.
13. The other time Jesus taught about his death and resurrection after three days, the disciples failed to understand his teaching but they feared to ask him. 9;30.
14. The disciples questioned Jesus when he had entered the house about his teaching on marriage and divorce which showed that they had not understood his teaching. 10;10.
15. The disciples rebuked people who were bringing their children to Jesus so that he would touch them. Little did they know that to Jesus children are more placed in God's kingdom. 10;13.

16. When Jesus taught that it is much easier for a camel to pass through an eye of the needle than the rich to go to heaven the disciples wondered then who would be saved not knowing that what is impossible to God is possible to man. 10;23.
17. The request of John and James from Jesus to allow them one sit on the right hand and another on his left hand in the kingdom showed lack of understanding of the nature of Jesus' kingdom.
18. The next day after Jesus cursing of the fig tree Peter wondered why the cursed fig tree had dried up. 11;20.
19. One of Jesus' disciples by the names of Judas Iscariot betrayed him to Jesus' enemies.
20. During Jesus' arrest all the disciples fled way in fear of arrest and left Jesus alone.
21. Simon Peter one of Jesus most trusted disciple and friend denied having been with Jesus and known him three times.
22. During the lord's supper celebration, the disciples failed to know the actual betrayer even after Jesus talking to them.
23. The disciples fell asleep in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus told them to stay watch and pray so that they are not tempted.
24. The disciples failed to drive out a demon from the epileptic boy and later asked Jesus why the demon could not go.
25. The disciples failed to understand Jesus' teaching on what makes man clean and unclean until when he explained to them.

DISCIPLES' UNDERSTADING OF JESUS IN MARK

1. When Jesus called the first four disciples to follow him so as to make them fishers of men, they accepted and left their nets so as to work with Jesus. This clearly showed that they had understood who Jesus was.
2. Levi the tax collector accepted to leave his tax office and followed Jesus. He was ready to sacrifice his income generating activity in favour of preaching the gospel.
3. The disciples of Jesus refused to fast when they were with Jesus while those of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were fasting. This was because it was not necessary since they were with the messiah.
4. When Jesus sent them out to preach the gospel less any extra shirt and money bag, they accepted to go for work and came back with a good report of their deeds.
5. Simon Peter declared Jesus a messiah when Jesus asked them who they thought he was. This proved that they had faith in him.
6. When Jesus sent them for a colt which did not belong to him, two of his disciples went and brought it to him for they knew who he was.
7. The disciples of Jesus laid their cloaks on the colt for Jesus to sit on it. This act manifested that they had faith in Jesus as a messiah.
8. On several occasions they addressed Jesus as master something which proves that they knew that he was superior than them.

HOW JESUS' OTHER AUDIENCE UNDERSTOOD HIM

1. The leper went to Jesus and asked Jesus to heal him if he so wished which showed that he had understood Jesus' messianic nature.
2. The man with the evil spirit declared Jesus God's holy messenger when he found Jesus in the Synagogue and Jesus casted them out.
3. The four men brought the paralyzed man to Jesus so that Jesus would heal him thus had faith in Jesus' messianic nature.
4. The Rich young man went to Jesus and addressed him as a good teacher. He also asked Jesus what he would do to inherit the kingdom of heaven.
5. The bleeding woman Had faith that if she could only touch Jesus' cloak she would be able to get saved from the prolonged bleeding which she did and got healed.
6. The demoniac at Gerasa ran and fell before Jesus' feet and recognized him as the son of the highest God and begged him not to punish him.
7. When Jesus was at lake Galilee in the territory of the ten towns, people brought to him a deaf mute and begged Jesus to place his hands on him.
8. The father of the boy with an evil spirit requested Jesus to help his boy and admitted that he had faith but not enough, so he begged Jesus to help him have more.
9. People brought their children to Jesus and begged him to place his hands on them Which was a clear sign that they had understood who Jesus was. MK; 10:13
10. The blind beggar Bartimaeus son of Timaeus recognized Jesus as son of David and begged him to take pity of him.
11. The Pharisees recognized Jesus as the one who tells the truth without worrying about what people think. This was when they asked him if they would pay tax to the Emperor. Mk;12;14
12. The teacher of the law thanked Jesus for having said the truth that only God is lord and that there is no other God but He when Jesus taught about the great commandment.
13. The crowd shouted that God bless him who comes in the name of the lord during Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem. They also laid down their cloaks and branches of trees for Jesus to pass.
14. The woman anointed Jesus' head when he was with his disciples at Simon the leper's home whose act was to be part of the future gospel. This meant that she had faith in Jesus as the messiah.
15. While at Levi's house a large number of tax collectors and other outcasts joined Jesus and his disciples at table and dined with him.
16. According to Mark when the sun had gone down many people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had demons to be healed showing that they had faith in him as a messiah.
17. When Jesus and his disciples were had entered the boat to cross over to the other side of lake galilee, people went ahead of them and Jesus found them waiting for him so he preached to them.
18. A woman whose daughter had an evil spirit went and begged Jesus to heal the daughter even when Jesus tried tested her faith, she did not give up.

HOW JESUS' OTHER AUDIENCE LACKED UNDERSTANDING IN MARK

1. On healing the paralyzed man, people got amazed at Jesus' action to them it was a new teaching in their land.
2. The people went to Jesus and asked him as to why his disciples were not fasting while those of the Pharisees and John the Baptist were fasting which showed their spiritual blindness.
3. When Jesus over worked himself and got tired people thought that he had gone mad and the Pharisees said that he had beelzebub in him who was helping him to perform miracles.
4. The teachers of the law accused Jesus of blasphemy when he said to the paralyzed man that his sins had been forgiven little did they know that Jesus had powers to forgive sins.
5. Some Pharisees and the teachers of the law asked Jesus disciples as to why Jesus was eating with the outcasts.
6. The Pharisees blamed Jesus for allowing his disciples to pick corn on the Sabbath something unlawful little did they know that Jesus was the lord of the Sabbath.
7. On healing a man with a withered hand, the Pharisees and Herod party met and made plans to kill Jesus Christ.
8. On raising Jairus's daughter, the people who were in the house laughed at Jesus when he told them to stop crying for the girl was not dead but asleep.
9. Jesus mother and brothers went for him to make him leave the work which had brought him on earth because of hearing that he had gone mad.
10. Jesus was rejected by his own village mates at Nazareth for they looked at him as a carpenter and wondered where he got such wisdom and power to perform miracles.
11. The Pharisees asked Jesus to perform for them a miracle so as to prove that God approved of him and what he was doing.
12. When Herod had what Jesus was doing he referred to him as John the Baptist who had come back to life for Herod had killed John the Baptist.
13. The rich young man became sad when Jesus told him to sell his property, give the money to the poor and follow Jesus if he wanted to inherit God's kingdom.
14. The crowd together with the soldiers sent by the chief priest went to arrest Jesus at night with swords and clubs as though Jesus was a robber. This manifested their spiritual blindness.
15. The crowd following Jesus scolded blind Bartimaeus when he screamed seeking for help from Jesus little did they know that Jesus had come for such people.
16. The chief priests and the Pharisees on seeing Jesus cleansing the temple met and made plans of killing him. Little did they know that it was his father's house.
17. Some Pharisees went to Jesus asked him questions like if they could pay tax to the emperor little did they know that Jesus was omniscient.
18. Some people criticized the woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany with an expensive perfume that she had wasted it. To them it would have been sold and money given to the poor.
19. The crowd asked Pilate to release Barabbas in exchange of Jesus 'death little did they know that they were killing the son of God.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS CHRIST Mk:9:2-13

CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH JESUS WAS TRANSFIGURED

- This simply means change in appearance of Jesus Christ. It's found in mark 9: 2 – 13 where Christ's figure was completely changed.
- Six days later Jesus took Peter, James and John to the high mountain where they were alone.
- As they looked on Jesus changed and his clothes became whiter than anyone in the world would wash them.
- The disciples witnessed Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus and these were the greatest Old Testament prophets.
- Peter in his speech realized that it was good to stay in that place which meant that he lacked understanding of Jesus' mission.
- Peter suggested to make three tents, one for Jesus, another for Moses and one for Elijah.
- The disciples were so frightened that they did not know what to say.
- They were covered by the shadow of the cloud which appeared on the mountain.
- Out of the cloud, a voice recognized Jesus as a son of God and commanded the disciples to listen to him.
- This meant that Jesus' mission and what he was teaching was willed by God.
- After wards when they looked around they could not see anyone else apart from Jesus who was with them.
- While leaving the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the son of man is raised from death.
- This meant that Jesus' messiahship was a secret and it identified the purpose of Jesus' coming.
- In obedience to Jesus' orders they asked themselves the meaning of rising from death.
- They asked Jesus as to why the teachers of the law were saying that Elijah had to first come.
- To Jesus Elijah' coming was to make everything ready and indeed he came but people treated him the way they pleased.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. It encouraged the disciples that in case of danger, God will send his messengers to help.
2. It re-emphasized that Christ was the messiah who had come to redeem the world.
3. The presence of the cloud signified the presence of God with them.
4. It also confirmed that there is life after death. This was as a result of appearing of Moses who had died and buried by God himself. Deuteronomy 34:
5. The divinity of Jesus Christ is confirmed i.e. Jesus Christ is recognized as a son of God by the voice.
6. It showed the disciples that Jesus' full ministry and death was planned by God.
7. The disciples learnt that Jesus' miracles do not come from the devil but from God.

8. The event also confirmed Jesus' teachings especially about suffering because after the incident, he asked them to keep silent until his death and resurrection.
9. The event proved the humanity of Jesus for he was worried about the suffering and death and he regained his appearance.
10. The disappearance of Moses and Elijah signified the end of the Old order and that in Jesus all that was fulfilled.
11. The change in clothes symbolized holiness.
12. It also symbolized new life after resurrection. It pointed to the life Christians were to enjoy after resurrection.
13. The disciples learnt that messiah ship was to be kept secret until resurrection.
14. The event helped the three disciples to gain courage to follow Christ as a son of God.
15. The proposal made by Peter to build three tents showed the lack of understanding of Jesus' mission by the disciples.
16. This event was confirming what Peter had said that Jesus was the Christ.
17. The incident identified the three disciples as the would be pillars of the church.
18. It was a confirmation that Jesus was to establish the kingdom of God, which the disciples had tested.
19. It manifested that this mountain was dwelling place of God. It showed that God used to meet his people on mountains.
20. The three disciples were in relationship with the three days Jesus was to spend in the tomb and resurrect.
21. The presence of the two important Old Testament figures stress the connection of the O.T to the New Testament.
22. The event showed the fulfillment of the Old Testament. This was based on the understanding that Elijah was to come back before the end of time mal 4:5
23. It made the disciples to be proper witnesses of Jesus after his death and ascension.

LESSONS

1. Christians should keep their holiness if they are to be elevated just like Jesus was holy.
2. They ought to respect the commandments of God given by Moses, i.e. Moses appeared during Jesus' transfiguration.
3. They ought to ask for wisdom from above so as to understand the mysteries of heaven, not like Peter who wanted to build tents.
4. They should keep religious secrets which can bring confusion in the church, Jesus told his disciples not to tell what they had seen.
5. The church should train its members and prepare them for religious duties. Jesus moved with the three disciples to the mountain as a preparation for leadership.
6. They should prepare for the day when the glory of God shall be revealed and transformation take place in their lives.
7. Christians are expected to listen to the word of God who is Jesus as the voice requested the disciples to do so.

8. They ought to trust in the divine nature of Jesus Christ because he was confirmed that he is the son of God during the transfiguration.
9. They ought to have change of heart and behavior if they are to be in the presence of God.
10. They ought to seek for spiritual strength from God whenever they meet challenges on their way to spiritual salvation just like Jesus did.
11. They ought to believe in the power of prayer because Jesus had gone to pray on the mountain and he was transfigured.
12. Christians ought to work for life after death because the appearance of Moses showed that there is life after death.
13. Christians should be prepared to suffer for the truth as Moses, Elijah and Jesus accepted suffering.
14. Christians need to be open to God's revelation just like Jesus was with his disciples.

How the modern church is a transfigured church?

- The Church is preaching the word of God to different people.
- Christians organize fellowships in which they worship God.
- Church leaders have tried to transform their communities by teaching people good morals.
- Many people have accepted to be Baptized and have got converted to Christianity
- Many Christians do repent genuinely their sins.
- Christians have given testimonies about God's mighty power in their lives.
- Miracles are being performed by Christians in Jesus' name.
- Christians have made successful missionary journeys to different areas of the world.
- Many Christians have concern for the needy and give alms to help the needy.
- Christians have made pilgrimages in faith to different holy places like Namugongo where the Uganda martyrs were killed.
- Christians have committed themselves to prayer and fasting.
- Christian songs have been composed to edify people spiritually.
- The church has written Christian literature aiming at spreading the gospel of the risen Christ. E.T.C.

WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM 9: 33 - 37?

- An argument broke out among the disciples of Jesus which was based on who was the greatest among them.
- When Jesus entered the house at Capernaum, he asked them of the cause of the argument but they kept quiet.
- It is from this background that Jesus told them that whoever wants to be the first shall be the last and a servant of all.
- Immediately Jesus picked a child and set him in the midst of them and said "whoever receives one of these little children in my name receives me and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me"

SIGNIFICANCE

1. It manifested the disciples lack of understanding of Jesus' ministry. Their argument was based on material greatness rather than spiritual greatness.
2. It showed Jesus' omniscience, this is because he was aware of their argument although he was not with them.
3. Their argument put them at the same level with other Jews who expected a political messiah.
4. Jesus' answer was a call for humbleness among the disciples.
5. It showed that one to inherit the kingdom of God should serve without discrimination.
6. It manifested Jesus as a spiritual messiah and the kingdom he had established was of spiritual nature.
7. It was a call for commitment by the disciples to God's will and service.
8. Showed that eternal life was for those who had decided to follow Jesus and serve others without conditions.
9. Jesus picking of a child showed that in God they were all children thus nobody would claim to be greater than others.
10. It manifested the love, mercy and kindness required for one to be received by God the Father.
11. Jesus' answer gave children a central place in his ministry on earth though they had been ignored by the elders.
12. Jesus' answer was an attack to the proud and an indicator that one to be righteous must keep a low profile in society.
13. It meant that one needs the faith like that of a child if he is to enter the kingdom of God.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. They are called upon to be humble when serving.
2. Christians are expected to serve without discrimination.
3. Love should be a principle to guide Christians life and activities.
4. They ought to concentrate more on their spiritual welfare than the material one.
5. Christians are challenged to protect the weak rather than exploiting them just like Jesus told disciples to receive children.
6. They should be pre-occupied with heavenly things not earthly.
7. They ought to see Jesus among fellow human beings when dealing with them.
8. They should have faith and trust in God.
9. They ought to keep a low profile in society just like Jesus demanded.
10. They ought to respect their leaders. However, humble they appear.
11. They should involve children in the service of God because they represent Jesus.

JESUS TEACHES ON DIVORCE 10: 2 - 13

- It was another occasion for the Pharisees to trap Jesus. This time they wanted to get him on the way he interpreted the law of divorce.
- They asked Jesus “does our law allow a man to divorce his wife?”
- Jesus answered them with a question demanding to know what Moses had taught them.
- They were quick to answer that he allowed them to write a divorce letter and then send the wife away.
- Jesus had to teach them the following about marriage;
 1. Jesus referred back to the beginning by quoting Genesis 2, when God made both male and female.
 2. In his teaching Jesus affirms that it is God who joins husband and wife together implying that marriage is willed by God.
 3. He teaches that marriage should be permanent/long lasting. Therefore, there should be no divorce.
 4. Teaches that whoever divorces and marries another woman commits adultery.
 5. Teaches that if the divorced wife also marries another man also commits adultery with him.
 6. Teaches that Moses allowed the Jews to write a divorce letter because of the hardness of their hearts.
 7. Teaches that from the beginning God created them male and female to stay together.
 8. He teaches that marriage is sacred and holy
 9. He teaches that marriage is a divine institution established by God.
 10. To emphasize permanence Jesus teaches that a man shall leave his parents and go to stay with a wife.
 11. Teaches that man and woman should come together to become one flesh. Thus teaches about unity in marriage.
 12. He teaches that marriage should be monogamous that is one man and one woman.
 13. Teaches that there should be mutual love and comfort in marriage.
 14. He teaches that marriage is a free will of two people man and woman.
 15. He teaches that there should be equality in marriage because partners become one body and one flesh.
 16. He teaches that divorce is against God’s original plan of marriage.
 17. Teaches that ideal marriage is intended to be between a man and a woman not man and man or woman and woman.

RELEVANCE/LESSONS

1. Christians marriages should be kept holy because it is a holy institution established by God.
2. Christian marriages should be permanent as divorce is declared to be a sin.

3. Christian couples are expected to be faithful to each other because adultery is a sin against God.
4. Christians ought to keep the original plan of God in creating man and woman i.e. it was to form a permanent family.
5. Christians ought to respect what God has put together by guarding against causing separation through rumors.
6. Christian couples ought to seek reconciliation if there is any misunderstanding in the marriage.
7. The divorced partner should stay single because getting another partner is a sin against God.
8. Christian partners are expected to leave their parents and set up their independent home so as to form a family.
9. People should respect marriage because it is willed God
10. Christian marriages should be monogamous. This is the only ideal marriage accepted by God.
11. There should be spiritual equality of husband and wife in marriage. None has a right to dominate the other.
12. Christians ought to update some old laws and give them a new interpretation so as to fit the changing situations just like Jesus did on this law.
13. Christians ought to take time and involve God in the right choice of marriage partners because marriage is permanent.

SIMILARITIES/RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS' TEACHING AND THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING.

- Both recognize the idea of one flesh.
- Both hold marriage as a covenant relationship.
- To both marriage is permanent and divorce is unacceptable.
- In both it is the man to leave his father and mother and joins with his wife.
- Both recognize the sacredness of marriage.
- In both teachings God is given as the initiator of marriage.
- In both teachings man is prevented from trying to separate those who are married.
- Monogamy is given as the ideal marriage in both teachings.
- In both there is an element of equality of couples.
- Both teachings identify marriage as a gift from God.
- In both marriage unions should be between male and female.
- In both extra marital relationships are not accepted.

DIFFERENCES

- In the Old Testament sometimes divorce was allowed according to the Mosaic law while in Mark marriage is said to be permanent.
- In the Old Testament Polygamy could take place like David had many wives and Solomon While in Mark, monogamy is an ideal marriage.

- In the Old Testament a wife was a subordinate/inferior to the husband while in Mark equality is encouraged.
- In the Old Testament the idea of marriage was majorly for procreation while in Mark marriage is mainly for companionship.
- In the Old Testament the Jews were restricted to marry from their own tribes while in Mark there is freedom of choice.
- In the Old Testament the divorced were allowed to remarry while in Mark the divorced are required to remain single or reconcile.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE INSTABILITIES TODAY

- Declining African cultures today has made people not to value marriage hence breaking up very fast.
- The women liberation movement and their demand for their rights and equality has made men tired of their wives hence divorce.
- permissiveness where people today are free to do whatever they want has made married people tired of themselves hence divorce.
- Unfaithfulness / marital infidelity where the partners cheat on themselves sexually has also led to marriage breakups.
- Lack of sexual satisfaction among married partners has made marriage meaningless and useless leading to its break up.
- Lack of respect and trust for each other in marriage has made partners suspicious of each other leading to marriage instabilities.
- Too much work where the partners do not give themselves enough time has contributed to marriage break up.
- Barrenness on the side of women and impotence on the side of men has made marriage use less leading to divorce.
- Producing of single sex children and children with disabilities have made most men divorce their wives thus ending marriage
- Political instabilities in the world today have made partners to run away for safety thus ending up abandoning their marriages
- Limited sex education being given to those about to get married has made married couples to make mistakes in marriage hence divorce.
- Limited time of courtship where people do not get to know each other well before marriage has also led to marriage breakup.
- Bad peer group influence where by the divorced women misadvise their friends to also divorce hence marriage break ups.
- Poverty and the high cost of living have also made wives tired of their husbands hence divorcing them and looking for rich men.
- influence of alcoholism and drugs which results into family conflicts as when the man is a drunkard he may not fulfill his marital obligations or end up beating the wife.
- Forced marriages: When the two people were forced to marry each other may be by their parents because of bride wealth or it was because of unwanted pregnancy.

- Unfaithfulness in marriage of one partner lead to a divorce because there will be no trust for other. Cultural difference when the two people fail to harmonize their cultural differences, it may result into conflicts and bring a lot marriage break up.
- Religious difference may also result into separation like a Christian marrying a non-Christian and the two fail to harmonize their religious differences.
- Western influence / culture which does not attach much value to marriage as compared to African traditional culture which emphasizes permanency in marriage.
- Family influence or parental involvement in the affairs of their children.
- If one partner has bad habits like witch craft, is a thief, quarrel some etc.
- Chronical diseases which could not have been noticed during courtship like sickle cell, Asthma etc.
- Long separation which could be because of work or studies and one partner become unfaithful.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN 10:17 - 22

- Mark presents a rich young man running and kneeling before Jesus and poses a question. “Good teacher what can I do to inherit eternal life”?
- Jesus responded by first making “man aware that it is only God who is good.
- He directed the man to go and keep the ten commandments God gave through Moses.
- Because the man seemed to have kept these commandments since his birth, Jesus loved him.
- Jesus requested him to go and sell whatever he had, give the money to the poor, take up his cross and follow him.
- The young man became sad and sorrowful and went away for he could not imagine giving out all his great wealth.
- It was from this back ground that Jesus told his disciples how it was hard for a rich man to enter God’s kingdom.
- To Jesus it is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of the middle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.
- As a practice the disciples seemed to have not understood Jesus as they were wondering who then can be saved.
- However, Jesus told them that what can be taken as impossible to men, it is very possible with God.
- Peter then wondered what was to be the reward of those who had left all their wealth and followed Jesus.
- Jesus assured all those who left whatever they had for the sake of the gospel shall receive hundred fold.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCIDENT

1. It showed that it is not praising Jesus that may earn a person the kingdom of God but doing the will of God.

2. It showed the divinity of Jesus Christ when the rich man refers to him as good which meant total purity expected of God.
3. It showed that Jesus had come to fulfill the old testament i.e. He requested the man to go and keep the commandment.
4. It showed that the law was not enough to make man right with God but also a need for self-surrender and sacrifice in during the will of God.
5. Jesus' answer changed the Old Testament thinking of wealth as a blessing from God to being a barrier to person's salvation.
6. It identified Jesus as a spiritual messiah a person who had come save men from his sin. (sell your property)
7. Jesus' answer to the man showed him as a suffering servant of God i.e. go sell your wealth give the money to the poor carry your cross and follow me.
8. It showed that even the poor can inherit the kingdom of God if they have faith.
9. It showed that much trust in wealth can block believers from attaining salvation.
10. Jesus' response to the disciples showed God's supremacy and omnipotence because nothing is impossible before God.
11. It shows the rewards God will give to those who have accepted to serve him unconditionally.

LESSONS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Christians ought to keep the ten commandments because they are a requirement to man's salvation.
2. Christians ought to surrender their wealth and families for the sake of the gospel.
3. Christians should attempt to do what God wants other than mere singing praises for Him, not like the man who called Jesus good.
4. They ought to trust God other than wealth because wealth can hinder a person from going to heaven.
5. They ought to use their wealth by helping the poor because this is what Jesus required them to do.
6. They should accept to follow Christ in whatever circumstances of even if one is required to leave whatever he has.
7. Christian leaders should put aside all other commitments and stick to their duty of serving God. The rich young man was requested to do so.
8. They ought to strive for eternal rewards in heaven by restricting themselves from the worldly riches.
9. Christians ought to take God seriously as their only God and savior by completely depending on him, unlike the rich young man.
10. Christians should pray to God for the gift of eternal life because observing the law is not enough to make Christians achieve it.
11. Christians ought to abandon any material things which become a stumbling block in one's faith.

