

THE STUDY OF THE PRE-GOSPEL PERIOD

The pre-gospel period refers to the period of believers that existed before the gospels were put into writing. It was called the pre-gospel period because it was a period that gave a foundation to writing of gospels.

The gospel / message that was proclaimed during this period also referred to as “**the gospel before gospels**”.

It is also noted that during this period there was a team of serious Christian believers who used to proclaim the gospel and they came to be known as early church believers and hence the pre-gospel period can also be known as;

- (a) The period of early church. Because it was the first church of Christian believers that existed immediately after Jesus’ resurrection.
- (b) A period of eye witnesses. Because most of the gospel preachers during this time were those individuals who witnessed the life ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus to heaven.
- (c) A period of apostolic age/church. Because it were the apostles whom Jesus had appointed before he left the world that were busy proclaiming the gospel.
- (d) The period of oral proclamation/preaching. This was because it was a period during which the good news/word of God was proclaimed orally (using word of mouth).
- (e) The inter-statemental period. This is so because it was the period that preceded the writing of the New Testament. Therefore period between Old Testament and New Testament. The early church/apostolic church and its activities.

THE EARLY CHURCH/APOSTOLIC AND ITS ACTIVITIES

What were the activities of the apostolic church/early church?

In the early church there were many activities conducted by eye witnesses or apostles and include the following;

- They preached the gospel (good news). After Jesus’ resurrection, he gave a great commission to his disciples to always preach the good news.
- They also got involved in baptism. Those who were converted to Christianity were baptized in the name of the father, son and the Holy Spirit.

- They early church also conducted missionary journeys and these were mainly apostles who moved from one place to another preaching the word of God. For example Paul moved to Corinth, Roma and Antioch.
- The early church also celebrated the Lord's Supper. This was done in order to remember Christ who had died for them. For example in the church of Corinth, this was recorded (1 Corinthians 11:17ff)
- They also settled problems among the believers. It was mainly apostles who provided solutions to problems. For example Paul provided solutions to the problems in the Corinthian church about incest, food offered to the idols, women veiling heads.
- They also carried out communal fellowship as believers. Believers used to gather and fellowship in an assembly. For example they used to fellowship in the house of Mary mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12)
- They also used to pray on a daily basis and hence praying became a culture. They could pray in the upper room until the Holy Spirit came.
- They also used to provide guiding and counseling services in form of encouragement to their believers who were suffering because of their faith for example Peter advised the suffering.
- They also appointed church leaders like deacons who acted as elders and therefore would guide the believers in the word of God. For example Paul appointed many deacons in the church of Corinth and Galatians.
- The early church also used to praise and worship God on daily basis and that also helped to proclaim the good news.
- They also interpreted scriptures to their members. This was done in order to guard against false preachers.
- The apostles also carried out catechism. This was where the strong believers used to teach the young converts fundamental basics about Christianity/Jesus Christ and this helped to fight against back sliding.
- Some believers used to conduct income generating activities to support their evangelism for example Paul was a tent maker.
- They also carried out charitable activities. For example apostles could help the needy, the poor, orphans, widows in form of giving them food, visiting them among others.

- The early church members also performed many miracles in the name of Jesus. They also planted and established churches as centers of worship. For example Peter established a church and also Paul in Corinth and Galatia.
- They conducted and organized theological debates. Leaders like Peter and Paul would always be in public gatherings, synagogues to guide people about the word of God.
- They also repented their sins. They would organize services for repentance so that when Jesus come back finds them pure and ready to go to heaven.
- As time went by the early church members started writing down gospels and letter especially when Jesus had prayed to come back.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The early church was characterized by the following;

- It was characterized with numerous prayers; to the early Christians prayers were on a daily basis like when they were repenting.
- The church was characterized with many missionary journeys where apostles were ever moving from place to lace preaching the gospel.
- Worshipping was a common feature in the early church. They worshipped on daily basis like the apostles creed formed the basis of their daily worship.
- It was characterized with eager expectation of the Parausia (Jesus' second coming)
- It was characterized with performance of miracles. Signs and wonders since they had strong faith in their God Jesus Christ.
- It was characterized with marriage break up. This is because the converted Christians especially women opted to separate with non-believing husbands.
- It was characterized with numerous working and manifestation of the gifts of Holy Spirit.
- It was characterized with great love among believers. They would care for one another's problem, pray for each other, help the needy both materially and spiritually hence they lived a practical demonstrated love t one another.
- Sharing material property in church was a common feature in church.
- They shared together as brothers and sisters so it helped to expand their fellowship.
- It was characterized with strong unity and fellowship. Members regularly fellowshipped themselves together in strong bond in fellowship in different places.

THE ORAL PERIOD IN RELATION TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Examine the period of the oral tradition in relation to the gospel message.

How was the good news spread, preserved and maintained in the early church?

- It was a period of continuous repentance, reconciliation since people were assured of God's forgiveness.
- It was a period of practical love by showing care visiting each other especially the sick, encouraging those in problems and such practical love became a gospel message.
- Baptism was also the tradition in the oral period and the more they baptized the more the message.
- It was also a period of missionary journeys and the more they moved to different places the more they spread the message.
- Performing of miracles was a tradition or culture of the early church. The more miracles performed the more people were converted hence the gospel message spread.
- Appointing of church leaders was the tradition of the early church these church leaders helped in spreading of the good news.
- The early church was also characterized by catechism giving basic teaching to new believers and in the process the message was proclaimed.
- Theological debates were carried out in the early church during which answers were given to questions and this became a basis for preaching the gospel.
- There was a tradition of interpreting scriptures to the public and this became the oral search for spreading the gospel.
- There was endurance of many trials, persecution and members endured and this displayed a sense of gospel knowledge.
- Sharing resources as brothers and sisters was a tradition in the oral period. This also led to spread of the good news. It was characterized with holistic living. Members struggled to live a holy life So that when Jesus comes back he finds them ready to enter heaven.
- Continuous guiding and counseling was the tradition of early church. This encouraged the persecuted and through these encouragements the good news was spread.
- Celebrating the Lord's Supper was the common tradition in oral tradition. This was done to remember the death of Jesus Christ.

THE MESSAGE PROCLAIMED IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- The message proclaimed in the early church is also regarded as the original proclamation.
- This message of the oral proclamation was all about the origin birth the life ministry the death resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.
- Therefore the original message of the full life of Jesus Christ was originally referred to as the **Keresian** which was a Greek word to mean the good news. The word **Keresian** was also borrowed from English and spelt to mean kerygma.

THE KERYGMA

The kerygma can be explained as the original message of the good news proclaimed by early Christians (eye witnesses) about the origin, birth, life ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

CONTENTS OF THE KERYGMA

- 1. Examine the contents/major teaching of kerygma/early church.**
 - 2. Discus the message of oral proclamation.**
- They taught that Jesus was a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies for example this was foretold by prophets like Elijah and Isaiah.
 - The kerygma contained a message that Jesus came from the lineage of King David. That is to say, Jesus is a descendant of King David.
 - They kerygma also taught that Jesus was the only son of God and so God is his father though he appeared in a human form.
 - They also preached the belief in only one God, the almighty being, the creator of heaven and earth.
 - The message of the kerygma was that Jesus was born by a Virgin Mary.
 - They proclaimed that it was the power of the Holy Spirit that made Mary to conceive. That is to say, Jesus was conceived by power of the Holy Spirit.
 - The kerygmatic message was that Jesus lived on earth like any other human being.
 - They also preached that while Jesus was on earth, he taught the message about God's kingdom in parables and performed miracles.

- There was a message that Jesus was arrested bribed by his enemies.
- The good news was that when they tried Jesus was sentenced to death and hence he was crucified.
- After crucifixion, Jesus died and was buried in the grave.
- They proclaimed that Jesus rose again on the third day as it had been prophesized.
- The kerygmatic preaching was that Jesus appeared to his disciples and to many other people after resurrection. For example Mary Magdalene.
- They also preached about Jesus' ascension to heaven after he had resurrected and appeared to his disciples.
- Another message was he is sited at the right hand of the father in heaven.
- Jesus is coming back the second time (Parausia).
- He is coming to judge the living and the dead.
- They also taught that they believed in the holy trinity. That is to say, father, son and Holy Spirit.
- They also proclaimed the belief in the whole universal church of God that is to say Christ was for all and hence universal message.
- They also taught that the saints of God should be in one union as the union of the trinity.
- They also proclaimed the good news about the forgiveness of sins.
- They also preached the message about the resurrection of God. That is to say, they believed that believers will resurrect.
- The original proclamation was about the eternal life that is to say they believed in life after death and preached to their audience.

IMPORTANCE OF KERYGMA TO EARLY CHURCH

The good news about Jesus Christ which the early apostles proclaimed became important and useful to them in the following ways;

- It helped them to worship only one God since the content was that they believed in one God.
- It portrayed to the members that Jesus was the messiah and was the real fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets.

- It helped members to accept Jesus whole heartedly since they knew that he was the only son of God and savior of people from sins.
- It encouraged members to repent since they were assured for the punishment of their sins and this was in kerygma.
- It helped members in early church to live a holy life since it was preached that Jesus Christ never sinned besides they feared judgment on Jesus' return.
- The Kerygma helped the early church members to baptize many members as they converted them because they were eager to enter God's kingdom.
- The message strengthened the early church members because of the message Jesus performed miracles.
- The kerygma kept church members in prayers all the time since they were expecting Jesus' second coming to find them holy.
- It gave hope and expectation of eternal life since Christians proclaimed that God will resurrect after death.
- Believing in life after death helped members to believe in all persecution, troubles and death without any fear since they knew even if they die they will get eternal life in God's kingdom.
- It helped members of early church to unite since they believed in the union of saints and union of the trinity.
- It helped the early church to endure suffering since they believed that even Jesus their Lord suffered under Pontius Pilate.
- Through the message preached the church members expressed their love for one another following the example of Jesus who loved man to extent of dying for his sins.
- The message assured the early church members of the reality of God's kingdom since they preached that he is seated at the right hand of the father.
- The message influenced members to share with one another because even Jesus shared out body on behalf of believers.
- The kerygma became the basis of the apostolic teaching just because they believed in the universality of Jesus.
- It became a basis for the process of canonizing the New Testament books.

RELEVANCE OF THE KERYGMA TO THE MODERN CHRISTIANS

1. What is the importance of the kerygma to modern Christians?

2. Explain the relevance of the Kerygma to the modern Christians.

- Modern Christians should repent since the Kerygmatic gospel emphasized repentance of sins.
- Modern Christians should pray since the kerygma taught the importance of prayers in believer's lives.
- Modern Christians should share just as Jesus shared his body for the believers.
- Modern Christians should wait and expect upon the second coming of Jesus Christ as the kerygmatic gospel proclaimed the return of Jesus Christ.
- Christians should love one another just as Jesus loved all mankind by dying for their sins as it was proclaimed in the kerygma.
- Christians should preach the gospel to all mankind just as the gospel stressed about Jesus' teaching/preaching to all mankind.
- Christians should endure every form of suffering just as Jesus endured every form of suffering in under Pontius Pilate.
- Christians should live a holy life as they prepare for the judgment day which Jesus would do when he comes back as it was preached in the kerygma.
- Christians should be baptized just as Jesus was baptized.
- Christians should forgive each other because the kerygmatic teaching stressed the forgiveness of sins.
- Christians should be noted just as the kerygma taught and encouraged the union of saints and the trinity.
- Christians should accept and trust in Jesus Christ as their savior.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The term worship refers to the different ways in which man expressed honor, glorification or exaltation to the almighty God his creator either by actions or words.

Worship was therefore one of the major and common activities in the early church because it was done on daily basis.

WAYS OF WORSHIP IN EARLY CHURCH

The following are the ways of worshipping in the early church;

- They worshipped God through singing different hymns and songs to honor the name of the Lord as being great, holy among others.
- They also worshipped God by kneeling down.
- They also worshipped God through repentance. They repented on a daily basis and asked for forgiveness.
- They worshipped God through laying hands and appointing church leaders.
- They worshipped God through speaking in tongues of different languages. These were believed to have been given to them.
- They worshipped God through expression of love like visiting the sick, helping the needy as a symbol to glorify God.
- They also worshipped through clapping hands to the Lord.
- Through celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was done regularly as people gathered with their offerings and shared together in the name of father, son and Holy Spirit in remembrance of Jesus Christ.
- They also worshipped God through fellowship. They would give offerings to God.
- They also worshipped through catechism. This was done by teaching the young converts the basics of Christianity.
- They also worshipped through making missionary journeys and planting of churches as centres of worship.
- At a later time they worshipped God through reading scriptures.

WORSHIP IN MODERN CHURCH

Examine the different ways Christians worship today.

- Through praying for example vigils on Sundays.
- Through organizing fellowships. For example in schools, hospitals, prisons etc
- Through organizing crusades with open air preaching.
- People today worship through the use of modern instruments like keyboards, guitars, modern drums etc.
- They worship through giving testimonies that glorify what the Lord has done for them.
- Through performing religious rituals like baptism, confirmation etc.

- Through composing gospel songs . For example gospel music of Pr. Wilson Bugembe.
- Through giving tithe and offerings plus other church dues “endobolo” in catholic churches.
- Christians also worship today through repentance especially in lent period.
- Celebrating the Lord’s Supper is the other way of worshipping God in early church.
- Christians worship through dancing, clapping and jumping for the Lord.
- They also worship God through fasting . That is to say, they deny food for a specific period of time.
- They also worship through carrying out and reciting of rosaries.

THE PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION OF THE GOOD NEWS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Preaching the good news/gospel was the major duty and commission of the early church believers and so they did all their best of the early church believers and good news about Christ.

Examine the methods of preserving the good news before it was put into writing

The following were the ways in which the good news was preserved especially before it was put into writing;

- Through open air in form of crusades.
- Through baptism in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit.
- Through performing miracles, signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. Such people who were healed like the lame crippled became the good news to the society.
- Through the testimonies of the believers the good news was preserved and spread. As people gave testimonies others were encouraged and also believed.
- Through planting churches to different places the good news was spread.
- Through prayers which were made especially for the sick in the name of Jesus.
- It was preserved through sharing resources especially to poor, needy, orphans, widows etc.
- Through the celebration of the Lord’s supper where all believers gathered, fellowshiped and remembered the death of Jesus Christ as their savior.
- Through organizing for repentance services and assuring those who repent of God’s forgiveness.

- Through making missionary journeys whenever they made these journeys they preached the good news.
- Through theological debates where questions were answered and this also led to preserving of the good news.
- Through expression of love and care in form of charitable work was another way of preserving good news.
- Through counseling and guidance.
- Through appointing church leaders.

HOW THE GOOD NEWS IS SPREAD TODAY

How is the good news spread today?

- The good news today is spread through catechism. For example people who are going to be confirmed first pass through a stage where people are preached to and ready to change their ways.
- The good news is spread through mass media. For example TV, radios.
- It is spread through preaching on gatherings. For example on burial places as people gather together.
- It is also spread through missionary journeys like some people move to go to Namugongo on 3rd June every year.
- Its spread through celebration of Lord's Supper. For example taking Holy Communion.
- Through appointing church leaders. For example pope, arch bishops, bishops, priests who help in spreading good news.
- Through expressing love and care by helping the needy through charity organizations like scouts and guides at Kaazi.
- Through organizing repentance services and assuring those who repent of God's blessings and forgiveness.
- Through performance of miracles . For example in catholic charismatic renewal miracles are being performed . For example blind can see, lame can walk all performed by Fr. Bashobola in name of Jesus hence good news.
- Though open air preaching the good news is spread today.

- Through baptism . For example in church today many have been baptized and all this has led to spread of good news.
- Through gospel music . For examplesongs of Mary Asimwe “okujunwani kumara” meaning salvation is enough.
- It is spread through prayers for the sick, words of encouragement to the needy.
- It is spread through organizing fellowships . For example in schools, hospitals, prisons among others.
- Its spread through musical instruments like keyboard, modern drums.
- Through reciting rosaries . For example during lent season.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL PREACHING

The effectiveness of oral method refers to how advantageous or disadvantageous the method was. The method therefore was both positive and negative

Advantages of Oral Preaching

- It was quick and a faster method of preaching gospel because one person would preach to very many people at the same time.
- It involved performance of miracles which strengthened faith of the believers as the preachers performed miracles.
- It led to easy expansion of the church numerically (in number) since it encouraged everyone to participate.
- It was cheap and even free because it didn't involve expenses of writing.
- It was easy to convince the audience.
- It led to easy understanding of the news because it encouraged question and answer system.
- The method benefited different categories of people like blind, over aged, illiterates.
- It saved time because it allowed many different people to preach the gospel and one person could address many people at ago.
- This method encouraged sharing. This is because apostles could share material property with the poor and needy they found.
- It involved direct counseling, guiding and hence helped to encourage those in trouble.

- It was easy for follow ups and hence minimizing backsliding . That is to say, preacher would know different people they preached to and in end make a follow up.
- It encouraged strong fellowship and unity in the society because people would always gather for the good news.
- It involved baptism. those who believed were directly baptized.
- It was advantageous in a sense that it was a way to follow Jesus' example because he also preached orally.
- Receiving spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues because the preachers would lay hand directly on the converts.

Disadvantages

- It was tiresome because it involved moving place to place and talking.
- It left no room for future reference and so it could easily be forgotten.
- It didn't favour some categories of people like the deaf.
- It exposed preachers to direct insults, persecution, abuses and others hence putting the life at stake.
- There was language barrier which could hinder the preaching in that not all people knew the same language.
- It would lead to death of some creatures . For example Steven was stoned directly to death.
- It would lead to destruction of the original message. It would be repeated and hence boring at times.
- It involved contradiction because different preachers could preach differently since they didn't gave a common book for reference.
- It gave a chance to false preachers because everyone was free to preach and in end pretenders would also come in.

Questions

Comment on the effectiveness of the oral preaching method.

How effective was the oral method of preaching?

Examine the effectiveness of the oral method of preaching the gospel.

PROBLEMS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

In the apostolic church, they faced a number of problems some of which were geographical, social, political and material as seen below;

- Faced a problem of direct persecution and a times killed by political leaders . For example political leaders stoned Steven to death.
- There was a problem of language barrier since they were using oral means to proclaim the good news. The apostles came from different places.
- They faced a challenge of fading memories. As time went on the information accumulated and started forgetting and this was a problem since they had no reference.
- They faced the problem of death of the eye witnesses who had the original information. This scared the new converts.
- There was a common problem of regular arresting and imprisoning apostles. This bought more attention to churchmember . For example at one time Peter was imprisoned.
- They also faced a problem of opposition from religious leaders like Pharisees, Sadducees who opposed Christianity and Jesus.
- There was a problem of unfavourable weather conditions for spreading of the good news. Sometime it would rain and sometimes it was sunny. This affected their movements from one place to another hence hindering spread of good news.
- They also faced a challenge of limited man power. This is because they were very few and were to cover a large area of the whole world.
- Besides, there was a poor and undeveloped means of transport.
- They faced a problem of limited resources or poverty. This prevented the writing of the gospels. Poverty was caused because most of their time was busy preaching and never carried out any activity.
- They faced a problem of the delayed Parausia (second coming)Jesus had promised to come back very soon but he has been waited soon didn't happen and non believers got a chance to abuse them.
- There was a problem of backsliding. This was caused mainly due to persecution and delayed Parausia.
- There was a problem of false preachers (agnosticism). Many false preachers used the opportunity of oral proclamation but also pretended to be Christians and preached wrong gospel.

- There was also a problem of divisions based on many factors. For example someone divided because of different spiritual gifts because of following different gospel preachers like Peter and Paul. This was common in the church of Corinth.

ATTEMPTS MADE TO OVERCOME PROBLEM IN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

- The early church leaders did not sit back, they sought or made attempts to address problems they faced and that is why they were successful.
- They started writing letters and gospels which solved problems like continuous movements for longer journey, fading memories and misinterpretation of scriptures.
- They resorted to free sharing of resources as brothers and sisters and this solved poverty and limited resources.
- They also carried out catechism which strengthened the faith of believers and this reduced on backsliding.
- Members also resorted to continuous praying together and in process encouraged one another and this re-strengthened their hopes and became more determined and reduced amidst persecution.
- Counseling and guidance was adopted which also minimized the problem of backsliding and strengthened their faith.
- Church leaders always came in to settle different disputes and conflicts which the church had faced and in process divisions were minimized and unity was forged.
- Church members decided to form a canon which was a standard measure by which would eliminate false preachers and their writings.
- There was continuous fellowship among members in different places and through this regular fellowship fear of persecution and disunity was overcome.
- Leaders adopted to living a prophetic life to help them overcome opponents.
- They also carried out regular theological debates which enabled them answer many question and solved misinterpretations and false preachers.
- The roman government developed technology which helped members overcome problems like language barrier, illiteracy, poor transportation and communication.

FACTORS FOR EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH OR REASONS FOR WIDE SPREAD OF GOOD NEWS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- The role of the Holy Spirit led to expansion of the church. It gave wisdom and spiritual strength for members to preach the gospel.
- It also influenced the performance of many miracles which attracted many people join the church.
- Influence of persecution contributed to rapid growth of the church. This forced many people to scatter to different places and as they scattered they continued preaching the gospel.
- The eager expectation of the parousia influenced expansion of early church. This is because Jesus had promised to come back repent and judge both living and the dead. This made people repent very fast hence Christianity.
- The conversion of great men who later joined the apostolic church led to the expansion. As time went on great men like Paul, Steven were converted and during the preaching.
- The age of literacy also contributed to the expansion of the early church. Since any people had learnt how to read and write and this made the writing of gospel easy and interpretation.
- The influence of Jesus' resurrection also contributed to the rapid growth/expansion of the church. When Jesus resurrected many non believers got attracted to Christianity and the faith of the believers was strengthened. This made them preach the gospel with confidence and one equal o Christianity.
- The influence of great commission speeded up the gospel preaching and hence expansion to the church. The great commission was the final command/ instructions Jesus gave to his followers to go to the whole world to preach the gospel and baptize. This made apostles to move to different places/ parts of the world preaching good news.
- The culture of practical love and sharing from members influenced wide spread of good news. This practical love attracted many people to Christianity and eventually the church expanded.
- The Roman law of freedom of worship also speeded up gospel preaching and hence expansion of the church. When the Roman Empire passed the law declaring freedom of worship and legalizing worshipping, the gospel preachers preached very fast to different parts of the world.

- The impact of false scriptures contributed to spread of good news. There were many false scriptures and this made the gospel preachers to preach very fast to counter fight them.
- The impact of missionary journeys made the church expand geographically and numerically as the preachers reached different parts of the country like Paul to Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Ephesus, Peter to Asia Minor they preached the gospel and people got converted.
- The presence of synagogues. These served as worshipping centres for regular worship. Fellowship and hence centres of spreading the gospel would gather there.
- The performance of miracles speeded up growth Christianity. These miracles. For example healing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear attracted others to gain Christianity since they would be healed free of charge.
- The modern development in the Roman Empire also contributed to expansion of the church such development included modern transport network system like the use of canoes and ships which enabled preachers travel to different parts.
- The influence of Greek language helped Christianity spread very fast. The Greek language was finally made a universal language official. This simplified communication of the gospel and eliminated the hindrance of language.
- The universal approach of Christianity also contributed to the expansion of the church unlike other religions which used to discriminate people. For example Judaism but Christianity never discriminated it instead it embraced anyone like the outcasts, sinners and so people joined Christianity.
- The unity of the gospel preachers was a strong factor to growth of church, apostles were united that they joined material physical and scriptural efforts to spread the gospel.
- The early church expanded because of canonicity. This was a period and process when the true gospels were to be written to eliminate the false ones.
- The unpopularity of other religions like Judaism gave an opportunity for Christianity to spread world wide Judaism. For example called an eye for an eye (revenge), stoning the adulterous women to death etc which became unpopular and people evaded it.

Questions

- 1. Account for the rapid spread of the gospel/good news in the apostolic church.**
- 2. Examine the factors that contributed to the growth and expansion of the early church.**

HOW PERSECUTION CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOOD NEWS

- It made believers to scatter to different parts of the world and so whenever they scattered they spread the good news hence expansion of the church.
- It created fear that believers/ eye witnesses could all die and so they spread the good news very fast before they could die.
- As the strong eyewitnesses started dying, they started to write all the information which helped in spread of the good news.
- Persecution influenced Christians to live unprojectic life to act as good examples and defend the good news before political leader who thought that Christianity was against the government.
- Some apostles preached the gospel even in prisons where they had been put to their fellow prisoner and fellow prison wardens.
- Christians decided to baptize very fast people since they knew anytime Christians could die.
- Due to persecution, apostles speeded up catechism which strengthened the faith of believers and helped to guard against backsliding.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

- The Holy Spirit gave believers power to perform miracles and the more miracles they performed, the more people were attracted to Christianity and hence good news.
- The Holy Spirit gave believers wisdom/knowledge to always answer difficult questions in public and it were the answers which satisfied people and ended up believing the good news.
- The Holy Spirit guided the gospel preachers on what to preach to who and where so the holy spirit made the preachers to move to different people and in the process many were converted.
- The Holy Spirit gave believers special gifts which were influential in spreading good news. Some believers were given gifts of speaking in tongues other prophesying and all these attracted many people to Christianity.
- It gave sharp memories to gospel preachers to remember all what Jesus had done and they were also able to teach others hence the good news.
- It was also the power of the Holy Spirit that convicted the non believers to repent their sins and when they repented they joined Christianity and the church expanded.

- The Holy Spirit strengthened the faith of the believers and helped them to grow hence expansion of the church.
- It helped to guard against backsliding and since people became too loyal and trusting in God Christianity expanded.
- It influenced unity of preachers and the more they became united physically the more they spread good news.
- It empowered the preachers to endure all forms of suffering and persecution and more they endured such persecution, the more they preached the gospel with goodness.
- It enabled preachers to interpret and even understand false preachers and as they interpreted the scriptures well they won many people to Christianity.

ROLE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION TO THE SPREAD OF GOOD NEWS

- It made many people to join Christianity since they knew that there was life after death in following Christ.
- The resurrection of Jesus provided hope and confidence to Jesus' followers which confidence made them spread good news very fast.
- It became uneverlasting testimony to whole world that the one crucified Jesus of Nazareth resurrected and so people accepted him and good news was spread.
- Jesus gave a great command to his disciples after resurrection which was to go to the whole world spread the gospel and baptize many who believed.
- Jesus' resurrection became good news and broke the fear that disciples had and so they preached the gospel with total confidence, boldness and the good news was spread.
- His resurrection became a basis of forming the New Testament canon. It was this canon which circulated widely hence expansion of the early church.
- It became a foundation upon which Christianity is built up to date.
- Jesus' resurrection is one of the pillars upon which Christianity bases its doctrines different from other religions.

- Jesus' resurrection gave a form of trust that all whatever he had promised, whatever had been written about him were completely true and hence people joined Christianity very fast well assured that it is the true religion.
- When Jesus resurrected, he promised to come back very soon to judge the living and the dead and this made very many people to repent very fast.
- His resurrection raised the faith of his followers and so guarded against backsliding.
- It provided assurance that there is life after death and so preachers endured all forms of suffering and in the process they preached the good news.

THE ROLE OF PAROUSIA IN THE EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Parousia means the second coming of Jesus Christ. As Jesus resurrected he later ascended to heaven however as he was living he told his followers that he will come back very soon and even told them that he had gone to prepare for them rooms, places in his father's house and so they needed to be worried of anything (John 14:1-2). The parousia therefore to a larger extent contributed to the spread of Christianity in the following ways;

- The expectation of parousia made the people to repent very fast hence expansion of the early church.
- It encouraged people to live a holy life of Christianity since they were expecting judgment very soon.
- It influenced believers to share the material property in wealth freely even with the non-believers since they knew that such properties would be left on earth.
- Very many people accepted baptism and were baptized so as to be ready the parousia.
- Due to parousia, the apostles preached the gospel very fast and tirelessly hence many people were converted.
- The church members lived a very good life of examples which made non believers admire them and be converted to Christianity.
- Due to parousia, oral proclamation became the method of preaching which encouraged everyone to participate in preaching the good news.
- Parousia created fear among many sinners that they would be judged and so they accepted Christ as their Lord savior so as to escape judgment.

- Parousia made the apostles to intensify catechism which strengthened the faith of the non believers to converts.
- It influenced believers and others to love one another as brother and sisters and it was practical love that drew many people to Christianity.
- Parousia meant that there is life after death and it was the influence of hoping for eternal life when Jesus comes back.
- Parousia influenced believers and non believers to live a life of preparedness, alertness, readiness and eager expectation to receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ROLE OF PAUL'S CONVERSION IN THE EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The spreading of the good news was quite hard during the time of Paul. It was until his conversion to Christianity that the spreading of the gospel became easier. For St. Paul, he was originally known as Saul and a great persecutor of the Christians until the Lord Jesus appeared to him and converted him to become a gospel preacher and an apostle. He played a great role in the expansion of early church as seen below;

- He became an apostle of the Lord and so when the Lord appointed him an apostle to the gentiles (non believers) he therefore preached to many of those Gentiles.
- Paul made different or several missionary journeys to different parts of the world and whatever he went and he preached and converted many people into Christianity hence expansion of the church.
- He used to plant or establish churches which became centres of worship and spreading the good news such churches include the Corinth church, Galatians and Rome church.
- He participated in writing Christian letters which had good news about Jesus Christ and these letters circulated to many parts of the world hence wide spread of the good news.
- Paul used to baptize those who accepted the good news and through this baptism, many people came to Christianity and the good news was spread.
- He used to settle disputes among believers in different churches and by doing so unity and peace prevailed which helped in wide spreading of the good news.
- Paul's conversion became a testimony and hence an encouragement to many non believers to also believe in a forgiving God and in a process many people joined Christianity.

- St. Paul lived a committed and devoted life of teaching and preaching the good news. He also leaved his privileges like marriage and became a celibate for the sake of spreading the good news.
- St. Paul became a tent maker and through this income activities supported preaching of the gospel helped the needy which encouraged people become Christians.

BAPTISM IN EARLY CHURCH

1. Discuss the importance of baptism in the early church.

2. Explain the importance of the sacrament of baptism during the apostolic age.

- It was a way of following Jesus' example by his eye witness since Jesus himself had been baptized.
- Through the sacrament of baptism the gospel preachers expressed their obedience to God.
- Baptism was a way of fulfilling the great commission by those early believers Jesus told them to go to the whole world spreading the good news and baptized those who believed.
- Through baptism the believers expressed their repentance and so they believed in forgiveness of their sins . That is to say, it was a sign of washing away their sins.
- It acted as a symbol of purification/holiness of water symbolized the blood of Jesus Christ.
- It distinguished Christianity from other religions.
- It made believers to put a new character and measure of Christianity. That is to say, it was a form of acceptance to follow only Jesus Christ.
- Through the sacrament of baptism members o the early church were a bit to be identified from the non believers and other religions like Judaism.
- It strengthened the faith of the early church members and hence acted an expression of faith in Jesus Christ.
- During baptism to early church members expressed their faith to God.
- It helped members to fellowship because they could gather during the sacrament.
- It acted as a form of worship hence it was another spread time for worshipping the Lord.
- During baptism members would pray both themselves and the church because they believed that on the ascension the Lord visited them.

- Miracles could be performed during baptism .g. people would heal the sick, demons would be cursed out.
- Baptism meant special resurrection from death as it was signified by coming out of water.
- The sacrament of baptism meant the death of Christ emersion into water.
- It was a sign of unity and togetherness among the Christians of the early church.
- It signified the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures.
- It was important because it created the new converts into the community of believers.

HOW BAPTISM IS PRACTICED TODAY

- In today's church, the practice of baptism varies from one Christian domination to another.
- Today some churches only baptized people who are mature enough, this is done in order to understand the purpose of baptism, this is done by seventh days.
- In some churches like catholic infants are also baptized.
- In today's church, candidates are accepted to dress with clothes to symbolize holiness.
- In some churches, the candidates should have the God parents in addition to their biological ones.
- In today's church, baptism is presented over by the clergy like priest and deacons in case of the Catholic Church.
- In the baptism of today a special name is given to candidate.
- During the baptism hymns are sung by the congregation to accompany to the occasion.
- In some churches especially the Catholic Church the candidate is baptized simply spreading water on the forehead by the clergy.
- In some churches like born again baptism is by emersion.
- In today's church, in baptism there is anointing with oil on the forehead.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- 1. What role did the Lord's Supper play in the early church?**
- 2. What was the significance/importance of the Lord's Supper to the Christians?**

In the apostolic church the Lord's Supper was a major and regular activity and it was therefore celebrated as one of the major sacraments with the following importance or significance;

- It was a way of following Jesus' command because Jesus had commanded them to always do it in commemoration of him.
- It helped believers to remember the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and the good things he had done for them.
- It helped believers to repent their sins because nobody could share of it without repenting.
- It also helped the church members to live a holy life because they believed to be washed by the blood of Jesus Christ during this sacrament.
- It promoted sharing among the members because they will gather with different items to eat and then share the Lord's Supper.
- It promoted members together and hence promote unity to both the poor and the rich even to the young ones and elders could all gather to share the Lord's supper.
- It was a form of worship and glorified the Lord for having died for our sins.
- It strengthened the faith of believers and hence checked their faithfulness to the Lord.
- It was a sign of acceptance to share in suffering the Lord Jesus Christ since they were remembering how he suffered and died for sinners.
- It implied the disciples' commitment, devotion and dedication to follow Jesus Christ who shed his blood for their sins.
- The Lord's Supper served as a spiritual meal which was aimed at maintaining the spiritual lives of Christians.
- It was an earthly meal that symbolized something of the future.
- It signified the presence of Jesus in the daily life of Christians.
- It helped Christians to sustain hope in the second coming of Jesus whom they expected anytime.
- The Lord's Supper also pointed at the future resurrection which all believers are expected to attain.

THE END OF ORAL METHOD OF SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE WRITTEN METHOD

The apostles of Jesus Christ depended on oral preaching of the good news for a very long period of time due to a number of factors. However, as time went by they also started writing gospels.

Reasons why they delayed to write the gospel or why they depended on oral preaching for a long time

Many factors and circumstances influenced the early church to delay in writing the gospel and instead preached orally for a long period of time. The following factors hindered the writing of the gospel;

- The expectation of Parousia led to the delayed writing of the gospel. They believed that Jesus is coming soon and so there was no need to write the gospel.
- Writing was tiresome and time consuming. It was easy to preach than sit down and write the gospel.
- The influence of poverty hindered the spreading of the gospel. Church members were so poor because initially most of them were not working because they expected Jesus to come back anytime and so could not afford the writing materials.
- The high level of illiteracy also led to the delay in writing of the gospel. Both believers and non-believers did not know how to read and write therefore writing could be useless.
- There was intensive persecution which delayed the writing of the gospels. The apostles were always on the move running away from the enemies and therefore had no time to sit down and write the gospel.
- The apostles and eyewitnesses had strong and sharp memories especially the first years after Jesus' ascension so there was no need to write.
- Jesus' commission for the disciples to go to the whole world preach the gospel but not to write hence delaying of writing.
- The apostles critically had some few scriptures of the Old Testament to refer to those few scriptures together with the fresh message they had about Jesus were used for reference.
- Preaching orally was the tradition of the time. The whole society was not used to writing as a form of communication but instead preferred oral preaching.
- The church was still small both in number and geographically preaching orally could satisfy people.

- Initially the level of technology needed for writing the gospel was not yet developed there were no machines like printing press and therefore.....
- The Holy Spirit had not inspired and guided the witnesses on what to write so they could not write because they were not guided.
- There was a belief that the eye witnesses by then were the last generation this was because they were expecting the second coming of Jesus Christ and the whole world would come to an end.
- The apostles were copying Jesus' example of teaching orally and so they also depended on the preaching as Jesus had began.
- There had existed some conflicts, disunity and misunderstanding in the church and so they could not come together and write the gospels.
- They lacked specific languages to use in writing the gospels so they depended on oral preaching.
- Originally writing was only authorized to special groups of people called the scribes who were not interested in writing about Christianity.

WHY THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN

- As time went by there developed technology and so the process of writing became possible using technological inventions like printing machines.
- The delay of Jesus' return provoked the apostles to start writing the gospels. This was done in order to guard against backsliding which had started.
- The eye witnesses had started dying as years went by. This created fear that they would disappear with the original information and hence hurried to write before all of them could die.
- There was need to express the University of Jesus' mission on earth and since oral preaching could not reach the whole world the apostles had to use written methods that would cover the world.
- They wrote the gospels to lay a firm foundation for the future generation which would use such gospels for reference.
- The influence of the false preachers prompted the eyewitnesses to write the gospels. They did so in order to counter fight the message of the false preachers.

- The age of literacy came up after along period of time. Since many people knew how to read and write including the apostles themselves they started writing.
- Improvement of the economic status of the church members led to the writing of the gospels. With time, the church's economic status improved and so people were able to afford the writing exercise.
- The gospels were written to be used for gospel transmission to different parts of the world. Oral preaching could be limited to nearby places.
- The gospels were written because the eye witnesses had weakened in their memories and could remember everything.
- Persecution and martyrdom had intensified and so Christians gathered in hiding places and started writing the gospels as they were fearing to appear in public preaching.
- The gospels were written down to be used as reference both in their preaching and in the future time . That is to say, they wanted written information for guidelines.
- The Holy Spirit had finally inspired them on what should be written and so they also started writing the gospels.
- The gospels were written to help in preserving Jesus' work, life, death and resurrection and finally ascension in a written form.
- The Greek language had become universal and it solved language barrier which had hindered the writing of the gospel.
- The writing materials had become available and affordable. For example ink hence influencing the apostles to write the gospel.

Questions

1. **“The end of oral tradition had become inevitable by 64AD” justify could not be avoided why.**
2. **Account for the eventual writing of the gospel.**
3. **“It took a long period of time before the gospels were written.” Explain why this trend of affairs took place.**

CANONICITY/CANONIZATION/NEW TESTAMENT

The term canonicity is spelt in English from the original Greek word known as Canon which means the following;

- (a) Measuring rod
- (b) Yard stick used to measure the length of the width of a dot of land correctly.
- (c) An instrument used to measure and provide correct accurate measurements.

In the bible therefore, the canon refers to the yard stick, the principles, guidelines on the correct basics used by the church elders to select the correct 27 books of the new testament s real, correct, authentic and accepted canonization therefore is the process by which the 27 books of the old testament were formed and justified as authoritative with perfect information about good news of Jesus Christ.

REASONS FOR THE FORMING OF THE CANON

- There was need to eliminate false literature which was circulating alongside true Christian books. Out of the many books which were in circulation some had false information.
- The canon was formed in order to have a manageable and portable volume of the book. There were many books in circulation that would make it a very big volume and not easy to be carried.
- There was need to eliminate contradictions. The many books in circulation were contacting each other and even those which had true information would contradict.
- The need to eliminate unnecessary repetitions accounted for the formation for New Testament canon. The many books in circulation were repeating each other.
- The church leaders wanted to get a standard book volume for evangelism. Some books had substandard information and the only way to eliminate this was by forming the New Testament canon.
- They formed the canon for liturgical purposes the church elders needed a specific volume of books that would be used in their daily liturgical worship, devotion etc.
- They wanted to eliminate mis-interpretation of the gospels hence setting up a specific standard for what to be included.
- The canon was formed to preserve the basic Christians fundamental doctrines. Some books had avoided the basic doctrines of Christianity such as salvation, baptism, Lord's Supper etc.

- The canon was formed to preserve Jesus' mystery works, death and resurrection in a correct way.
- There was need to preserve correct scriptures for the future generation since some books in circulation had false information.

THE PROCESS OF FORMING THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON (HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON ACQUIRED ITS PRESENT FORM)

- The New Testament canon is composed of 27 books, four which are gospels 21 are letters, one book of Acts and one book of Revelation.
- The current form of the New Testament canon was developed and acquired through different stages or steps which were mainly three . That is to say, the oral stage, the written stage and the selection stage which involved choosing which book is right and which one is wrong.
- It started with the oral stage whereby the apostles or eye witnesses were proclaiming the message about Jesus Christ.
- The proclamation of the apostles about Jesus Christ became the good news and was adopted as the kerygma.
- The kerygma which was proclaimed during the oral stage became the original message and it was recommended to circulate in different parts of the world.
- When the kerygmatic gospel accumulated during the oral stage three major problems occurred . That is to say, fading memories, false preachers and persecution was at climax.
- These problems plus others influenced the apostles to start writing the gospels and then a canon was beginning to join a form of a written book.
- The apostles and eye witnesses used the context of the kerygma since it was the original message of the good news to write gospels and letters which were later compiled to form the canon.
- It is believed that the first letter to be written was the letter to Galatians, first and second letter to the Corinthians were the first Christian literature to be written and adopted in Christian churches for moral instructions.
- All St. Paul's letter circulated to Christian communities. They were approved and used in prayers and worship and so they were approved, accepted to be included in the canon. Other eyewitnesses like St. Peter also started writing his letters around 62AD and were mainly

dealing with crisis of persecution against Christians, so the purpose of these letters were to encourage/give hope and instill faith to those suffering.

- Other eyewitnesses and close associates also started writing the gospel . For example Mathew, Luke, Mark and John. It is said that Mark was a close associate of Peter and also a secretary. Mark started writing his gospel getting information from Peter between 60 – 70AD therefore Mark’s gospel has a formula $Mk = MK + P + Q$
- After Peter then Luke also wrote the gospel basing on mark first and his independent source. It is believed that Luke has 320 verses of Mark’s gospel and hence the formula $Lk = Lk + Mk + Q$
- John’s gospel which is the forth one was the last to be written and it was accepted in the Christian activity because it has the theme of practical instructions of Christians holy, then of salvation by faith and connection between Old Testament and New Testament.
- The book of Acts of the apostles was written compiled by the church elders confirming what the apostles had done and was included in the canon.
- John the apostle and the writer of the fourth gospel also wrote the gospel of Revelation and it was easily accepted by the Christian community since it had been written by an eye witness. It talks about the resurrection and the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- In the process when these letters and gospels written by eyewitnesses were in circulation and were being used by the Christians, false literature like the books of Apocrypha, Tobiastarted circulating so they bought confusion, bad morals which created an agency for the church elders to sit down and set conditions, guidelines, yard sticks that should be followed to qualify any book in the community.
- The church elders especially bishops like Ignatius Augustine Cyprian Anthana made regular meetings in specific centres like cathage and Rome during which they finalized the qualification/criteria they formed and selected the 27 books and others were left out.

CRITERIA USED TO SELECT THE 27 BOOKS

The church leaders and elders in the cathage and put up the following as the basic yard stick in selecting which books to be included or excluded in the New Testament canon.

- The author. Writer of the book mattered in the information of the canon. The book which was written by eyewitness or a known apostle was easily accepted and included in the New Testament canon.
- The book that was written by a close associate to an apostle was easily approved and hence included in the New Testament canon. For example Mark's gospel was accepted because he was a close associate to Peter.
- The books that were written in the apostolic age were proved as authentic and hence included in the New Testament canon. That is to say, books written in between 30s to 100AD were accepted.
- The books that taught about Christian moral values like holiness, humbleness, obedience were accepted in the new testament canon for example Peter's first letter to Romans.
- Books which stressed the Acts of the Apostles like their preaching, miracles, missionary journeys and all their activities were regarded authentic and hence included in the New Testament canon for example the book of Acts of apostles.
- Any book which stressed the contents of the kerygma was quickly accepted because it was treated as the original message/gospel.
- Any book that talked about Jesus as the only son of God the promised messiah, the savior of mankind was approved as authentic and hence included in the New Testament canon.
- Books which reflected on the Old Testament teachings/ scriptures were regarded authentic in the New Testament for example Paul's first letter to the Galatians was first rejected but because it had many scriptures of the Old Testament it was later accepted.
- Book which were already in use in the Christian churches by the time of selecting were regarded as authentic easily included in the canon.
- The books which were in line with the apostolic books or online with those that had been accepted were considered authentic.
- A book that stressed strong Christian doctrines like baptism, confirmation, resurrection, repentance, Lord's Supper were included in the new testament canon.
- Any book that carried the message of strengthening faith, hope, courage among the Christians was taken as authentic and hence included in the canon.
- A book to be included in the canon had to reflect on the existence of the trinity of God the father, son and holy spirit as being one.

- Books that survived the destruction/fire sent by Emperor Nero were accepted as inspired/guided by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Questions

1. *Examine the criteria followed in the selection of the New Testament canon.*
2. *How did the New Testament books come to be approved as authentic?*
3. *Discuss the authenticity of the New Testament canon.*

FACTORS FOR THE ELIMINATION/EXCLUSION OF SOME BOOKS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

There were some books which were left out/rejected as the New Testament was being formed. The reasons for eliminating some books were as follows;

- Books written in the period outside the apostolic were left out. And in those books that were written before 30s and after 100AD were rejected because they were outside the apostolic age/error.
- Books which contradicted with the already existing books and accepted books of the eye witnesses were excluded from the New Testament canon for example the letter of St. James was first rejected because it seemed to contradict with S. Paul's letter about faith.
- Some books which encouraged immoral behaviors were rejected. They were books which encouraged immorals like drunkardness, polygamy, so they had to be eliminated.
- Books that defined the Christian doctrines like baptism, Lord's Supper, resurrection, repentance were eliminated.
- Some books which opposed the teaching of the Old Testament and did not refer to them were eliminated from the Old Testament.
- There were books which doubted Jesus' resurrection, death and even his miracles. This was enough reason for such books to be eliminated since Jesus' mystery and life were the Centre of Christianity.
- Some books which were written directly from philistine which was a Centre of Christianity for Christian's persecution and a Centre of Emperor Nero's activities were rejected.
- The character, personality, integrity and morals of the author was a ground for some books to be eliminated.

- There were some books written by people whose morals in society were poor and so the church elders rejected the books.
- There were some people who encouraged discrimination for example discriminating women and children from the public, discriminating the leper, the Jews against Gentiles such books were eliminated because Christianity was for every woman.
- Books that were written by unknown people were excluded.

Questions

1. *Discuss the factors that made some books to be eliminated from the New Testament canon.*
2. *“There were many books in circulation but the church leaders selected only 27 books:.*
 - (a) *Why were some books left out?*
 - (b) *Explain the authenticity of the canonized books.*

THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE EARLY CHURCH MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

The team of early church members that included apostles, church leaders like bishops, deacons, priests played a great role in the formation and acceptance of the canon as follows;

- They provided the first hand information to the gospel writers. Most of the gospel writers got the information from those eyewitnesses who could not write.
- The early church leaders/members are the ones who approved which books had sound doctrines and were accepted and those who had false doctrines were eliminated.
- The church leaders also provided writing materials.
- The church members studied the behaviours, characters and hence proved the author who was morally upright and his gospel was worthy for acceptance.
- The early church members also set the standards upon which were written first and used them in their daily worship.
- The church members helped to eradicate false preachers and their false writings and hence formed the canon with only true information.
- The early church members especially the Gentile Christians raised questions and problems which created agency/need for writing the canon in the correct way.

- Some of the church members participated in writing the gospels and letters which were included in the New Testament canon like St. Mark, St. Paul.

COMPARISON BETWEEN EARLY CHURCH CHRISTIANS AND THE JEWS/PHARISEES (Christianity and Judaism)

- The early church Christians believed and followed Jesus Christ as their messiah but the Jews rejected to be their messiah and instead followed the teaching of king pharaoh.
- To the early Christians, Jesus Christ their messiah had already received him whereas the Pharisees/Jews were still waiting for their messiah to come in a glorious way.
- The early Christians believed in direct forgiveness and reconciliation whereas the Jesus believed in first sacrificing before in order to be forgiven.
- To the Jews, forgiveness was only for God while to the early Christians forgiveness was by God through Jesus Christ in the both Jesus and God had the power to forgive.
- To the Christians all people were equal before God but the Pharisees leaders were very superior and children and women were inferior and not allowed in worship.
- To the early Christians, God was universal and even his kingdom was universal that it was for everyone but to the Jews the kingdom of God belonged to only themselves.
- To the early Christians salvation was by faith in Jesus Christ yet the Jews' salvation was by obeying the Mosaic Law.
- To the Jews salvation was only for those who practiced the Mosaic Law and its customs like circumcision yet to the early Christian salvation was for all those who believed in Jesus' teaching.
- To the early Christians baptism was important as an external sign of purity to enter God's kingdom yet to the Pharisees circumcision was external sign of purity for one to enter God's kingdom.
- To the early Christians they were waiting for the second coming of Jesus their messiah to judge the living and the dead but for the Jews were waiting for the first coming of their messiah who would be political.
- To the early Christians, all days were equal and free for worshipping the Lord but to the Jews, the Sabbath was more special and was their holiday for worshipping.

- Christians would gather, worship and pray to God from any place anytime on a regular basis while to the Pharisees worshipping took place only in synagogues and on Sabbath.
- Early Christians preached the gospel through missionary journeys to anyone like in markets and prisons while the Jews preached there to only the Jews and in synagogues.
- Early Christians welcomed everybody associated with everybody while the Jews discriminated other people like lepers, tax collectors etc whom they regarded as sinners.
- To the early Christians suffering of any kind was part of serving God and following his example and so they endured it but to the Jews suffering was seen as a curse and punishment from God.

Similarities

- They all believed in the concept of salvation from God.
- Both believed in purity and holiness to enter God's kingdom.
- They all believed in one God and worshipped him (monotheism).
- They all uphold the value of the temple as God's special house for worship.
- They all believed in the messiah only that the Jews believed in the political messiah.
- They all believed in God's authority to forgive sins.
- They all believed and referred to the Old Testament teaching especially the Ten Commandments.
- All believed in the judgment day by God and it is only the righteous who could escape judgment and enter God's kingdom.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GOSPEL PREACHED BY JESUS AND THAT TAUGHT BY THE DISCIPLES

- Jesus' message was directly from God his father but the disciples message only promised to forgive through Jesus.
- The disciples baptized with water while Jesus baptized with Holy Spirit.
- Jesus Christ preached in parables for example the parable of the sower while his disciples preached ordinary message with ordinary statements.

- Jesus' message involved the performance of miracles directly from the power of God or Holy Spirit but the disciples performed miracles through the name of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus' message was full of his death where he used to say that the real son of man will die and resurrect whereas the disciples message was full of Jesus' coming.
- In Jesus' teaching he always quoted the Old Testament scriptures or the teaching of the Old Testament prophets like Moses while the disciples quoted Jesus' resurrection.
- Jesus in his message used to hide his messiahship while the disciples preached openly and made Jesus' messiahship open and declared him as a messiah.
- The message preached by Jesus was totally oral (not written) while that preached by the disciples was both oral and written.
- In Jesus' teaching he proclaimed the message (good news) of God's kingdom, its good news and joy while the message of disciples proclaimed Jesus as the good news of salvation the redeemer of salvation of mankind.

Similarities

- Both proclaimed the message of salvation of mankind which is received through repentance.
- Both performed miracles in the teachings like healing the sick, casting out of demons among others.
- Both preached the gospel orally.
- They all encouraged repentance, forgiveness of sins and hence living a holy life.
- They all stressed that there is life after death to those who lived faithful lives.
- Both preached using missionary journeys after his resurrection, he would move from place to place preaching the good news.
- Both proclaimed a message of reconciliation and peace within the society.
- Both proclaimed a universal message that the kingdom of God is for all mankind.
- They all accepted suffering as a way of following God, serving him, testing one's faith hence encouraged endurance.
- Both preached a message of love for all mankind irrespective of one's background or status.
- All preached about the unity of believers for example Jesus told his disciples to be united just as him and his fathers are one.

- Both stressed the message of perfect monotheism. That is to say, they all preached in believing in one God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

THE AUTHORSHIP OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The question of authorship tries to answer the question as regards a person who wrote the gospel according to the available evidence therefore, Mark's gospel was written by;

- It was written by a man called John Mark.
- It was written by John Mark who is believed to have been a close associate of the eyewitnesses of all apostles especially Peter.
- John Mark who wrote this gospel is the Mark who is believed to be a personal secretary to Peter the senior apostle and this is believed to have been the major source of his information.
- He is John Mark in whose mother's home the apostles ran away naked when Jesus was arrested and so from his childhood he started getting associated to eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ.
- He is Mark whom Saint Peter refers to as his son. This implies that Mark the author was a spiritual son to Peter.
- He is the only person known by the name in the whole bible which confirms he is the author.
- In the gospel according to Mark some Greek words are interpreted in Aramaic language. John Mark qualifies to be Saul since he had a Jewish background. Words like "TalithaKoum" meaning young girl wake up, "Eloi Eloi" meaning my God my God.
- The author presents many direct events about Jesus 'mystery. For example use of parables, Miracles etc. This implies that he got information from a direct eye witness and hence it was John Mark because the source of information was Peter.
- The gospel presents some agency which implies that the writer must have been a secretary of Peter and this was John Mark.

PURPOSE/AIMS OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The author of Mark's gospel could have aimed at the following;

- He wanted to put the good news of Jesus Christ in a written form. Probably this is why he begins his gospel with statement that 'this is the good news about the Lord'

- He wanted to preserve the information about Jesus Christ for the future generation. And this could only be in written form.
- The aim was to show that Jesus is the real savior of man's sins and real promised messiah and son of God.
- The author's purpose was to call all people repent and live a holy and acceptable life in God that's why John the Baptist ran calling people to repent.
- The purpose was to show the Universality of God's kingdom. The author in his gospel shows that God's kingdom does not discriminate the Jews and the Gentiles, children and adults made.
- The purpose was to show the salvation mission of Jesus Christ on earth that Jesus came to save sinners and he was sent by God since he had authority to forgive sins.
- The aim was to show reality of everlasting life through following and believing in Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus resurrected people who are dead like Jairus' daughter and even Jesus himself who had resurrected.
- He aimed at strengthening people's faith in God. He wanted his followers to have strong faith in God through Jesus Christ the redeemer.
- Mark wanted to show that Jesus' coming was a fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures. This is why he refers to the teaching of Old testament prophets like Isaiah (Mark 1;2ff).
- The author aimed at showing the greatness of God's kingdom and its reality comparing to satanic kingdom. This is proved by many miracles of casting out demons and use of parables.
- It was to establish a strong relationship between mankind and god through love.
- The author shows God's love for mankind and calls upon the audience to endure suffering, trials, temptations etc.
- The author wanted to present the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which were a divine plan.
- Mark also aimed at showing the growth and understanding of God's kingdom as gradual but not sudden.

- The author also intended to show that the kingdom of God had come down among many people who believed. This is because John the Baptist advised people to prepare the way to obey and repent because kingdom of God was at hand.
- The aim was to show continuous battle between God and satanic powers that victory and greatness belong to God's kingdom. For example Jesus on many occasions casted demons and ordered them to keep quiet which showed some kind of battle.

THE AUDIENCE OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Audience is the word used to refer to the congregation to whom any author addresses his message/written literature.

The author of mark's gospel had a specific guidance or type of congregation which he aimed at addressing his message/teachings.

According to research of scholars, the author seemed to have two different categories of people to whom he addressed his gospel and these are/were

- (i) Gentiles
- (ii) Jews

Proof/ evidence that he wrote to the Gentiles itself, Mark could have addressed the congregation of the Gentiles due to the following;

- He uses very few Old Testament scriptures because some of them could not be understood by gentiles since they were not considered by the Jews.
- He tries to explain some Jewish cultures, practices and customs implying that he was addressing people who didn't know such cultures and hence were the Gentiles.
- The author tried to show that the gospel is for all mankind. For example Jesus told his disciples to go to the whole world and preach the gospel. This implies that even Gentiles were considered.
- The author allows even women to participate in public matters like serving God but this was not allowed in the Jewish culture because women were not supposed to talk in public so since

even women participated in public matters and serving the lord, this means that the letter was written to gentiles.

- Jesus' genealogy/background is rejected and completely omitted in Mark's gospel implying that the author was writing to gentiles since for them Jesus' background would not be of value and would not be understood.
- Mark could have written to the Gentiles because Jesus Christ performed some miracles in gentile land, he also had his gospel centered in the Gentile land for example feeding of 4000 men took place in the Gentile land.
- In the gospel Jesus served or attended to the needs of the commanded their faith to benefit them in God's kingdom for example the woman with continuous blood flow.
- Jesus also helped to heal and save Gentiles and this means that he had great concern for them as the audience for example the Phoenician whose daughter was about to die begged Jesus to heal her and she got healed.
- In this gospel Jesus associated with all categories of people. For example outcasts, tax collectors, lepers etc. which was not accepted in the Jewish culture. This implies that Mark was addressing gentile nation.
- John Mark labored to interpret Aramaic words for example "Eloi Eloi" meaning my God my God "TalithaKoum" meaning young girl wake up that implied that was communicating to Gentiles.
- However on the other hand, he always intended to address another group of believers especially the Jewish Christians because of the following;
- Mark refers to Jews as God's children for example his experience with a Phoenician woman whom he told that "we can't give food of children to dogs".
- When Jesus was crucified and hanged on the cross, on his cross, they wrote "king of the Jews" which meant he was addressing the Jews.
- In the gospel Jesus tried to remind the Jews about the teaching of the mosaic laws for example when he taught about marriage and divorce (Mark 10:1ff)
- During the triumphant entry, Jesus was riding a donkey and found people gathered and they praised him as the one coming from David's kingdom.
- Some audience used to refer Jesus as son of God. For example the blind Bartimaeus.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The gospel according to Mark is characterized by the following;

- It is characterized by messianic secrecy. That is to say, the gospel Jesus hides his identity as a messiah in that he does not want people to know him.
- It is characterized by use of many parables. For example the parable of mustard seeds.
- It is a very short gospel compared to others. For example it has 16 chapters yet other like John have 21, Mathew has 25.
- The gospel is too brief in reporting about certain events such as there was urgency with the author. For example he describes Jesus' temptation in any two verses (Mark 12:1-3).
- In the gospel there is disciples' lack of understanding is shown (spiritual immaturity). For example the disciples called Jesus a ghost when they arrested Jesus they all took off.
- It is characterized by the universal approach. It's concerned with all mankind both the Jews and gentiles, women and men, adults and children among others.
- The gospel shows a continuous battle between divine forces and powers of darkness. For example Jesus gave authority to the disciples to cast out demons and even when he was crucified darkness fell over the world.
- The gospel is characterized with Jesus' passion. Narrative that is a lot of Jesus' suffering is indicated.
- It is characterized with the kingdom of God being a future reality. For example Jesus' ascending to heaven shows that God's kingdom is a future reality.
- It is characterized with opposition against Jesus or Jesus' rejection by the Jewish leaders.
- It is characterized with Jesus' humanity in many occasions the author represents Jesus as an orderly human being. Jesus himself got anointed he was angry; he slept and ate with sinners like Levi.
- It also presents Jesus' divinity meaning appeared a super ordinary way below man's understanding. For example transfiguration.
- It is characterized with performance of many miracles as compared to other gospels of other nature life, healing, feeding. The gospel of Mark presented the kingdom of God for example powerful.

THE PORTRAITS OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Characteristics of Jesus

The author of Mark's gospel portrays or shows Jesus in many identities or characterized as shown below;

- In Mark 1:1 the author shows Jesus as the son of God.
- He is presented as the messiah who had been promised to come as a messenger from God. The messiah whom the Old Testament wrote about.
- He is presented as the lord. For example John Baptist came telling people to prepare way for the Lord.
- He is presented as a savior of mankind. For example he used to forgive people's sins like the paralyzed man whom he said "my son your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:2-9)
- He is presented as a healer or a doctor. He healed many people including Phoenician woman, blind Bartimaeus among others.
During transfiguration he told peter not to tell anybody of what he had seen until the son of man is risen (Mark 9:9)
- He is a provider. For example he feed the hungry people/ multitude of 4000 and 5000.
- He is presented as a son of Mary and a son of a carpenter. For example the people of Nazareth rejected him saying he is just a son to a carpenter.
- He is presented as Jesus of Nazareth for example at his crucifixion they referred to him as Jesus of Nazareth.
- He is presented as prophet (foretellers). For example his betrayal, denial, arrest all took place.
- Jesus is the source of life or giver of life. For example he resurrected the dead like Jairus's daughter.
- Jesus is portrayed as the king in the gospel of Mark. For example during his crucifixion on the cross, they wrote "Jesus the king of the Jews" during the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, they were singing Hossana, the one coming in the name of King David.
- He is portrayed as a victor or conqueror for example conquered death, overcame the devil's temptation.
- According to Mark Jesus is a human being. That is to say, he is shown with many characteristics of humanity. For example he ate, slept, cried etc.
- He is presented as a divine being that is in many ways Jesus got his powers from his father God. For example he calmed the storm.

- He is a universal redeemer. That is to say, redeems all people without discriminating any. For example he allowed the children, women all to participate in God's kingdom.
- He is a master/ teacher. On many occasions his disciples referred to him as a teacher for example when they were asking him who would be the greatest among them in God's kingdom.
- He is presented as a judge. For example when they questioned him why he had healed on Sabbath he gave an answer that proved him as a judge.
- He is portrayed as a humble servant of God. Jesus portrayed characters of humbleness throughout the gospel. For example he humbled himself before the religious lepers and even to his disciples.
- Jesus is presented as a suffering messiah as it had been written about him in the Old Testament books. For example he suffered during his crucifixion, he was mocked at.

THE PROLOGUE OF MARK'S GOSPEL (Mark 1:1-13)

A prologue refers to any introduction and in this case, it refers to the introductory part about Jesus as reported by Mark. It has following content or message.

- This introductory part about Jesus begins with the idea that this is the good news about Jesus Christ.
- The message is that Jesus is the son of God.
- It shows that Jesus' coming was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies especially Isaiah.
- John the Baptist came as a fore runner but he wasn't a messiah.
- Jesus is the messiah who is so great that even John the Baptist cannot even untie his sandals.
- John the Baptist told people to get ready for the lord and make a straight path for him to travel.
- John came from the desert preaching and baptizing.
- John the Baptist was baptizing with water but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.
- John the Baptist told people turn away from their sins and be forgiven.
- The message is that many people came from province of Judea and Jerusalem to listen to john the Baptist and those who accepted the message were baptized in river Jordan.

- The content is that John the Baptist used to put on clothes made from camel's hair and leather belt around his waist.
- According to this prologue Jesus came from Nazareth in the province of Galilee and was baptized in River Jordan (Mark 1:9).
- John the Baptist used to eat locusts and wild honey.
- After being immersed in water he came out of it and then saw heaven opening.
- The spirit of God came upon Jesus in form of a dove.
- Jesus heard a voice from heaven saying "you are my own dear son I am well pleased of you".
- Jesus was tempted in the desert according to the prologue.
- Satan the devil tempted him for 40 days but he overcame temptations.
- Wild animals were there when Jesus was being tempted but the angels of the Lord attended to him and helped him.

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

The author of Mark's gospel presents Jesus Christ coming from Nazareth in the province of Galilee and went to river Jordan where he was baptized by John the Baptist and was baptized by immersing him in deep water.

Four major events took place during baptism of Jesus

- The Holy Spirit came to Jesus in form of a dove.
- Heaven opened
- Jesus moved out of water
- Voice came from heaven saying "you are my own dear son I am pleased with you".

IMPLICATION OF JESUS' BAPTISM

- The opening of heavens meant the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation. Right from the time of old testament, the Jews always expected heaven to open and God their father would visit them.
- The message in the voice was also a fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures showing a connection between the Old Testament and New Testament. For example this very voice had been recorded in Psalms 2:7.

- The coming out of water of Jordan it implied the Israelites experience of crossing the Red sea hence Jesus was the new Israelite.
- By coming out of water also meant Jesus' resurrection.
- It also meant Jesus' victory over death just as he came out of deep waters it symbolized that he would come out the grave victoriously.
- It acted as an example that every human being has to undergo baptism in order to enter the kingdom (heaven).
- The coming of the Holy Spirit meant strength of the trinity. That is to say, the father spoke in the voice, God the spirit in form of a dove upon Jesus God the son.
- It also symbolized Jesus' humanity, humbleness because a dove was a symbol of humbleness.
- The dove was also a symbol of peace implying that Jesus' mission was peaceful for all mankind.
- The event confirmed Jesus as son of God because the voice said "you are my son".
- His baptism signified the need for repentance, purity, holiness in order to enter God's kingdom.
- By Jesus being baptized, he was repenting on behalf of mankind and was showing way to heaven through holiness.
- It meant that Jesus recognized the work of John the Baptist and hence John was a true messiah of God.
- It also showed that Jesus' humanity since he was also baptized as a human being.
- Jesus' baptism confirmed him as a suffering messiah because he accepted to go under humiliation, shame of being baptized as if he was a sinner.
- It also symbolized that God's kingdom is powerful and living because heaven opened and voice spoke to Jesus Christ.
- The baptism showed that all mankind must accept the good news and receive Jesus as their Lord. For example John the Baptist had to accept and received Jesus for baptism.
- Going to the land of Galilee for baptism meant that Jesus was a universal savior who had come to save sinners. This is because Galilee was a land known for pagans but Jesus went there to be baptized.

- It also shows that Jesus was a promised messiah who had come to die for the sins of mankind.

Questions

1. *Discuss the meaning of Jesus' baptism.*
2. *How relevant is his baptism?*
3. (a) *“Jesus was not a sinner but he went to John to be baptized.” How can you justify Jesus' action?*
(b) *Why did Jesus have to go to John to be baptized?*
4. *What can Christians learn from this?*

WHY JESUS WENT TO JOHN THE BAPTIST TO BE BAPTIZED

- It was an act of obedience to the father because he had to be baptized for the sake of mankind.
- It was an act of fluffiness to the father since he had to do the mission of saving mankind so whether he was not a sinner he had to be baptized.
- He was laying a foundation for all mankind to be baptized to enter heaven.
- He had to be baptized in order to exercise his victory over death as a way of proclaiming his resurrection.
- It was a way of demonstrating his humanity and so showing that mankind should be humble.
- It was a way to prove or confirm that John the Baptist was carrying out the right baptism so Jesus recognized his ministry.
- He wanted to fulfill the Old Testament scriptures.
- He did so in order to express his love for the sinful mankind on whose behalf he accepted to be baptized.
- He wanted to show an example to all others that baptism is divine.
- He was confirming the idea of the suffering messiah. He was ready to suffer for the sinners.
- Jesus wanted to repent for sinners.

BAPTISM IN MODERN SOCIETY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

In different church denominations baptism is carried out differently though with the same purpose and aim.

Among the Catholics, baptism is conducted in quite or similar way but different from how the Pentecostals and SDAs conduct it.

BAPTISM IN PENTECOSTAL AND SDA DENOMINATIONS

- In SDA and Pentecostals baptism is organized and conducted by church leaders called pastors.
- In these denominations they only baptize mature people who can decide for themselves and who can repent for the sins they have committed.
- Before one is baptized in water, he/she is subjected to intensive teaching of the value and meaning of baptism.
- It is through teaching that candidates are taken for baptism ceremony.
- In the Pentecostal faith baptism is by emersion. The person is taken in deep water where he is immersed and made to face upwards while in water. This is done to emulate the way Jesus Christ was baptized.
- They baptize in the name of the father, the son and Holy Spirit.
- During baptism ceremonies, intensive praises, worship and other forms of hymns are sung in honor of the Lord who forgives man's sins.
- Intensive prayers are also made for the baptized candidates aimed at delivering the candidate from the poor history of demon attacks and usher him/her in new life of peace, joy holiness and purity.
- In the Pentecostal faith people's names remain unchanged. It is only when the candidate wishes her name to be changed.
- In most cases, baptism in SDA faith is conducted out of church building but taken to an open place where there is enough water where a person can be deeped.

JESUS' TEMPTATION (Mark 1:12-13)

In the gospel according to mark the ways in which Jesus was tempted were neglected. He was tempted by Satan in the desert.

It is the spirit of God that led Jesus to wilderness where he stayed for 40 days being tempted but he overcame temptation because the angel of God helped him.

Implication of Jesus' Temptation

- It implied his human nature because he was exposed to the temptation like any other human being.
- It showed the struggle between satanic powers and God's kingdom since it was Satan tempting Jesus.
- It implied that Jesus is the suffering messiah because he suffered under Satan's temptation and was even fasting.
- The 40 days Jesus spent in the desert symbolized or represented 400 years the Israelites spent in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.
- It meant that Jesus is the new Israelite because he was tempted just as Israelites were tempted in the wilderness.
- It implied the victory God's kingdom had over satanic forces because Jesus overcame the satanic temptation.
- The experience demonstrated the divinity of Jesus Christ because he overcame, fasted for 40 days and it is the spirit of God that led him to the desert.
- It meant that suffering is part of mankind and part of saving God no matter whether one is a sinner or not.
- It showed the connection between the Old Testament and New Testament. This is because it was written in Old Testament that the baby was with wild animals but they could not harm him, angels attended to him.
- His temptation was a sign that the devil exists and its work is to tempt believers and off track (mislead) them from ways of God.
- It showed the power and need of prayers in order to defeat Satan. It was because of the power of prayer that Jesus defeated Satan.
- It implied his willingness and readiness to save mankind through suffering.
- It meant that Jesus' mission on earth would be victorious because he overcame the temptation of Satan right from the start.

- It meant that Jesus was being equipped or trained or prepared by the presence of the Holy Spirit for the next battle that he would undergo.

Relevance of Jesus' temptation to modern Christians

- Christians should love one another and suffer on one another's behalf as Jesus showed his love for mankind by accepting to suffer on man's behalf.
- Christians should draw closer to God in times of temptations because he is the source of hope just as the angel protected Jesus in the wilderness.
- Christians should guard against temptations and defeat such powers as Jesus did in the wilderness.
- Christians should accept suffering when it comes their way as part of saving God because even Jesus accepted suffering through temptations.
- Christians should seek God's protection in times of trouble because even Jesus was protected by God's angels.
- Christians should obey the Holy Spirit just as Jesus obeyed the Holy Spirit as he led him to the wilderness.
- Christians should stand strong against trials of the enemies just as Jesus stood firm and overcame Satan's temptation.
- Christians should be willing to follow God's direction and guidance when it means suffering just as Jesus willingly followed experience in the deserts.

THE CALL OF THE FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES (Mark 1:14-20)

As Jesus was beginning his earthly ministry officially, he went to the province of Galilee preaching the good news, calling people to repent because the kingdom of God had come and was at hand.

He met the fishermen at the lake Galilee and the first two were Simon and Andrew and the last two were James and John the sons of Zebedee.

By this time John the Baptist had been in prison and when Jesus saw the last fishermen, he called them to follow him "come follow me, I will make you to catch men."

Immediately these fishermen followed Jesus and the other two left their father in the boat.

Significance of Call of Fishermen

- The call implied that Jesus' ability and authority to change man's background and career this is because he was able to change these fishermen to be preachers of good news.
- The call implied that Jesus' earthly ministry had officially begun because John the Baptist his fore runner had been imprisoned and himself was preaching the good news as he got the fishermen.
- It portrayed the Lord's love for every mankind and that the Lord loves everyone the way he is regardless of one's status. This is because Jesus called the fishermen who were despised.
- It implied that Jesus is the real savior of mankind because he had gone to Galilee land of sinners and was preaching the good news and managed to get fishermen and forgave their sins.
- It implied that God's kingdom is a future reality because Jesus told his people that the kingdom of God is near and so people should turn away from their sins.
- It showed a need for repentance and holiness in order to enter God's kingdom. Jesus came telling people to repent their sins which would therefore prepare them enter God's kingdom.
- The call of the first four disciples implied that.....and even Jesus' mission on earth is universal. This is because Jesus was calling everyone to repent and get prepared for his kingdom.
- The event helped Jesus to prepare/equip his disciples for future spreading of good news.
- Jesus' humanity was revealed on the call of the first four disciples he walked from Nazareth to Galilee, spoke to people all of which were characteristics of humanity.
- The call signified Jesus' divinity because he had authority to forgive sinners and at the same time he was able to teach them how to catch people.
- It implied that the vocational and choice of the Lord for anyone does not depend on his background. This is because he called fishermen regardless of their background.

Why Jesus called the four disciples

- The experience and background of these people being fishermen was the reason for Jesus' call. This is because fishing is as tiresome and challenging as preaching and leading people which therefore made Jesus to call them to use the fishing experience and fish people.
- He wanted to prepare them for the future mission of preaching the gospel since he knew that he would have an end to his earthly ministry so there was need for other people to continue with it.
- It was another way for Jesus to express his love, care, compassion to the fishermen who were despised in society and that's why he called them.
- Jesus could have needed company and that's why he called these disciples.
- He wanted to be with a team that would give him company.
- It was one way to show that God's kingdom is universal. That is to say, the kingdom of God is for everyone as long as one accepts to follow Jesus.
- He wanted to forgive the sins of these fishermen just like he came calling everyone to turn away from sins he wanted to forgive their sins.
- Jesus could have needed eyewitness from the earth he knew that any time could leave and go.
- The call of the four disciples was to show Jesus' authority over mankind and authority to transform man's one career like he transformed fishermen to preacher men.
- Jesus aimed at hiding his messiahship right from the start. This is because he holds ordinary fishermen and associates with them.
- He called the four disciples as a way to show that choice and selection does not depend on man's background but the divine will of God just as he chose the fishermen.

Relevance of the call of the first four disciples

- Christians should obey God's will just as four fishermen obeyed Jesus when he called them.
- Christians should be prepared for the call of God because it is abrupt just as the four disciples had not been prepared for it.
- Christians should spread the good news of the kingdom of God just as Jesus spread the good news to the fishermen and won them to God's kingdom.
- Christians should repent just as Jesus called people to repent and turn away from their sins.

- Christian leaders should be humble and associate with everyone just like Christ humbled himself and associated with fishermen.
- Christians should respond positively to God's call just as the fishermen responded.
- Christians should love everyone without discrimination regardless of one's background Jesus loved the fishermen.
- Christians should conduct missionary journeys just as Jesus went to Galilee the land of sinners and preached the good news.
- Christian leaders should prepare their followers as successors in matters of God's kingdom just as Jesus Christ prepared his four disciples.

Guiding questions

1. *What is the relevance of Jesus' call of the first four disciples to the modern Christians?*
2. *What lesson do modern Christians learn from Jesus' call of the first four disciples?*

MIRACLES IN JESUS' MINISTRY

A miracle can be defined as an extra ordinary event that is beyond man's ability and it is attributed to God's intervention.

It is that event that is beyond science and ordinary laws of humanity but can only be interpreted by God's involvement.

In the gospel according to Mark many of these extra ordinary events were performed and can be grouped into five major categories

- (i) Miracle of feeding
- (ii) Miracle of healing
- (iii) Miracle of life
- (iv) Miracle of nature
- (v) Miracle of exorcism

MIRACLE OF FEEDING

These were extra ordinary events where Jesus fed multitudes using very little quantities of food which was beyond scientific laws. The feeding miracle include

- Feeding 5,000 multitudes using only two fish and 5 loaves of bread.
- Feeding 4,000 multitudes using 7 loaves of bread and small quantity of fish.

MIRACLE OF HEALING

These were extra ordinary events where by Jesus used his divine powers to heal incurable diseases in an extra ordinary way. They include;

- Healing of blind Bartimaeus
- Healing of a woman with constant blood flow.
- Healing of a man with a paralyzed hand.
- Healing a man with leprosy
- Healing of a deaf mute
- Healing of many people at once including Peter's mother-in-law.

MIRACLE OF LIFE

These include;

- Raising Jairus' daughter to life

MIRACLE OF NATURE

These were extra ordinary events whereby Jesus used to calm the storm, walk on water, curse the fig tree.

MIRACLE OF EXORCISM

These are miracles where by Jesus cursed out demons using his divine power and they include;

- Healing of a boy with evil spirits (Mk 9:24)
- Healing of the daughter of a Phoenician woman who had an evil spirit (Mk 7:24-30)
- Healing of a man with evil spirits (Mk 5:1-20)
- Healing a man with epilepsy

PURPOSE OF THE USE OF MIRACLES

The miracles that Jesus performed in mark's gospel have the following purposes;

- Jesus wanted to express his spiritual love for mankind. For example by healing and feeding the multitudes.
- The purpose was to show the difference between Jesus and religious leaders because Jesus in his teaching performed miracles which teachers of the law and Pharisees could not.
- Miracles were used to fulfill Old Testament promises about the messiah that is to say it had been prophesized that messiah would heal the sick for example Isaiah 53.
- Miracles were to show that Jesus was a good shepherd and so caring for example feeding miracles which he did like any good shepherd can do.
- He performed miracles to show his power and control over nature for example when he calmed the storm.
- He used miracles to show his power and authority over life and that's why he performed miracles of raising Jairus' daughter to life.
- He performed miracles to show his power and authority over diseases and sickness that is why he healed the deaf, the blind and the crippled.
- He also used miracles to show his power and authority and that is why he just commanded demons to leave.
- He used miracles to show that God's miracle is stronger more powerful than Satan's kingdom. This is more true for exorcism miracle.
- Miracles serve to show that there is a lot in God's kingdom and that is why Jesus could use little food like four 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread to feed multitudes.
- He used miracles to show that there is life after death. This is more true with the miracle of raising Jairus' daughter.
- Miracles serve to show that there is no disappointment to those who believe in Jesus and trust in him for example he healed those who trusted in him.
- Miracles show that God's kingdom is a future reality. For example by raising the dead, it showed that God's kingdom is in future.
- Miracles used to restore hope to the disadvantaged and to the disappointed in the society.
- Miracles helped to raise the confidence and faith of Jesus' followers for example when he healed a woman with constant blood flow he told her "your faith has healed you".

- They were used to show Jesus as savior of mankind from sin, torture and any other form of suffering. For example healing and exorcism miracle.
- They wanted to show that God's kingdom is universal and that even his mission on earth is universal for example he did not discriminate.
- He wanted to show his divine nature despite the fact that he appeared in human nature for example when he cast out demons, he demonstrated his divine nature.
- He wanted to demonstrate his compassion, mercy, kindness for mankind.

Questions

1. *Of what importance were miracles to Jesus?*
2. *Why did Jesus perform miracles in his ministry?*

MIRACLES OF EXORCISM

- In Mark 5:1-20, Jesus cast out evil spirits from a man who had many of them and hence named themselves "mob" meaning they were so any.
- This man was in the territory of Gerasa in the land Galilee.
- Before Jesus came to him, he used to stay along the tombs and was so strong that nobody would touch him.
- He would be chained but broke the chains.
- As soon as the demons saw Jesus from a distance, the man came running and fell at Jesus' feet and started screaming that Jesus son of the most high God.
- Jesus commanded them to get out of him despite that they begged not to be destroyed.
- However, before the final command was given, the demons tried to be Jesus not to send them out but at least send them to pigs nearby.
- Jesus sent them to a herd of pigs about 2,000 of them.
- As soon as the demons entered the pigs, the pigs run mad and drowned in the lake.
- The pig owners became very angry with Jesus and started chasing him away from their land but the demonic had been healed and wanted to go with Jesus.
- Jesus told him to stay with his parents and tell them what the Lord had done for him.

Importance of Exorcism Miracle

- It showed Jesus' love for mankind by delivering him because he had suffered for many years.
- It portrayed Jesus' messiahship because it had been written that the messiah would come to deliver those who were suffering and by him doing so it confirmed him as a messiah.
- It demonstrated Jesus' mercy or compassion for mankind since he even told the man to go and tell the public how God had been so kind to him and delivered him.
- It portrayed Jesus' power and authority over demonic forces because he simply commanded the evil spirits and they went away.
- It shows that Jesus is the savior of mankind both from sin, torture, misery etc which this man had experienced along the tombs.
- It demonstrated Jesus' victory on earth and that god's kingdom is stronger than Satan's kingdom because the mob spirits obeyed Jesus' command and ran away.
- It demonstrated Jesus' universal nature because the miracle took place in Galilee the land of pagans.
- It helped to expand on God's kingdom because the man who had been delivered was told to go and tell others what the Lord had done for him and at the same time all people who saw him being delivered were all amazed.
- It demonstrated Jesus' divinity because he used this divine power to cast out mob demons and as such demons recognized him as the son of most high God.
- It showed Jesus' humanity because he was visible walked and even talked to the man by advising him to go and tell people what the Lord done for him.
- It showed the difference between Jesus Christ and other religious leaders of the time because for him even demons obeyed him.
- It showed that in God's kingdom there is peace, freedom and joy because Jesus brought freedom and joy to this man after setting him free.
- It showed that Jesus was a suffering messiah because people had started chasing him away even for the good he had done.
- The miracle became a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and hence a relationship between Old Testament and New Testament.
- It showed that Satan's kingdom is a source of suffering.

- It restored hope for the demonic and his family because they were all amazed and hence their trust and hope in the Lord.
- It showed a continuous battle between satanic forces and divine powers in Mark's gospel by demons asking Jesus whether he had come to destroy them.
- It became a Centre of controversy or opposition between Jesus and religious leaders of time. This is because they allied with pig owners to chase Jesus away as a bad man.

Relevance of Exorcism Miracle to Modern Christians

- Christians should take all their problems to Jesus for help just as the demonic went to Jesus and was helped.
- Christians should confront the devil with the power of the Holy Spirit because the "mobs" in the man recognized Jesus' presence and requested him not to destroy them.
- Christians should extend love to one another just as Christ extended love to the demonic and healed him.
- Christians should commit themselves in prayers asking God to send Holy Spirit to guide them.
- Christians should depend on Jesus because he is the only source of rescue just as he rescued the demonic.
- Christians should help all people without discrimination. This is because he never discriminated.
- Christians should extend compassion or mercy to those who are suffering just as Jesus extended mercy to the demonic.
- Christians should call upon for protection and healing against the devil.
- Christians should spread good news to everyone in different places the same was Jesus spread the good news in Gerasa and ended up healing the demonic.
- Christians should cast all their worries/troubles to the Lord because he cares just as the demonic fell at Jesus' feet.
- Christians should trust in the Lord because he is able to deliver them just as he helped the demonic.
- Christians should exercise their faith in the Lord for help just as the demonic had faith in God.

THE MIRACLE OF NATURE (MARK 4:35-41) (JESUS CALMS THE STORM)

- Jesus one time was with his disciples after feeding the multitude.
- He left them into the boat as they were crossing to go to Bethsaida but Jesus had gone to the hill to pray.
- As the boat was in the middle of the lake, the wind started disturbing them and they would not control it.
- Jesus saw the disciples shouting and he went out to rescue them while he was walking on water.
- As he was passing them, they failed to recognize that he was the master and called him a ghost.
- Jesus told them not to fear describing that it was him but not a ghost.
- They were terrified, Jesus got into the boat with them and the wind died.
- The disciples were amazed to see this happening because they had not understood.

Importance of the Miracle

- It showed disciples spiritual immaturity (lack of understanding of Jesus) because they failed to recognize and instead called him a ghost.
- It portrayed Jesus' authority over nature because he commanded wind and obeyed him.
- It reflected on Jesus' coming as a fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures. This is because the supernatural walking on water symbolized the supernatural way the Jews crossed the Red sea.
- It portrayed the love of Jesus because he walked on water to rescue them from strength of strong wind.
- It demonstrated divine nature of Jesus because he walked on water in supernatural way beyond man's ability.
- It showed Jesus' universal mission because he was crossing from one region to another to preach the good news.
- It reflected on Jesus humanity because he was visible, talked to his disciples and he had gone to pray just like any human being.

- It portrayed the strength of faith because it was by faith that Jesus walked on water.
- It also reflected on the salvation mission of Jesus Christ for mankind. This is because he saved his disciples from stress and torture of wind.
- Walking on water meant that with God everything is possible and at Jesus' presence is enough to change worst condition.
- It showed that Jesus' mission is peaceful because he helped disciples to get peace as strong wind disturbed them and later stopped.
- The water on which Jesus walked symbolized troubles which therefore meant that Jesus would be victorious in his mission on earth.

MIRACLE OF FEEDING (Mark 6:30-44)

- In this miracle Jesus was with disciples in an isolated place.
- Meanwhile a multitude of people who were hungry surrounded Jesus.
- When Jesus looked at them he looked like sheep with a shepherd.
- In way of expressing concern Jesus asked the disciples how to feed the hungry multitudes.
- They asked Jesus to send the people away but Jesus asked them how much food they had.
- They answered two fish and five loaves of bread.
- Then Jesus asked for bread and fish they had which he got and raised up towards heaven and prayed to the father.
- He broke the 2 fish and also 5 loaves of bread and gave his disciples to supply it to everyone.
- People ate and they were satisfied, amazed and Jesus' disciples collected twelve baskets of the leftovers and the number of men was 5,000.

Importance of Feeding 5,000 People

- It showed Jesus' love, care for mankind whom he fed.
- It portrayed Jesus as a provider because he provided food for the hungry people.
- It showed that Jesus has authority of a nature because he multiplied the 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread and fed 5,000.
- It showed that in God's kingdom there is plenty because people ate and twelve baskets of leftovers were collected.

- It showed the universality of Jesus because he fed everyone regardless of the background, size, and colour.
- It implied that Jesus is a good shepherd that all other shepherds because he looked at people who looked like sheep without a shepherd and acted as good shepherd.
- It showed a fulfillment of old testament scriptures where God said that he will become the shepherd of his people.
- The twelve baskets of leftovers symbolized the 12 tribes in Israel.
- It implied that Jesus catered for both physical and spiritual needs of his audience. That is to say, by feeding he extended the care of physical needs.
- It shows that Jesus' physical power and love came from heaven (from God his father). This is because he got the bread and fish and looked up as gave thanks to God and a miracle was performed.
- It implied the spiritual immaturity of Jesus' disciples because they poorly advised Jesus to send away the people and doubted his power to feed the multitudes.
- It showed Jesus' divinity as he was able to multiply 2 fish and 5 loaves to feed the multitudes.
- It reflected Jesus as a servant of the people because he served those who were hungry.

THE HEALING OF A WOMAN WITH CONTINUOUS BLOOD FLOW (Mark 5:25-35)

- This is one of the main miracles which Jesus performed.
- As Jesus was on his way across the other side of the lake he met a large crowd together with his disciples.
- In the big congregation, there was a woman who had a problem of continuous blood which she had suffered for twelve years the woman had tried all different doctors but with no cure.
- When she heard that Jesus had power to heal she decided and courageously reached out to touch Jesus' cloak/garment or cloth.
- As soon as she had adored so the flow of blood stopped and she was healed.
- Jesus was disturbed by this touch on his cloth because he felt it and he asked his disciples who had touched him.

- Their response was that there was no way they could have recognized who touched him out of very many people who were around him.
- The woman came and fell on Jesus' feet and spoke the truth that she was the one who had touched him.
- Jesus said the woman "my daughter your faith has made you well go in peace and be healed of your trouble".

Significance of the Miracle

- It portrayed Jesus' power over diseases since the woman just touched Jesus' cloth and was healed of her disease which she has suffered for 12 years.
- It implied that Jesus is the savior of mankind from trouble touches because he told the woman that go in peace and be healed of your trouble.
- It demonstrated the value and power of faith for mankind to receive miracles from God since Jesus told the woman that my daughter your faith has made you well.
- It implied the divine nature of Jesus Christ in that the woman just touched Jesus' cloth and her disease was cured and even Jesus recognized that the divine power had come out of to heal the woman.
- It portrayed that Jesus is the promised messiah who is to come and heal or deliver mankind from suffering according to Isaiah 53 by his spirit people are healed.
- It reflected the disciples' spiritual immaturity because they could not recognize that Jesus had felt a special touch as him.
- It portrayed that Jesus' mission was to bring peace, freedom, liberty when he said go in peace.
- It showed that with God everything is possible because the doctors had failed to cure the woman's problem.
- It showed his love for mankind because he healed a woman who had suffered for twelve years.
- It showed Jesus' universal nature because he never discriminated.

Questions

1. ***Why did Jesus heal the woman with continuous blood flow?***

2. *Explain the relevance of this healing to modern Christians.*
3. *How does Jesus heal his people today?*

CONTROVERSIES IN JESUS' MINISTRY ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A controversy can be literally interpreted as a disagreement, misunderstanding expressed in form of opposition or verbal conflicts between two or more parties over a given principle.

In the case of Jesus, controversies refer to different misunderstanding, disagreement, opposition or conflicts which Jesus faced from the different religious leaders like the Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees and political leaders plus other people of his congregation.

Mark's gospel records the hottest battles or oppositions Jesus faced in his ministry compared to other gospel.

There are five major areas of conflict and these include;

- (i) The first controversy of healing a paralyzed man (Mk 2:1-12)
- (ii) The second controversy is Jesus calling Levi the tax collector (Mk 2:13-17)
- (iii) The third controversy is about question of fasting (Mk 2:18-22)
- (iv) The fourth controversy is about Jesus' disciples picking corn on Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28)
- (v) The fifth controversy which is the major is about Jesus' working or healing on Sabbath (Mk 3:1-6)

CAUSES OF THE CONTROVERSIES IN MARK'S GOSPEL

Examine the causes of the controversy or conflict that Jesus Christ faced in gospel according to Mark.

- Jesus' practice to forgive sins caused conflicts between him and the Jews of the time. This is because they knew that it was only God who had the authority to forgive sins for example in the first controversy of healing the paralytic Jesus told him that "my son your sins are forgiven"

- Jesus equated himself to God and according to Jews this was blasphemy for example he said to the paralytic that “my son.....” meant that Jesus was God the father and this annoyed leaders hence conflicts.
- Jesus’ tendency of associating with the outcasts was a strong cause of opposition in this ministry. To the Jewish cultures outcasts like tax collectors, lepers were not supposed to be associated with but Jesus instead associated with them and sometime touched them and healed them this annoyed the Jews.
- Jesus used to eat with people regarded as sinners and welcomed them in the community which annoyed the Jews. For example he called Levi the tax collector went to his house and other outcasts came in and ate with them on the round table. This was centrally to the Jewish culture.
- Jesus’ disciples used not to fast during seasons of fasting and Jesus looked to support them which annoyed the Pharisees for example at one time all the people were fasting including disciples of John the Baptist but Jesus’ disciples were not.
- Jesus’ disciples picked corns on Sabbath in the field to eat but the Pharisees were not pleased and when Jesus was asked, his response annoyed them the more.
- Jesus’ working on Sabbath was an area of controversy between him and Pharisees. Jesus used to violate the Sabbath laws by working and healing.
- Jesus used to win many people on his side at expense of religious leaders on time for example when he could go to the synagogues and preach, he got a large congregation and the Pharisees hated him.
- The religious leaders were also envious and jealousy against Jesus because he was doing extraordinary signs which they could not do for example miracles he performed.
- Jesus’ response to some of the questions they could ask him created more anger and hence opposition. To the Jews some of his response sounded a bit of arrogance with no respect for them for example when they asked why he forgave sins, he only assured them that he wanted to prove to them that he is a son of God.
- At one time Jesus’ disciples ate with unwashed hands which was a violation of the Jewish ritual of cleanliness. This also angered the religious leaders hence opposition.
- Jesus was opposed because he appeared like any ordinary man.

- Jesus' coming disappointed the Jewish expectation of the messiah and so they opposed him in whatever he did and said for example they expected a messiah to come riding donkeys.
- Jesus came from the most despised land (Nazareth) which created a negative attitude giving rise to opposition.
- Jesus also used to allow women and children in public worship which was centrally to the Jewish law for example he allowed children to come to him and blessed them and also allowed a woman to anoint him.
- Political leaders that Jesus was a political opponent since he was winning a big congregation to his side.
- Religious leaders and others were spiritually immature and ignorant of Jesus Christ.

METHODOLOGY (METHODS OF JESUS' GOSPEL PROCLAMATION)

Jesus in his gospel proclamation or spreading he used many different means which transmitted the good news and these included;

Jesus in his gospel proclamation or spreading he used many different means which transmitted the good news and these included;

- By use of parables which were so interesting and so they attracted many people to his teachings and accepted the gospel.
- By miracles which convinced the congregation to raise their faith in him and followed him.
- Through the use of missionary journey when Jesus moved from Nazareth to Galilee to Capernaum and whenever he moved he spread the gospel and people accepted him.
- Through theological debates which were between the religious leaders and the Pharisees in their synagogues.
- Through commissioning his disciples.
- Through preaching in the synagogues.
- Through celebration of the Lord's Supper which showed his love for his audience and they accepted him and his gospel.
- Through sharing and helping the needy for example he fed the hungry multitude.
- Through expression of practical love to everyone without discrimination for example he associated with everyone like the tax collector, women and children.

- Through visiting different people without discrimination for example he visited Jairus' home, the home of Levi, home of Peter's mother-in-law.
- Jesus lived an exemplary life so humble, approachable by everyone, so forgiving.

THE CHOICE OF THE TWELVE (Mark 3:13-19)

Following the increased number of disciples or believers or followers Jesus decided to choose 12 men from the many and he called them apostles the twelve men were Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John the brother of James, Philip, Bartholomew, Mathew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thadaeous, Simon the patriot and Judas Escariot who later betrayed Jesus.

The incident of choosing the twelve men took place on the mountain after Jesus had prayed for the whole night.

Why Jesus Chose the Twelve

- He chose the call for apostles in order to be with him to give him company.
- He chose the 12 in order to train them in the work of preaching, probably because it would be difficult for a number more than that.
- He chose the twelve to prepare them for future missionary works especially after his death, resurrection and ascension.
- He also wanted to equip the twelve with divine power to drive out demons and thereby intensifying the struggle against Satan.
- He wanted to prepare the twelve for future leadership of the church after him. For example he made Peter a leader.
- He wanted to teach them how to pray and that's why he taught them "our father".
- He also wanted to prepare them for future persecution ahead of time.
- He wanted to teach them the value of repentance and why it was important to repent.
- He wanted to equip them with healing powers.
- He chose the 12 to be the pillar of the new Israel and that's why figure 12 corresponds with the number of the twelve tribes of Israel.

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (Mark 6:7-13)

- The word commission means to give authority to someone to perform a certain task or duty. This was the act of sending the 2 disciples into the field to preach or practice what they had been learning in theory.
- In the commissioning of the 12 disciples, Jesus dedicated them into the hands of God and sent them two by two for security purposes.
- He sent them in pairs for purpose of witness so that what they preached would easily be accepted.
- He instructed disciples to carry sticks in their hands which were to signify good shepherdship.
- They were to carry sticks for self-defense against snakes just as God had instructed the Israelites to carry sticks during the Passover event.
- He instructed them not to move with food, bag and to carry sticks during as the Passover event.
- He told them that they were to be catered for by the people to whom they pre-called.
- Jesus told them to use the divine power to perform miracles in order to get what to eat.
- He instructed them to treat all people with equality the rich and poor, made them rich.
- He fore warned them of opposition and told them to leave places where they were not accepted.
- He told them to stay in houses and places where they were welcomed.
- He sent them off; they went and preached baptized performed miracles, laid hands on the sick and drove out demons etc.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

- According to mark, being a disciple of Jesus means being companion of Jesus (Mk 3:14)
- Discipleship means parting one's family or country for the sake of Jesus (Mk 1:20)
- Discipleship also involves abundance of one's occupation in order to follow Jesus (Mk 1:18)
"at once they left their nets....."
- Discipleship calls for preaching of good news (Mk 3:13-14)
- Discipleship also means falling oppositions and persecution for the sake of Jesus.
- Discipleship involves responding to Jesus call without hesitation.

- Discipleship also demands complete obedience, faith, trust and obedience in the fall of suffering.
- Involves convincing un believers to repent and to become baptized in the name of Jesus.
- It also involves leading a simple, poor and humble life.
- Discipleship means being a full time servant of God or for Christ.
- It involves facing them overcoming temptation. For example Peter was tempted to deny Jesus but realized his mistake (Mk 14:66)
- Discipleship means living by God's providence that's why Jesus told his disciples not to carry anything like food.
- It involves witnessing them intensifying for Christ then that's why he sent them in pairs.
- It also means being a leader but not a ruler and that's why Jesus instructed his disciples to carry sticks as a symbol of good shepherdship.
- It involves performing miracles for the glory of God's kingdom then that's why the disciples of Jesus performed number of miracles like casting demons then anointing the sick.
- It means giving equal treatment, respect and attention to all people.
- It also involves abandoning one's wealth in order to avoid hindrance.
- Discipleship involves carrying one's cross daily because it's not a walk over business.
- It also involves moral living meaning that the disciples should be morally good.
- It also involves parting with one's customs then cultures (Mk 7:1-23)
- Discipleship involves being humble then always putting oneself last (Mk 9:35, 10:41-45)
- It involves a big reward by denying oneself (Mk 10:28-31)

THE DIVINITY IN GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

- In the opening verse Mark 1:1 Jesus is portrayed as a son of God being the son of God Jesus shares the divine nature of God in most perfect way.
- During his baptism heaven opened holy spirit descended on him in form of a dove and this showed his divinity (Mk 1:10)
- Again in his temptation experienced God the father sent him an angel who helped him to overpower the devil (Mk 1:12-13)

- His divinity is shown in the call of his first four disciples although they had not known him before at once they left their nets and went with Jesus (Mk 1:14-20)
- His miracle of healing the sick pointed at his divinity (Mk 1:21-45) presents a number of healing miracle that Jesus performed.
- Jesus had the power to forgive sins which pointed at his divinity. He healed a paralyzed man and said “my son your sins are forgiven”.
- The woman who touched Jesus’ cloak with faith got healed from her bleeding thus shows Jesus’ divinity (Mk 5:25-34)
- Jesus’ miracles of raising the dead pointed at his divinity. For example he raised Jairus’ daughter using an authoritative word “Tarithkoum” (Mk 5:21-44, 31-43)
- His feeding miracles pointed at his divinity to feed 5,000 people using only 5 loaves bread and 2 fish (Mk 6:30-44)
- He later fed 4,000 men using only 7 loaves of bread and 2 fish.
- The transfiguration show Jesus’ divinity his body clothes changed into shining white colour (Mk 9:28-36)
- Jesus had power to predict future events. That is to say, he predicted his suffering and death 3 times (Mk 8:30-32) he also predicted peter’s denial (Mk 14:27-31) while serving the last supper Jesus revied that his blood will receive a new covenant.
- Jesus’ ascension into heaven also passed his divinity.
- The resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb stored his divinity.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist just like other human beings the baptism took place in water of river Jordan like that of other human beings.
- Jesus could feel pity for people. For example he felt pity when a man was suffering from a disease and asked him for mercy (Mk 1:41)
- Jesus could get suppressed just like other human beings. For example when he was rejected at Nazareth he was suppressed by people’s stubbornness (Mk 6:4-6)
- Jesus like other human beings. That is to say, Jesus visited Levi and enjoyed a meal in his house (Mk 2:15-17)

- Like other human beings Jesus valued privacy. For example in Mk 1:25 Jesus is seen to a private town to pray.
- Jesus would get annoyed. For example when he entered the Jerusalem temple he found them selling and buying and exchanging goods and money he got annoyed turned to the temple table and dropped them out (Mk 11:15-19)
- Jesus had parents just like other human beings in Mk 6:1-6 his mother is mentioned to be Mary and his brothers are mentioned to be James, Jude and Simon.
- Jesus had a great love for his/her children just like another could spare sometime for them.
- Mark portrayed Jesus as a human being with village of origin. For example he originated from Nazareth (Mk 6)
- Like other human beings, Jesus feared death in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus us plotted as full of fear of death (Mk 14:32-36)
- Jesus died and was buried just like other human beings (Mk 15:33-47)
- Jesus could get tired like other human beings. That is to say Jesus rested in the boat with his head on a pillow as they crossed the lake Galilee. This was due to fatigue.

THE DISCIPLES' LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

In spite of the fact the disciples were always with Jesus and they listened to him, they took long to understand him, his power and spiritual mission. The gospel of Mark has the following mission;

- The gospel of Mark. For example moments recorded to show that the disciples lacked proper understanding of Jesus.
- The gospel of Mark records that Jesus was interrupted by disciples when he was having private prayers (Mk 1:35-39)
- They failed to understand the parable of the sower (Mk 4:13)
- They interrupted Jesus' sleep while they were sailing along lake Galilee (Mk 4:38)
- The disciples wondered what type of man Jesus was when he ordered the winds and waves to keep calm and they obeyed him (Mk 4:37-41)
- They misunderstood that Jesus was asking a question at the time when a certain bleeding woman touched his cloth (Mk 5:30)

- The disciples didn't understand Jesus when he told them to feed 5000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.
- When Jesus walked on water, the disciples thought that he was a ghost (Mk 6:45-52)
- The disciples wondered how Jesus could feed 4000 people and yet they had witnessed the feeding of 5000 men with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.
- The disciples showed lack of understanding when Jesus warned them against the yeast of Pharisees and Herod (Mk 8:14-21)
- During the transfiguration, Peter took Jesus as an earthly messiah by suggesting the building of the 3 tents for Jesus, Moses and then Elijah (Mk 9:2-5)
- Peter opposed Jesus when he announced that he will suffer be rejected.
- They failed to drive out demons from the assigned that they never understood Jesus' power (Mk 9:14)
- They urged among themselves on who was greater (Mk 9:33-39)
- When they saw a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus stopped him (Mk 8:38-41)
- The preventing of parents from bringing their children Jesus showed the disciples lack of understanding.
- They showed lack of understanding when Jesus told them that it's difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.
- Peter expressed surprise when he saw the fig tree that had been cursed by Jesus had dried.
- The request of James and John that Jesus would allow them sit near his father's kingdom also showed their lack of understanding.
- The betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot also showed lack of understanding of Jesus.
- Peter's denial of Jesus three times during suffering showed lack of understanding of Jesus.
- They showed lack of understanding by falling asleep when Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42)
- The running away of disciples during the arrest of Jesus showed their lack of understanding (Mk 14:50)
- Peter showed lack of understanding of Jesus' mission by cutting off an ear of one of the armed men who had come to arrest Jesus (Mk 14:43-51)

- When a certain woman poured perfume on Jesus' leg when she used her hair to clean, some of the disciples were among those who criticized her for wasting resources.
- When Jesus resurrected, among the disciples took long to believe it.

WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE SHOW LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS TODAY

- Today people show lack of understanding of Jesus refusing to join Christianity.
- Others show lack of understanding by resorting power of witchcraft.
- Some Christians show lack of understanding by going for Holy Communion when they are not prepared for it.
- Some show lack of understanding by involving in anti-social act like revenge, rager, refusing to give etc.
- Some people show lack of understanding of Jesus' mission by doubting his resurrection which is a foundation of Christian belief.
- Many more Christians show lack of understanding of Jesus by discriminating against people basing on eternal appearance.
- Christians also show lack of understanding through committing evils like murder, rape, defilement etc.
- Christians show lack of understanding of Jesus by rejecting in times of difficulties and trials.
- Some Christians especially leaders. For example pastors and priests show lack of understanding of Jesus becoming nationalistic.

JESUS' USE OF PARABLES TO TEACH ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The word parable comes from two Greek words Rova and Bale which means putting two things side by side for the purpose of companionship.

Parables were therefore comparative choices in which Jesus compared the kingdom of God with earthly things or happenings.

A parable is sometimes defined as an early story with a heavenly meaning. It was the main method used by Jesus to teach about the kingdom of God.

REASONS WHY JESUS USED PARABLES

- They were easy to be understood since they had earthly experiences of daily events for example parable of the sower.
- They were brief and social so they would avoid long stories and boredom.
- He wanted to summarize the bigger meaning in a brief way over common experience.
- Parables were time saving since they were brief.
- Jesus aimed at creating a difference between his teaching and that of the Pharisees.
- Parables were so interesting since they were stories of daily experience. For example parable of growing seed, sower etc.
- He used parables to attract maximum attention from his audience just because they were nice stories and of daily experience.
- He used parables in order to avoid direct confrontation of his enemies and beat their understanding since some of the parables were condemning the evils of his opponents. For example the parable of the wicked tenant.
- He aimed at creating personal interpretation of his audience about the meaning of parables. That is to say, he wanted to have their own interpretation of the message in parables.
- Parables would allow deeper meditation and concentration. For example parable of the lamp under the bowl.
- Parables were used to allow disciples to develop have deeper reasoning and understanding based on their own interpretation.
- They were easy to be remembered and so the message in the parables could not easily be forgotten.
- They also aimed at showing the need of spreading the gospel because every parable about seed symbolized preaching the god news.
- He used parables because he was fulfilling the Old Testament teaching. For example prophet Isaiah used parable of vine yard, Prophet Nathan used parable of rich and poor.

Questions

1. *Account for Jesus' use of parables in his teaching.*
2. *Why did Jesus use parables in his ministry?*

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (Mark 4:1-9)

In the parable which Jesus spoke to his audience, he illustrated using a sower who went out to scatter or sow seeds but these seeds fell on different grounds.

Some seeds fell on the rocky soil others in the thorny soil, others along the path and others on the fertile soil (Mk 4:1-9)

All the seeds that fell on the fertile ground grew up and yield that some produced 30, 60 and 100.

Others seeds that fell on different type of soil did not yield for various reasons.

The Implication of the Parable

- The sower in this parable implied the preacher of the word of God and Jesus was the preacher.
- The seeds meant the words of God being preached by Jesus.
- The different grounds represent the different audiences who received the word of God and how they responded to it.
- The soil represented the hearts that received the word of God beingto them.
- The rocky ground symbolized the type of Christians. Believers who are weak hearted and unserious with the word of God and didn't practice it.
- The seeds that fell in thorn bushes symbolize the type of Christians who received the word of God with joy or excitement but cannot use it to resist worldly pleasures and overcome them so when worldly pleasures like music come their way, they easily give up the word of God.
- The thorny bushes also signifies the world pleasures that disturb believers and in process of temptation believers give up the truth.
- The seed that fell along the path represent Christians who are never attentive when the word of God is being preached and at times have no bibles and so the word of God can't stick in their minds.
- The birds that picked the seeds signified satanic temptation and pleasure which take attention of believers and therefore make them ignore the word of God.
- Seeds that fell on fertile soil represent Christians who are as attentive to the will of God as it is preached and even put it into practice.

- The roots in the parable signify the faith that Christians receive as they practice the word of God but those who do not practice cannot receive this faith and up falling off the Christian target.
- The fruits signify good actions of Christianity which the Lord the God expects them to demonstrate.
- It also implied the struggle between satanic powers and divine powers. This is because satanic powers keep taking the word of God.
- It acted as a warning to believers to guard against Satan's temptation and endure persecution and temptation which come from thorns to destroy faith.
- The probable showed opposition, Jesus was encountering from the Jewish leaders.

Relevance to Modern Christians

- Christians should check the type of soil they are in order to inherit the kingdom of God.
- Christians should strive to be fruitful just as the seeds that bore fruits on the fertile ground.
- They should preach the good news to others as Jesus used the parables.
- They should have strong faith in order to yield fruits.
- They should endure the different troubles that come their way unlike the Christians who just gave in because of persecution.
- Christians should listen to the word of God attentively so that it multiplies in them.
- Christians should focus on the kingdom of God in order to defeat and disorganize Satan.
- Christians should always have hope even if the entire society is opposed to the gospel message.
- They should pray for those who reject the gospel message so that the Holy Spirit may fell their hearts.
- Christians should be helpful to the needy (spiritual power)
- Christians should contribute to construction of churches.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANT (Mark 12:1-12)

The parable of the wicked tenant is one of such parables that fulfill the Old Testament in New Testament.

Jesus spoke and said there was a man who planted a vine yard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress and built a watch tower.

The Implication of the Parable

- The gardener, who planted the vineyard, signified the almighty God of Israelites.
- The vineyard meant the Israelites as chosen people of God who were special people of God.
- The wicked tenant signified the Jewish religious leaders who were in charge of the Israelites to guide them in Godly affairs.
- Building a fence and watch tower around the vine yard, symbolized God's almighty protection of Israelites and their nation.
- The hole which was dug implied the covenant and its laws upon which Israelites would be governed or their relationship with God would be based.
- The wine pres implied the good works of obedience, holiness, faithfulness expected of Israelites in relation to the covenant rules.
- The serpents whom the owners sent were the Old Testament prophets whom God used to send to his people calling them to repent.
- Sending away the servants and killing them, symbolized the persecution, injustices and killing which religious leaders extended to God's prophets.
- The parable symbolized God's judgment since he will come and kill the wicked tenants.
- It reflected on the spiritual immaturity since they were doing what they didn't know.
- It reflected on God's continuous love for the people he chose because he kept sending servants to warn his people and bring them to repent.
- The parable shows that the New Testament is a fulfillment of the Old Testament because the parable of vineyard had been announced by prophet Isaiah.
- The parable also showed the hypocrisy, pretence and unrepentant nature of religious leaders because they persecuted Jesus instead of repenting.
- It meant Jesus' death and the end of his earthly ministry because he told the wicked tenants that they killed the owners' son.
- It implied Jesus' tendency of hiding his messiahship because he used the parable and was not direct yet he was the son of the gardener.

- It reflected on Jesus' humanity because he was visible, fought and was ready to die like any other human being.

Questions

(a) Examine the implications of the parable of the wicked tenant.

(b) Explain the relevance of the parable of wicked tenants to modern Christians.

- Modern Christians should have strong faith in God so as to become God's people like the Israelites.
- Modern Christians should listen to the word of God as it multiplies in them.
- Modern Christians should pray for those who reject the gospel message so that the Holy Spirit may fill their hearts.
- Modern Christians should have hope in God so that they are ever protected as he did to the Israelites and their nation.
- Modern Christians should focus on the kingdom in order to defeat and disorganize Satan.
- Modern Christians should be obedient, holy and faithful in order to get rewards from God just as the Israelites were expected in relation to the covenant rules.
- Modern Christians should live holy expecting God's judgment since he said to come and kill the wicked tenants.
- Modern Christians should love one another as God showed his continuous love for people he chose by sending servants to warn them and bring them to repent.
- Modern Christians should preach the word of God and contribute to construction of churches in order to convert many people to Christianity.
- Modern Christians should endure the different troubles that come their way unlike Christians who just gave in because of persecution.
- Modern Christians should believe in one God as the Israelites believed him as their almighty.
- Modern Christians should know that the parable of the wicked tenant was a fulfillment of the New Testament because it was announced by prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament by them reading the bible.
- Modern Christians should obey God's laws which were given to Israelites in that they maintain their relationship with God.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (Mark 4:30-34)

Jesus in this parable compared the kingdom to a mustard seed he told his listeners that the kingdom of God is like the smallest seed in the world.

He also told them that at the time of planting the seed it is so small and insignificant. He also told them that a seed after being planted grows into the biggest tree in the whole world.

Jesus told them that the tree puts on big branches and they provide shelter for the birds.

Meaning of the Parable

- The use of the mustard seed signify that the kingdom of God begins in a humble way.
- The mustard seed symbolized the good news or the words of God.
- The tree referred to the church which was to grow expands and then turn into a very big community.
- The spreading of the branches of the tree symbolized the future expansion of the church to all directions.
- The leaves of the tree symbolized fellowship and the need to fellowship among believers.
- The man who planted the mustard seed symbolized Jesus or any other creature.
- The birds represented the Gentiles who were also free to join Christianity.
- The birds also symbolized the different categories of people meaning that the church is universal.
- The parable in general was a call for unity since all branches that formed the tree have one stem.
- The parable was a warning that some evil people would also take over in the church.
- The parable was also a warning to stop judging in spiritual matters by using earthly standards.
- It meant that the genuine followers of Christ would find peace, joy and then relax in God's kingdom.
- It signified that in the beginning faith may be difficult to recognize but as time goes on it grows.
- It signified that the kingdom of God is living.

Relevance to Christians

- Christians should be humble, gentle and possible in their life styles just like the mustard seed.
- Christians should preach the universality of the church of Christ.
- They should always stand firm when they have few number of believers in the church just as the church started with few people and expanded later.
- Christians should show their faith and visible acts of love and mercy.
- They should believe in the kingdom of God which gives peace, joy and relaxation just as the birds relaxed on the leaves.
- Christians should be united irrespective of their different denominations.
- They should have hope in heavenly rewards because the genuine believers are assured of heavenly rewards.
- They should call upon the Holy Spirit help the church to grow.
- They should base their judgment on spiritual matters rather than basing on artificial attributes.
- They should stick to Jesus because trials and sufferings are normal.

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED (Mark 4:28-29)

In this parable, Jesus compares the kingdom of God with a man who plants the seed in his field leaves it there to germinate but doesn't know the process through which the seed grows into a big plant and produces more seeds.

The seed produces corns and when they become ripe he comes to harvest them.

Significance of the Parable

- It signified that the kingdom of God is a future reality.
- The man who plants the seed in this parable represents Jesus Christ or any preacher.
- The seeds planted in this parable represent the gospel message.
- The field in which the seed is planted represent the church in which gospel is preached.
- The growing of the seed in stages represents the gradual growth of the church.

- The time which the seed takes to grow and bare fruits represents the growth of kingdom of God thorough gradual process.
- The fact that the farmer is not aware of how the seed grows signifies the mystery surrounding the kingdom of God.
- The secret growing of the seed also signifies that the mystery of the kingdom of God is only understood by faithful followers of Christ.
- It points to the messianic secrecy of Jesus to take care of his church.
- It also means that it is responsibility of God to take care of his church.
- The harvesting in the parable signifies the judgment that believers would have in the kingdom of God.
- It also stresses the importance of having faith in the kingdom of God.
- It was meant to encourage the disciples to continue preaching the gospel.

Relevance of the Parable to Christians

- They should preach the god news of salvation as Jesus did through the parable.
- They should be honest by spreading the truth as a way of preparing for the judgment day.
- They should strive to convert as many as possible into kingdom of God.
- They should encourage other people who may have lost hope.
- Christian leaders should strive to be exemplary in whatever they do.
- They should regularly read the word of God that can help them attain salvation.
- They should believe in God's word that they receive from preachers.
- Christian leaders should advise their members whenever they go astray.
- They should resist the devil's temptation as a way to prepare for judgment.
- Christians should develop the spirit of patience in their lives.
- They should remain hopeful even amidst trial moments.
- They should have complete trust in God who knows everything.

JESUS HIDES HIS MESSIAHSHIP

The term messiah means God's anointed one, redeemer, liberator, son of God, king and long awaited one.

It was a culture in the Jewish tradition to anoint God's servants for example kings, priests, prophets etc.

To the Jews a messiah was that anticipated unique son of God who would be a savior of mankind.

Contrary to what they expected, Jesus hid his nature that's why Mark emphasizes.

Evidence in Mark's Gospel to Show the Messianic Secrecy

- Whenever Jesus performed miracles he used to tell those present not to mention what had happened hence hiding his nature.
- Even after healing an individual he used to forbid those to spread the good news. For example the man with mob demons.
- He constantly referred to himself the son of Joseph the carpenter hence hiding his messiahship.
- There are occasions when Jesus retired from public views as if he had gone to hide himself. Such withdrawal from the ground meant that he did not want everybody to know him hence hiding his identity.
- He referred himself as a son of man and said he will die.
- Although parables were used in the Old Testament Jesus excelled using this method to preach.
- This parable had hidden meaning that hid his messianic identity.
- After Peter's declaration of Jesus as the messiah Jesus ordered him not to tell anyone about it.
- When Jesus went up mount olive he transfigured/changed before Peter, James, and John. On their way down the mountain Jesus ordered them not to mention it until the son of man is risen, hence hiding his identity.
- Jesus sometimes would leave his disciples so that he makes private communication (prayer) with his father from a lonely place where his disciples would find them.
- When Jesus was arrested and taken to Pilate and was asked whether he was the king of the Jews he answered "it's you who says it" Pilate questioned further but Jesus kept quiet.

- In some instances when Jesus told people and failed to understand and recognize him, he used to take his disciples aside and clarified his identity to them. This meant that he did not want to tell everyone his identity.
- When Jesus confronted the devil through healing they often recognized him as a son of God however Jesus silenced them and this shows he was hiding his identity.

REASONS WHY JESUS HID HIS IDENTITY

Questions

- 1. Examine the reasons why Mark in his gospel does not directly refer Jesus as a messiah.**
- 2. Why did Jesus conceal his messiahship?**
- 3. Account for the messianic secrecy in Mark's gospel.**

- The Jews expected a political messiah yet Jesus was a spiritual one.
- To avoid confrontation with the Jewish leaders he had to keep his messianic nature.
- He wanted people to realize that his ministry was gradual and difficult to understand.
- He wanted to show that understanding his father's kingdom takes time .e. gradual process that takes place by all believers.
- He did not want cheap popularity which would mean equating himself to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.
- He knew that his time to be known by other people had not yet come.
- When he revealed his identity, he was killed hence fulfilling the messianic task.
- He wanted to have people of all categories attracted to the kingdom of God he had come to establish. He didn't want to keep away from people like tax collectors.
- He did not want to cause public chaos and excitement.
- He wanted to distinguish himself from the Pharisees and Scribes who wanted public recognition.
- He did not want to impose himself on the people.
- He wanted to show that the holy way of bringing salvation to mankind was by being humble.
- He wanted to get the true seekers of the kingdom he had come to establish.

To what extent can the gospel of Mark be referred to as the gospel of messianic secrecy?

Approach

- To a greater extent, it shows the messianic secrecy.
- However it revealed his identity

JESUS' MESSIANIC IDENTITY REVEALED

- A dove came on him during baptism and a voice from God declared him as a son of God hence revealing his identity.
- After healing the demonic at Gesera he sent him to go and spread the good news hence revealing his identity.
- He healed a paralyzed man and publically forgives his sins hence revealing his identity.
- He publically fed 5,000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.
- He raised Jairus' daughter back to life hence a powerful messiah.
- He publically entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
- He moved openly from one place to another and he always had a big crowd.
- Peter confessed that Jesus was a messiah.
- His transfiguration convinced Peter, James, John that he was a messiah because a voice came from heaven.
- He resurrected after 3 days hence revealing his identity.

RELEVANCE OF MESSIANIC SECRET

- Christians should be humble just as Jesus was humble before the people.
- Christians should boast of what God has done for them but not what they can do.
- They should accept suffering and challenges just as Jesus accepted.
- Christians should love one another and be kind to one another.
- Christians should work hard to fulfill their mission just as Jesus fulfilled his mission.
- Christians should be holy because Jesus is holy just as Jesus is holy.

TO WHAT EXTENT DID JESUS FULFILL THE CURRENT JEWISH EXPECTATIONS?

To a smaller extent Jesus fulfilled the expectation of the Jews as seen below;

- Jews expected a messiah to be born from Bethlehem and it was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
- They expected a messiah to come from the lineage of David and it was fulfilled.
- The Jews expected the messiah to be a Jew and was fulfilled because he was a Jew.
- They expected the messiah to perform wonders and this was fulfilled when he could perform miracles. For example healed the sick, raised the dead.
- They expected the messiah to come and perfect the Law of Moses and it was fulfilled.
- They expected the messiah to reach in parables and it was fulfilled when he preached using them. For example parable of the sower.
- They expected him to care and feed the hungry. For example he fed 4,000 with 7 loaves and 2 fish.
- They expected to establish peace in the Roman Empire and was fulfilled when he lived peacefully with wild animals in wilderness.
- They expected a messiah to be king of the Jews and was fulfilled when they put a label on the cross” king of the Jews”.
- They expected a messiah to teach authority and was fulfilled when he taught with authority in the synagogues.
- They expected him to be instilled with the Holy Spirit and this was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came on him in form of a dove during baptism.
- They expected him to be a son of God and this was fulfilled during transfiguration when voice was heard “this is my dear son, listen to him”.
- They expected the messiah to appoint disciples to work as assistants. this was fulfilled when he appointed disciples.

However, to a larger extent, Jesus failed to fulfill the messianic expectation of the Jews as seen below;

- The Jews expected a messiah who would save them from paying taxes but Jesus encouraged them to pay taxes by saying give Caesar what belongs to him and God what belongs to Go.
- They expected the messiah to be loved by his fellow Jews but Jesus was rejected by his own people of Nazareth.

- They expected him to perform miracles but Jesus refused to perform for Pharisees when they asked one.
- They expected him to use a horse which important people were using but instead used a donkey for triumphant entry.
- They expected him to refer himself as a son of God but instead referred himself as a son of man.
- They expected a messiah who would maintain the culture of Jews for example he elevated the position of women.
- They expected a messiah who would give out positions in his kingdom when James and John asked for the position on the priest.
- They expected a messiah to come with an army and defend the Jews but instead he came as a spiritual messiah without an army.
- They expected him to associate with the Jews but instead associated with both the Jews and Gentiles.
- They expected him to associate with important people but instead he associated with mother, sinners and children and tax collectors.
- Jesus had human parents that is to say Mary and Joseph from despised village of Nazareth which was opposed today.
- During his arrest, he prevented peter from fighting the Roman soldier yet as a messiah he was to be fought for.

THE REJECTION OF JESUS IN NAZARETH

1. Why was Jesus rejected by his own people according to gospel of Mark?

2. Account for the rejection of Jesus by the Jews.

- Jesus was just a son of Joseph the carpenter and such jobs were often despised by people.
- The Jews thought that Jesus' birth was not a product of the Holy Spirit.
- They asked themselves the source of Jesus' wisdom since they knew Jesus was uneducated, came from poor family, how could he become prominent.
- Jesus' background and origin were all known yet they new that a messiah would come out of heaven and would be an extra ordinary figure.

- There were some Pharisees and teachers of the law who spread the rumor that Jesus was a bastard and therefore was not worthy to speak to people.
- They thought that Jesus was seeking for cheap popularity and believed that Jesus an opportunist interested in winning people on his side.
- They were astonished at the authority of his teaching on Sabbath when he expanded and analyzed the scriptures.
- They rejected him because of prejudice since he appeared to do extra ordinary things that none of them could not do.
- They rejected him because his disciples were eating with ritually unclean hands.
- They rejected him because he refused to perform a miracle for them when they asked him which was to prove that he was a son of God.
- It is because he could call himself son of God which was blasphemy among the Jews.
- It is because he encouraged permanency in marriage and discouraged divorce yet the Mosaic Law allows it.
- They rejected him because he could forgive sins on act which was to be done by God for example when he forgave sins of a paralyzed man.
- They rejected him because he called himself a messiah yet the leaders knew the messiah had not yet come.
- They were rejected because they had to fast.

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS ARE REJECTED

- Some Christians show bad examples in the society. For example commit adultery with people.
- Some Christians encourage homosexuality in the society.
- Some call themselves prophets and whatever they prophesize is not true.
- Some of the religious leaders have bad backgrounds for example some have been thieves, robbers, prostitutes.
- They discriminate them in church for example special seats are for special people.
- Some Christians associate with evil world to get power and perform miracles.
- Some people take miracles by using electronic gadgets.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

What were the roles of women in the gospel in Jesus' ministry according to Mark?

- Some Peter's mother-in-law showed herself as a committed disciple by serving food and drinks after healing her (Mk 1:29-31)
- A woman with a continuous blood flow showed her faith by touching on Jesus' garment in order to be healed.
- A woman at Bethany showed her faith in Jesus by anointing him with an expensive perfume and thereafter, the good news was spread.
- The first witnesses of the risen Lord were women and therefore spread the good news about Jesus.
- It was a woman who took the spices to anoint the body of Jesus Christ in the tomb.
- It was women who ran out to tell disciples that Jesus had spread the good news.
- Among the 5,000 people Jesus fed women were present listening to his preaching.
- Jesus was born by a Virgin Mary who was a woman.
- A Gentile woman approached Jesus with deep faith kneeling and begged Jesus to drive demons out of her daughter.
- Mary mother of John Mark provided room for Jesus and his disciples to have the last supper and after the good news was spread.
- Jesus' mother came searching for him in the synagogue which attracted her spread the good news.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN SPREADING GOOD NEWS TODAY

- Women are serving as reverends, pastors. For example pr. Namutebi Imelda.
- Women do teach CRE in schools hence spreading good news.
- Catholics nuns who are dedicated to the service of the Lord influence over the children therefore teach religion to children.
- As wives are good at convincing their husbands to go for prayers in this men can get converted.
- In hospitals, women who are Christians spread good news to patients.

- Some women write Christian books which help in spreading good news.
- Some Christians compose Christian songs which can attract many into Christianity. For example Judith Babirye.
- They preach on mass media. For example newspapers, radios, televisions etc.
- They act as good mothers during baptism therefore they take the role of guiding people to Christian life.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS (Mark 9:2-13)

- After a sudden there was a tremendous change, Jesus' cloth became shining white, whiter than anyone in the world could wash them.
- His face also became brighter than ever.
- The three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus.
- Peter spoke and said "teacher how good is it that we are here" we shall build three tents one for you, one you Moses and one you Elijah. Then from the above, the cloud covered them from above with its shadows then Elijah and Moses appeared besides Jesus and the two walked with him.
- A voice similar to that of Jesus' baptism came from the cloud.
- It proclaimed Jesus as his dear son and called them to listen to his dear son.
- Suddenly Elijah disappeared and the clouds also disappeared and Jesus turned to his usual face.
- As the four descended the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone what had happened until the son of man is risen from the dead.

Significance of the Transfiguration

- It proved that Jesus was the longer awaited messiah who had come to liberate mankind.
- It revealed God's divine nature as he evidenced the complete change of his state.
- It showed a special relationship between Jesus and his father.
- It offered Jesus a chance to give another prophecy to his disciples . That is to say, suffering, death and resurrection.

- It showed the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in Jesus' personality. Elijah's presence represented all the Old Testament prophecies that foretold the coming of the messiah.
- The event proved that Jesus had not only come to perfect the law but to fulfill it. Moses' presence represented the old testament which Jesus had come to perfect.
- It was a basis of courage and hope that made Jesus withstand later pressures especially during his trial and trial days.
- It pointed to the related peace, joy, happiness, glory that belongs to God's kingdom.
- It revealed the messianic secrecy in Jesus' ministry.
- It showed that Jesus was about to establish an everlasting kingdom.
- It indicated that Jesus' earthly ministry was about to end, he spent three days in the tomb and be raised from the dead.

THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM (Mark 11:1-11)

- As Jesus and his disciples came nearer Jerusalem, he instructed two of his disciples to find a donkey which was ahead in the next village. The donkey had never been sat on.
- He told them to untie it and bring it to him.
- He told them that in case they asked to where they were taking it they were to tell them the master wanted it. The disciples did what Jesus had told them.
- They brought him the donkey, threw clothes on its back and Jesus sat on it.
- Many people spread their cloaks and branches of trees on the ground surface and those ahead and the ones behind began to shout praise God! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord, God bless the kingdom of our father David.
- Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple looked at everything but since it was already late in the day, he went out to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

Significance of the Event

- The event marked Jesus as the expected messiah king of the Jews.
- It showed that Jesus had come to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies/scriptures which said that the messiah would come from the lineage of King David.

- It indicated the approaching hour when Jesus would be tortured and will be killed when he completed his messianic.
- It implied that Jesus was a messiah in a spiritual because his entry was peaceful.
- It showed that the kingdom of God had come.
- It was a moment in which people showed that they were for them.
- It showed that Jesus was a great nature because he did not suppress them.
- It showed that Jesus was a great figure who attracted public attention.
- The event opened hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees, teachers of the law and other authorities.
- It clearly showed Jesus as the only son of God. This was because he sat on a cult that had never been driven before which symbolized holiness.
- The entry reflects on the future happiness and joy which would be expressed by the faithful ones in the kingdom of God.
- It exposed the disciples' lack of understanding.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE (Mark 11:15-19)

- On the second day after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus came back into Jerusalem and cleansed the temple.
- He began by driving out all those who are buying and selling from there.
- He over turned the temples of the money changers and the stools of those who sold pigeons.
- Jesus then told them “doesn't the scripture say my house will be called the house of prayer for all the people”.
- He rebuked them for the way they had turned his father's house into a den of robbers.
- When it came to the notice of the chief priests and the Scribes they tried to find some days of getting rid back.
- Mark said that they were afraid of him because they were attracted to his teaching.

Why Jesus Cleansed the Temple

- The temple was divided into portions (courts) but the Gentile was used for the sale of animals and a short cut for people moving to and fro Jerusalem. This made it difficult for the Gentiles to worship.
- The converted Gentiles who came to worship were expected to pay a fee and this was to be converted into Jewish currency.
- The chief priests made the conversion rate very high and got abnormal profits.
- The temple had become a den of robbers.
- There were disputes and quarrels that led to un holiness in the temple. It was no longer a symbol of God's presence but had become a place of controversy.
- There was no order in the temple. The place was full of noise since some people were selling items, others exchanging money and others haggling over prices.
- Animals polluted the temple while human beings made noise while negotiating prices.
- It was a divine will that the temple had to be cleansed.
- People in the temple had no respect for God hence need a cleansing.
- Horrible sins could sometimes be committed in the temple.

Significance of Cleansing the Temple

- It showed Jesus' determination to reserve abuse which people had put on the church.
- It showed that Jesus had come to purify the house of God since God is holy his place of worship also had to be holy.
- It exposed the mistakes and guilty of the Pharisees that's why Jesus was not opposed when he over turned the tables of the money changers.
- It proved that Jesus had appointed the temple for prayer but not business.
- The cleansing event and Jesus' words proved that Jesus had not come to destroy the temple as falsely accused by the Pharisees but put right what had gone wrong.
- The destruction of the property symbolized that his body that would be destroyed so that man is cleansed of his sins.
- It showed that old testament prophecies (Isaiah 56:4) had been fulfilled
- It proved that Jesus was a messiah.

- It was against this background that Jesus noted that his father's house had been made a den of robbers.
- The action proved that Jesus was a master of all creation. He clearly opposed what was taking place and no one could risk touching him.
- The cleansing was a step taken to show that Jesus' authority was from above.
- It showed the humanity of Jesus because he got annoyed used force to destroy.
- It increased the conflicts between Jesus and the leaders teachers of the law plus the Pharisees.
- It showed that God's worship was universal.
- Jesus established the temple for all the nations.
- It fore shadowed his future death and resurrection.

To What Extent does the Church need Cleansing?

To a larger extent the church needs cleansing because of the following;

- Some Christians are corrupt, they embezzle church funds therefore the church needs cleansing.
- Some Christians practice sexual immorality for example homosexuality, fornication, adultery etc.
- There is struggle for top positions in church by some Christians which is bad.
- Some Christians worship idols alongside God.
- There is witchcraft practiced by some Christians in the church.
- Some Christians mind about their businesses and leave God.
- There is practice of denominational conflicts.
- There is division between the poor and rich.
- There is division between men and women.
- There is existence of false teaching in the church.
- Some Christian couples divorce.
- Some Christians involve in telling lies.
- There is poor dressing in the church for example some people put on tight skirts that expose them.
- There is forging of miracles in the church today.

- Some Christians commit sins and receive the Holy Communion.
- Some Christians are proud and show off in the church.

However, to a smaller extent the church does not need cleansing because of the following;

- Some churches in Uganda have maintained spiritual standards which do not require cleansing.
- Some Christians put their faith into actions.
- Some Christian couples have remained faithful in their marriage.
- Some Christians attend bible studies to improve on their spiritual wellbeing.
- Some Christians worship God in truth and spirit.
- Some Christians give a tenth of their earnings in the church.
- Some Christians have protected fellow Christians from false teachings.
- Some Christians repent in church.

THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE (Mark 11-12)

As Jesus was moving with his disciples he was hungry and wanted to get some figs to eat but the tree was fruitless.

The following day as he was moving with his disciples Peter got surprised to see that the fig tree Jesus had cursed had dried up from the top to the roots.

Jesus then told his disciples that with faith everything is possible and therefore should not get surprised to see the fig tree.

Significance

- It signified Jesus' humanity because he got hungry and angry.
- His divinity was revealed when he cursed the tree and it dried.
- It showed Peter's lack of understanding because he was surprised to see the fig tree dry.
- It showed the importance of faith. This is seen when Jesus taught his disciples that with faith everything is possible.
- It increased the faith among his disciples after seeing the fig tree had dried and started believing in Jesus Christ as a messiah.

- The event is more of an acted parable than a miracle because of the fig tree signified Judaism which appeared to be good on surface but unproductive.
- It showed that God cannot be deceived by outward religious practices but it is much interested in devotion from people by producing spiritual fruits.
- It showed that the good work for believers shouldn't be like the fig tree which could bear fruits in seasons but throughout the year.
- It showed the need to bear spiritual fruits because it was what Jesus is looking for.
- It pointed to the destruction of the unrighteous on the Day of Judgment because they will have failed to bear spiritual fruits.
- It showed that Judaism and Law of Moses were outdated so they were to be destroyed and replaced by faithful gospel.
- It showed that the kingdom of God had come on earth.

Lessons to Modern Christians

- Christians should do their god work throughout their life instead of being seasonal like the fig tree.
- Christians should tell the truth instead of being hypocrites.
- Christians should pray to God with faith because with faith everything is possible.
- Christians should be prepared at all times because Jesus is coming back any time therefore should meet us bearing spiritual fruits.
- Christians should have faith that produces spiritual fruits. For example feeding the hungry, clothing the poor etc.
- Christians should move and spread the good news in this way they will be bearing spiritual fruits.
- Christians should understand Jesus in their lives unlike Peter who lacked understanding of Jesus.
- Christians should believe in Jesus as a messiah.
- Christians should be prepared for judgment day therefore Christ should meet them when they are to stand.

THE ANOINTING OF JESUS AT BETHANY (Mark 14:3-9)

When Jesus had gone to visit Simon a man who had healed from a dreaded skin disease, a woman with a jar full of expensive perfume came and poured on Jesus' head.

Some people around criticized her harshly to waste the expensive perfume that she would sell for 300 silver coins to give to the poor however Jesus defended the woman that she had done a fine and beautiful thing to prepare his body for burial.

Significance of the Event

- It showed Jesus as a messiah sent by god to save mankind.
- It showed the faith the woman had in Jesus it was because she believed in Jesus that's why she waited Jesus' body with an expensive perfume.
- It showed that the ministry of Jesus was universal for both men and women that's why he accepted to be anointed by the woman.
- It showed the woman's love for Jesus Christ that's why she used her expensive perfume.
- It showed Jesus' divine powers because if it were the divine powers that forced the woman to anoint him.
- It led to the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures in Old Testament important people were always anointed like kings.
- It showed that Jesus always defends his people. This is seen when he defended the woman by saying that "leave her alone, she has done a fine and beautiful thing to prepare my body for burial".
- It showed the time for Jesus' death had come. This is seen when the woman anointed his body for burial.
- It showed lack of understanding of people who were around. This is seen when they criticized the women harshly for wasting the expensive oil therefore lack understanding of Jesus as a messiah.
- It was a way of spreading good news. After Jesus had been anointed at Bethany, the news about Jesus spread all over.
- It also showed that the people are materialistic because instead of having faith in Jesus, they criticized the woman for wasting the expensive oil.

- It showed the greatness of Jesus Christ that he was greater than the things of the world.

Lessons to Christians

- Christians should give their best to others for example expensive clothes just as a woman used her expensive perfume to anoint Jesus.
- Christians should have faith in their religious leaders just as a woman had faith in Jesus Christ and anointed with an expensive perfume.
- Christians should show love to their religious leaders by supporting them financially just as the woman showed love to Jesus Christ by anointing him with an expensive perfume.
- Christians sometimes should accept to take risks in God's work by accepting to be abused while serving the lord just as a woman was harshly criticized.
- Christians should defend their fellow Christian during times of trouble just as Jesus defended a woman.
- Christians should give opportunity to woman to serve in church as pastors just as Jesus accepted the woman to anoint him.
- Christians should trust in Christ irrespective of their sex, Colour, tribe and many others since Jesus is universal.
- Christians should show their gratitude to the religious leaders for the work they have done just as the woman showed gratitude by anointing Jesus.
- Christians should depend on Jesus Christ just as the woman depended on Christ when she was criticized.

THE PASSOVER AND THE LAST SUPPER

- In Mark 15 presentation of the Lord's Supper it coincided with the Passover festival.
- It was speculated that the room which Jesus had the last supper with his disciples was in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark.
- It was that evening when Jesus was having a meal with his disciples and he predicted that one of his disciples would betray him.
- At the last supper Jesus identified the traitor as Judas Iscariot.
- While they were eating Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it and gave to his disciples take it "this is my body".

- Thereafter he took a cup of wine gave thanks and told all the disciples to drink from the same cup “this is my blood” poured out to seal God’s covenant.

Significance of the Last Supper

- The last supper signified unity and fellowship by sharing the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
- It signified Jesus’ suffering on the cross for the salvation of sinners.
- The bread of the last supper symbolized Jesus’ body and flesh.
- The wine on the other hand symbolized Jesus’ blood which was shed to liberate sinners from bondage of sin.
- The event pointed at the importance of prayers that’s why before serving bread and wine he first prayed.
- It symbolized the new covenant between God and all humanity.
- It signified God’s love for mankind.
- It was a way of attaining spiritual reunion with Jesus.
- It also reflected the heavenly banquet which Jesus would serve to the faithful one.
- It signified Jesus’ death but he was to resurrect.
- It was during this event that Jesus predicted his betrayal by Judas Escariot.
- It signified the importance of prayers because after supper Jesus went with his disciples to Mount Olive to pray.
- It was a fare well party which Jesus served his disciples before being crucified.

Importance of the Lord’s Supper to Christians today

The last supper today is referred to as the Holy Communion or Eucharist and it has the followings ways;

- It reminds Christians about the love of God for them.
- It promotes love and unity among Christians.
- It promotes the spirit of sharing among Christians.
- It reminds Christians about the death of Jesus for their salvation.
- It makes Christians to repent before taking part in the Holy Communion.
- It is a call for morality and holy living among Christians.
- It reminds Christians about the new covenant where by Jesus reconciled man with God.

- It reminds Christians of their future resurrection.
- It reminds Christians that they are on their exodus to heaven and they should be careful on the way they move.
- It points to the joy, glory and perfection awaiting Christians in the heavenly kingdom.

REASONS WHY JUDAS ESCARIOT BETRAYED JESUS

In Mark 14:10-11, it was reported that Judas Escariot went to the chief priest and negotiated with him the ways in which Jesus could easily be caught. He agreed to betray him in turn of money because of the following;

- Judas did not understand the proper mission of Jesus Christ on earth.
- Judas was materialistic and had excess desire for money.
- He thought that Jesus would use his divine powers to escape from soldiers and chief priest.
- He wanted to gain cheap popularity from teachers of the law and the chief priests.
- He expected Jesus to use his messianic powers to fight Roman soldiers.
- Judas was probably envious of Jesus who had become popular.
- Judas was disappointed when Jesus called Peter, James and John his closest friends.
- His betrayal of Jesus was a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.
- He thought and felt isolated and developed the bad thought.
- His betrayal was because of the satanic forces that had entered into him.

THE ARREST AND TRIAL OF JESUS

- After the last supper with his disciples, he took them and went with them to Mt. Olive where he predicted that Peter would deny him three times.
- He also predicted that at his arrest all his disciples would run away from him.
- At that very night Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray and ask for strength from his father.
- While still in the garden of Gethsemane Judas arrived with a crowd of men armed with clubs and swords.
- The men were sent by chief priests and teachers of the law to arrest Jesus.
- On the arrival Judas approached Jesus, addressed him as a teacher and kissed him.

- The kissing acted as a signal to the soldiers that Jesus was the man to be arrested.
- The kissing was followed by immediate arrest of Jesus.
- Peter tried to defend Jesus by cutting off an ear of the high priest's soldier.
- In no time, all the disciples had run away except a certain young man who followed up the men who had arrested Jesus.
- The soldiers also tried to arrest the man but he run away naked.

JESUS' TRIAL (Mark 14:53-65)

- After Jesus being arrested, they took him to the high priests' house.
- The house was packed with chief priests, elders and teachers of the law who formed the Jewish religious council which was called Sanhedrin.
- The intention of the Sanhedrin council was to get rid of Jesus and that's why they sat at night to get some evidence against Jesus unfortunately they could not.
- After failing to get evidence they bribed some people so that they could give false witness and information about Jesus.
- They taught false stories against Jesus which could not agree.
- Jesus never reacted to any accusation against him.
- The chief priest stood up and was very annoyed at Jesus' silence and he asked him "have you no answer to the accusation they bring to you".
- Jesus still kept quiet to the question of the high priest.
- The high priest then asked Jesus for the second time "are you the messiah?" To this question Jesus answered "I am....." And you will see the son of man seated on the right of the almighty and coming from clouds of heaven.
- This annoyed the high priest and made him tore his robes (garments) and said "we do not anymore witness! You heard his blasphemy (abuse of God)".
- The whole council voted against Jesus and agreed that he deserved death.
- They started spitting on him; the blind folded him and hit him.
- He was handed over to guards who slapped and took him.
- Peter had followed him at a distance and as trials went on, he was seated in the courtyard of the high priest's home.

- One of the high priest's slave girl identified Peter was one of Jesus' disciples.
- Peter denied three times "I don't know..... I don't understand what you are talking about and this was followed by the crawling of the cock.
- Peter remembered what Jesus had predicted which made him to break down, cried and repented.

JESUS' TRIAL BY PILATE IN THE ROMAN COURT (Mark 15:1-15)

- The following morning very early, the chief priests, elders, teachers of the law and the whole Jewish council planned to handover Jesus to Pilate.
- They suggested possible charges that could enable Pilate to sentence Jesus to death.
- Pilate who was by then the Roman governor and the judge in the Roman Empire was very strict and could not entertain religious accusations against Jesus.
- The Jewish council decided to make a case against Jesus to appear to royal court.
- They instead accused Jesus of calling himself the king of Jews with the intention of leading a rebellion against Roman authorities.
- They also accused Jesus of inciting and forbidding them from paying taxes.
- Pilate cross examined Jesus but found no fault in him.
- He asked Jesus "are you the king of the Jews?" and Jesus answered him "so you say" and Jesus never answered any accusation against him.
- Pilate asked him "are you not going to answer?" Jesus didn't even say a word and this annoyed Pilate.
- Pilate detected the innocence in his silence and he told teachers of the law that he hadn't found any crime in Jesus.
- On hearing that, the teachers of law shouted that they wanted him crucified.
- Pilate tried to release Jesus as he used to do every Passover season when he could release the prisoners.
- He asked the teachers of the law to decide between Jesus and Barabbas who to release.
- The teachers of the law demanded for the release of Barabbas who was a known criminal.
- Due to the public pressure, Pilate left Barabbas and handed over Jesus to the public to be crucified.

REASONS TO SHOW THAT JESUS WAS INNOCENT

- Jesus was arrested at night and not in the open showing that he was not a criminal and therefore innocent.
- Many of the accusations given against Jesus were very contradicting.
- Jesus' keeping quiet throughout showed that he was very innocent.
- Pilate himself found out that Jesus was very innocent and didn't find any crime committed.
- Pilate even asked Jesus whether he had anything to say after being examined.
- Jesus forgave those who crucified him a sign which showed his innocence.
- Jesus was crucified to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies otherwise he was not guilty.
- The resurrection of Jesus also proved that he was innocent.
- The Roman army official who witnessed the death of Jesus said "surely this man was a son of God".
- The label on the cross "king of the Jews" shows Jesus' innocence.
- Pilate acted against Jesus under the pressure of the crowd.

Questions

1. *"Despite being crucified, Jesus was not guilty." Justify*
2. *What do today's judges learn from this*

CAUSES OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

Why was Jesus crucified?

- Jesus had gained popularity than the teachers of the law so they felt jealousy.
- Jesus was crucified because of Judas' greed for money.
- Jesus and his disciples did not fast the way the Pharisees expected.
- Jesus' power to perform miracles made the Pharisees jealousy and turned against him.
- The circulating information that Jesus was the messiah made him to be crucified.
- The cleansing of the temple of Jerusalem made him to earn enmity hence his crucifixion.
- The need to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies made him to be crucified.
- Jesus' association with sinners and outcasts made him to be crucified.

- Jesus' act of raising the dead annoyed the Jewish religious leaders who never believed in resurrection of the dead.
- Jesus' use of parable to criticize the evils of the teachers of the law made him unpopular hence his crucifixion.
- Pilate's desire to please the mob and gain cheap popularity led to his crucifixion.
- He was crucified because crucifixion was the popular way of dealing with stubborn agents among the Jews.

Lessons Christians learn from Jesus' Trials

- Christian judges should pass judgment basing on clear evidence but not on the interest of the crowd just as Pilate did.
- The courts should be conscious while passing judgment because it is only God who has power over death.
- A judge who feels biased should leave a certain/given case to other judges.
- Christian judges in courts of law should give alternative punishments instead of death sentence.
- Christian judges should base their judgment on concrete evidence.
- Christian judges should promote the rule of law and order by punishing what is wrong.
- Christians should give genuine witness in courts of law.
- Christian judges should allow the law instead of following people's wishes.
- Christians should avoid mob justice which can delay the process of justice.
- Christians should safe guard against acquiring cheap popularity.
- Christians who violate the law should accept punishments given to them.
- Christians should be with the spirit of forgiving one another.

Evidence to Show that Jesus Died

What evidence does Mark give to prove that Jesus died?

- Mark provides that Jesus was crucified hence he died.
- Mark also provides that during his crucifixion the whole world was covered with darkness.
- The words "Eloi, Eloi" showed that he was dying.

- The tearing of the temple curtain into two parts showed that Jesus was dead.
- The army official who was guarding the cross showed that Jesus died and said “this was a real son of God”.
- Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome stood at a distance and saw Jesus dying.
- Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus had already died.
- Pilate asked the Roman official to confirm that Jesus had died.
- Joseph rolled a large stone and covered the entry of the tomb.
- Joseph placed the body of Jesus in the tomb which had been dug out of the solid rock.
- Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus Christ in a linen cloth which was a custom of the Jews.
- Joseph also removed the body of Christ on the cross and confirmed that Jesus was dead.
- His resurrection also proved that he had died.

Evidence to Show That Jesus’ Resurrection is a Reality

1. What evidences are there in the new testament to show that Jesus resurrected?

2. What is the importance of Jesus’ resurrection today?

- His appearance to his disciples showed that he had resurrected.
- He also appeared to women like Mary.
- The women who went to anoint the body, early in the morning found an empty tomb meaning he had resurrected.
- Jesus appeared to Peter and the rest of his disciples.
- He proved to the doubting Thomas by showing him wound in his palms and ribs.
- In the gospel of John he ate with his disciples.
- He appeared to the two disciples who were going to Emaus, the angel of the Lord said “he has risen; he is not here see the place where they laid him”.
- He appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus and converted Saul to Paul.
- The fact that the New Testament is present then it is a proof that he resurrected.
- The readiness of his disciples to suffer was because of his resurrection.
- After his resurrection he commissioned his disciples.
- His ascension into heaven was after his resurrection.

