

**PURITY PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**BIBILE KNOWLEDGE NOTES MSCE (The Gospel of Luke)**  
**Teacher: J.F. M'bwana**

**1. Introduction to the New Testament**

The word Bible is taken from the old Greek word Biblio which means “Library of books or books”. The Bible is divided into two main parts or sections:

- a) The Old Testament (OT) which has 39 books.
- b) The New Testament (NT) which contains 27 books.

All the books give a total of 66 books which were written by 40 different authors both men and women in a period of almost 1500 years. The word testament means covenant.

**1.1 HOW WE GOT THE NT**

The NT contains books written about Jesus Christ, the beginning of Christianity but the continuation of the family of God and it gives us an overview of the new covenant period. The NT picks where the OT leaves off completing God's plan of redemption by revealing Jesus Christ as the Messiah promised in the OT. It focuses on the first and the second coming of Christ and the response which God desires each person to make to the revelation of himself in the person of Christ.

The NT written over a period of 50 years (45 AD to 95 AD).

Written at least by eight different human authors.

27 books with a unifying theme.

Written in common Greek

Over 5000 manuscripts copies of all or part of the NT have been preserved- it is the best attested of all ancient writings.

Copies of the NT were meticulously made by scribes until invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The 27 books are also divided into sections

1. Matthew to Acts- The historical section
  2. Romans to Jude- Letters (epistle) section
  3. Revelation- Prophecy, apocalypse section
- 
2. Background to the New Testament
  3. The writing of the New Testament

**1.2 THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS**

According to the debates that have been going on it seems Mark was the first to be written since most of the material that is in Mark is found in both Matthew and Luke. It is believed that Matthew and Luke used Mark as the source “quelle” in German. This is known as Markan source. But there are also some things which are found only in Matthew and Luke only and scholars agree that there must be another source which Matthew used and also Luke. This is known a Matthean and Lucan sources.

During the NT time people used the amanuensis or scribes in writing. When a book is ascribed to a certain author it does not mean that all the material as presented in the book were compiled by the author. Sometimes amanuensis was used.

**2 The Gospel of Luke**

**2.2 Sources of Luke**

Where did Luke the doctor get the material that he used to write his gospel? According to the information that Luke himself gave us in Luke 1:1-4, he told us that he did a research using the writings of other writers. And when you read the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke you will see

a lot of similarities which gives us a picture that they used material from the same sources (refer-synoptic problem).

### 2.3 The Synoptic Problem

The word synoptic means “seeing together”. When we see together the three gospels we will see that they have a similar approach in treating the story of Jesus. But the issue or problem is “why do these three gospels have most things in common, and sometimes they used the same words? The word synoptic means “seeing together” and the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as synoptic gospels because they see together the life of Christ by covering the same basic events which each contributes its own unique material and emphasis.

There are some people who think that the gospels contradicts each other. This is not true they complete each other, complement each other and confirm each. The Gospels can perhaps best described as selective topical narratives or historical biographies of Jesus Christ from a theological perspective. Each of the gospels was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by different men at different times but each presents:

- The same basic message: - concerning the ministry and mission of Jesus centered on the atoning, substitutionary death on the cross followed by His triumphant and unique bodily resurrection.
- From a different view point:- designed to present a complete portrait of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of Man for various readers.

The word gospel comes from a Greek word eaungelion which means “Good News”. So the Gospels accounts are the Good News of Jesus Christ, they tell of the Kingdom and salvation.

There are explanations that have been given by scholars to this problem and the following are some of the explanations:

- **Oral Tradition:** - The sayings of Jesus were taught orally for some time before the evangelists wrote them down. This means the Gospels writers interpreted them as much as they could.
- **Reciprocal borrowing:** -This means that the two Gospels, Matthew and Luke could have borrowed materials from Mark (Markan source). In this view scholars believe that it was Mark who wrote first as compared to Matthew and Luke.
- **Documentary Sources:** Matthew and Luke could have copied from one other source which contained the sayings of Jesus. This source is called QUELLE (German word for source). This means that Luke might have got materials from his own research that he did (Lucan Source). Many people accept this explanation. So it is possible that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark and Quelle (in short Q). The authors could have also used special sources known to them. This explains as to why some of the materials found in Luke and the same is true with Matthew. See the drawing below which is illustration of how to understand the synoptic problem.

Luke wrote his Gospel skillfully when compared to the other Gospels. He used classic Greek (His Greek is good and the vocabulary is rich and varied) which was not used in the other Gospels. He used beautiful expressions.

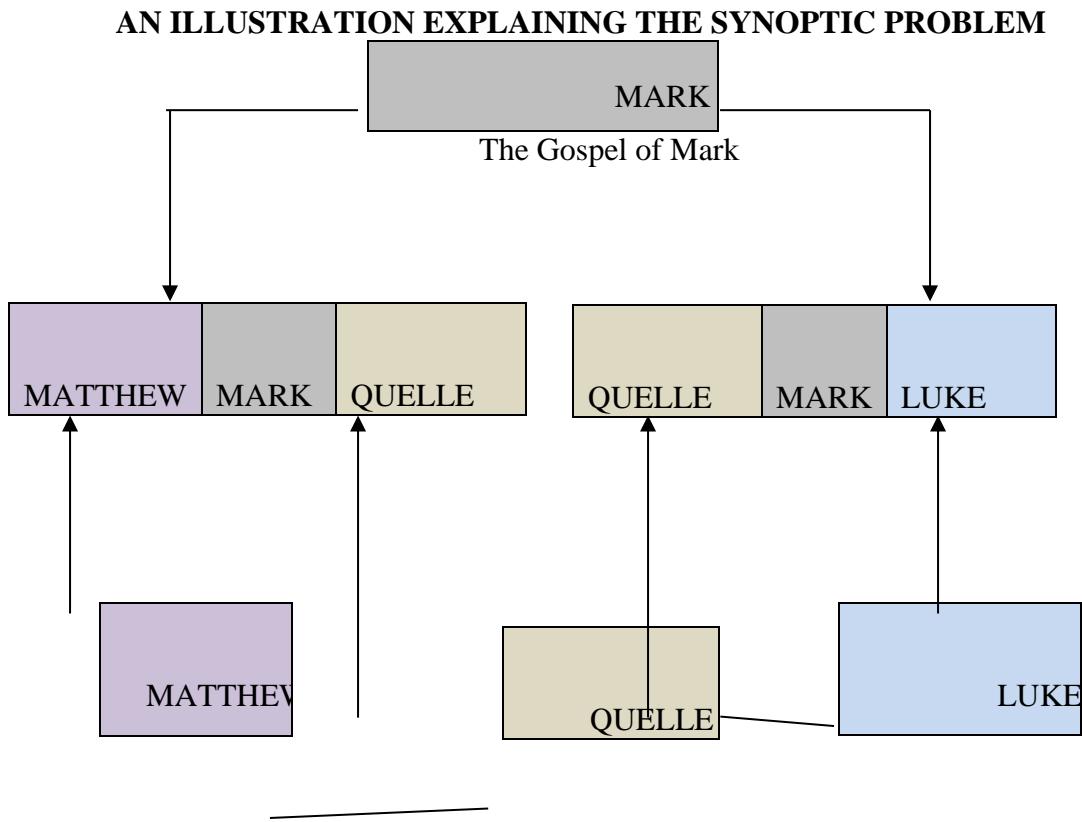
For example:-

- a. The magnificent (Luke 1:46-56)
- b. The Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79)
- c. Glory to God (Luke 2: 14)
- d. Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:28-32)

These poems have come to us as church hymns.

Luke gives more details than the other two synoptic Gospels. He gives a complete sketch of Jesus' career. And in this Gospel we will find that Jesus' Gospel is UNIVERSAL (covering the whole

world). He writes about Jesus from the point of view of the whole world. He writes as if there is no Jew, Gentile, Barbarian and slaves. For Luke Jesus came for all the people of the world.



**The Gospel of Matthew**

**Luke**

**The Gospel of**

## 2.4 Authorship of Luke

Behind every document there is a writer, most of the books in the Bible were at first without the names of the writers attached to them. After people did a thorough research and discovered those who wrote the books names were included. The name “The Gospel according to Luke” was attached to the Gospel of Luke after the findings that it was Luke who wrote the Gospel.

From the introduction of the Gospel we see that Luke was writing to Theophilus (a Greek name which means *lover of God* or *one loved by God*) Luke 1: 1-4. The word excellent used in the text shows that the one who was addressed (the one to whom the Luke wrote his Gospel) was an official or member of the ruling class, so from the text itself we can deduce that Theophilus was perhaps a man from a ruling class.

In his introduction Luke tells us that he wanted to write and because of that he had to do a research (to write an orderly account of what Jesus did). He wanted Theophilus to know the truth about the things which he had learnt.

When you read Acts 1:1-11, the recipient is Theophilus again as with the case in Luke’s Gospel. You will notice that in Acts, the writer mentions a book which he wrote before, this book is the Gospel of Luke. This means that Luke wrote both books, the Gospel of Luke and Acts of Apostles.

## 2.5 Who was Luke?

Luke does not mention his name in the Gospel but when you read the contents of the book you will see that he calls himself doctor. He was Paul's friend, Luke was a Greek speaking gentile. He was well educated and was perhaps the first convert in Antioch. He travelled extensively (very much or quite a lot) with Paul.

### **The Religious Background of the Gospel of Luke**

The Gospel of Luke deals with the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was a Jew and as a Jew, living in Palestine, most of what he said and did was Jewish. From this you can see that the background to the New Testament is the Jewish religion.

### **2.6 Institutions in Judaism that form a religious background to Luke (NT in General)**

The most important institutions in Judaism (The religion of the Jews) were:

- ✓ The Temple
- ✓ The synagogue
- ✓ The Law and the Tradition
- ✓ Parties, sects and movements in Judaism

#### **A. The Temple**

The temple was in Jerusalem and it was the center of worship. The temple that was in Jerusalem had seven major divisions:-

- The court of the Gentiles
- Women's court
- Court of Israel
- Court of Priests
- The Holy place
- The Holy of holies

Each of these courts had its regulations and function. There were no restrictions for the court of the Gentiles. Anybody could go in, and sometimes the court for Gentiles was used as a market place.

Women were excluded from the court of Israel. There was an altar in the middle of the court of Priests and this was the main altar. The Priests used the Holy place for sacrifices and they kept the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

When the temple was destroyed when the Jews were taken to exile, the Jews in return built a simple temple. Herod the Great (40-4 B.C.) began to build a bigger temple to replace the simple one. It was still not complete until the time of Jesus that is why in John 2:20 we read that, The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"

This means that the temple was under construction when Jesus was preaching. This temple was not complete until 64 A.D. The Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D.

#### **B. Synagogue**

Since there was only one temple which was in Jerusalem, what was happening in the communities was that they had small prayer houses known as Synagogues. These synagogues served the following functions:-

- I. Local center of worship
- II. Local center for the study of the law
- III. Local school
- IV. Community center
- V. Center of local government

The community used to gather at the synagogue on the Sabbath. Women and men would sit apart and listen to the reading of the Law and the Prophets (Luke 4:16).

The Jews used to have prayers of worship in the same synagogue.

The elders ran the government and these were civil authorities of the community. They were also the magistrates and guardians of public morals.

### C. The Law and Tradition

The Jews had the Law since the time of Moses. When the Jews returned from exile, they emphasized the study of the Law and this study of the Law increased the body of traditions. These traditions were binding as the Law itself. The Scribes were the professional students of the Law and the Traditions.

The Scribes gave exact regulations for every occasion. E.G. there were 36 types of actions which the Jews were not allowed to do on the Sabbath and the following are some of these actions:-

- Reaping
- Threshing
- Picking ears of corn
- Rubbing the grain out in the hands
- Travelling not more than two-thirds of a mile.

Out of the 10 commandments that God gave them in Exodus 20, these Scribes came up with 613 commandments. This led to Jews forgetting the most important thing about the Law itself (Mark 7:1-13, 3:4-5; Matthew 23:23).

### D. Parties, sects and movements in Judaism

There were several parties, sects and movements in Israel. These had a great influence in the making of the New Testament. The most important sects and movements were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essences, Zealots, the apocalyptic movement, Messianic hopes, the Dispersion, Proselytes and Samaritans. Some of these opposed Jesus to a great extent.

#### i. Pharisees

The name means “separated ones”. These are the people that kept away from the Gentiles and Samaritans and from unclean Jews. The Pharisees were religious **PURISTS** (people who believed in being morally or religiously pure or clean). This party grew in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century from Hasidim. The Hasidim considered themselves to be God’s royal ones. This is a group that developed when the Syrians tried to impose the Greek culture in Palestine. The Jews resisted, some through violence, some by peacefully remaining faithful to the Law. This non-violent group developed into the Pharisee movement. The Pharisees concentrated on controlling the religious affairs and not on political affairs. The great concern was to keep the law and the tradition in every exact detail. Most of the Scribes belonged to the part of the Pharisees. The Pharisees could not eat with non-Pharisees. They considered themselves holier than others. They were concerned with the law on the expose of love and mercy. They had conflicts with Jesus because of their attitude that they were holier than others (holier than thou).

**Membership:** There were about 6,000 Pharisee; they formed communities and most of the members were lay people (illiterate), people who were not priests but the priest and the learned scribes could join them.

**Influence:** At the time of Jesus the Pharisees were the spiritual leaders because the priests who were supposed to be the spiritual leaders were not interested in the things of God but on wealth and political power. The Pharisees were able also to make converts from the proselytized Gentiles.

**Faith and Hope:** Apart from faith in Scriptures (the Law, the prophets and the writings) they believed in the Oral tradition and in angels; spirits; and in life after death. The Pharisees did believe that the only way to be delivered from the Roman oppression was through strict and peaceful observance of God's Law. They were looking forward to the Messiah. They were peace-loving and disagreed with the zealots who used violent means to fight the Romans.

**Relationship with the Romans:** They reluctantly submitted to them so as to avoid bloody suppression.

**Aim:** The aim was the strict observance of the Law, written in the Torah and applied to daily life by rules found in the Traditions of the elders. A Pharisee would follow the Laws strictly in the way he prayed, worked, ate, fasted, dressed, paid his tax and tithe, related to the Gentile, sinners and women etc. e.g. is it permissible to eat an egg that has been laid on the Sabbath?

Evaluation: Among the Pharisees there were men who loved God sincerely, practiced charity, helping the poor. Jesus was against the leaders of the Pharisees rather than the common members. Three times Jesus accepted an invitation to eat with them (Luke 7: 36f; 11:37ff; 14:1ff). Some Pharisees warned Jesus of danger (Luke 14:31). After the resurrection a good number of these Pharisees became Christians (Paul, Gamaliel-Acts 5:35). There were problems later because those who joined the church emphasized that Gentiles who become Christians be circumcised (the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15).

**Jesus called the Pharisees blind leaders-** It is because they did not see the danger of their religious attitude and practice:

- The blind Pharisee is sure that God thinks well of him, because he keeps the Law. He thinks he 'earns' righteousness and cannot believe that God loves everyone, even sinners.
- Convinced that God thinks well of him, he tries to make also the people think well of him. So he practices his piety to be seen.
- He pays so much attention to minor rules that he tends to forget the heart of the Law: love of God and love of neighbor; justice, mercifulness and faith.
- He believes that God cannot forgive certain sins: murder, apostasy and adultery. Jesus taught that all sins can be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Spirit.

**The Pharisees rejected Jesus:** They did not enter the kingdom; they thought they did not need to repent, because they believed that they were justified in God's sight. They thought of themselves as the health that did not need a doctor. They believed this because: (1) they knew the Law and kept it; (2) they were well off and saw this as proof that they were justified in God's sight; (3) the people honoured them as holy men, saluted them in the market places and gave them the best seats in the synagogues. This affirmed the faith they had in themselves.

### ii. Sadducees

The Sadducees were another main party although in the time of Jesus their influence was declining. This party was composed of the rich people who owned land and they used to manipulate (use of one's advantage) their political positions to dominate the state. They controlled part of the seats in the Sanhedrin. Many of the priests were Sadducees and in religion they were Conservatives (maintaining the existing institutions). They refused to accept any revelations beyond the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). This meant that anything that is new which was not part of the five books of Moses was not allowed by these Sadducees. Some of the things that were denied by the Sadducees were beliefs in: immorality, angels, resurrection and demons.

### iii. Essences

The Essences were also a party which regarded itself as the true people of God. It considered all other Jews in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders as enemies. They nicknamed themselves "Sons of the Light." They excluded themselves from the community and used to study the scriptures.

#### **iv. Zealots**

The Zealots were the freedom fighters; they fought against the Roman Government. The Zealots sparked off the great rebellion which led to the Romans destroying the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70. One of Jesus' apostles was a Zealot (Simon the Zealot).

#### **v. Messianism**

Messianism was a belief among the Jews that God would send them a Strong and powerful leader to deliver them from their enemies. One big enemy of the Jews was the Romans. Such a leader was to be the anointed one of God, in other words he was the Messiah (in Greek this was Christos or Christ in English).

Some Jews thought that the Messiah would be a prophet, and many believed that the Messiah would be the son of King David.

#### **vi. Jews in Diaspora**

In the book of Isaiah you studied that the Jews went to exile in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. In the New Testament times, the Jews who remained in the foreign land were called Jews in Diaspora which means Jews in dispersion. These Jews followed their Judaism and their culture although they learnt some of the Greek ways of life (remember Hellenization and the Greeks did to all the slaves). They spoke Greek but identified themselves as Greek speaking Jews.

#### **vii. Proselytes**

Proselytes were gentiles converted to Judaism and they had to accept circumcision and baptism in order to join Judaism. They were supposed to agree to observe the following:-

- (a) The Law of Moses
- (b) The regulations about the Sabbath
- (c) The regulations about clean and unclean food

Proselytes had sometimes to abandon their nationality.

#### **viii. Samaritans**

Samaritans were the children from the intermarriages between Jews of the Northern Kingdom and the foreigners. These foreigners came from the neighbouring states; they had a temple at Gerizim in 722 B.C. This temple was destroyed in 128 B.C. The Samaritans worshipped God as the Jews did. They accepted the Torah (Pentateuch or the five books of Moses). In the Gospel of Luke we will find a lot about these parties, sects and movements.

### **2.7. Roman and Greek Religion**

The Gospel of Luke reflects much about the Roman and Greek religion and remember that when Rome conquered Palestine they also came up with their culture and religion of which most was adopted from the Greeks.

#### **2.7.1 Animism**

This was a belief in nature and it meant that everything had its own soul and god.

#### **2.7.2 Emperor Worship**

During the time of Jesus most of the Greek and Roman gods began to fade away, instead people began to worship emperors. The Greeks used to consider their kings as gods and in that way they called them **KYRIOS** (Lord) and **SOSTER** (saviour).

Christians refused to worship emperors. They said these were human beings and as a result the kings and their supporters began to persecute them.

#### **2.7.3 Mystery religion**

Many religions believed in a god who has died and these religions had different origins. They believed that this god rose from his death. These taught that all the believers were brothers and there was no distinction among masters, slaves, rich, poor, high or low.

#### **2.7.4 The worship of the occult**

Occult worship was similar to mystery religion. People considered the universe to be full of power, they could not understand it. They believed that the whole world is full of spirits which included demons. They believed they could control them to do what they wanted and this was like magic. The Jews and the Gentiles shared these beliefs. The Gospel preached the son of God that died and rose from the dead. The sin went up to heaven to join his Father. You can also see that in the Gospels Jesus casted out demons.

### **3. Main ideas in the Gospel of Luke**

Luke is his Gospel gives a number of ideas and some of these ideas are:

#### **(a) The kingdom of God**

Jesus taught much about the kingdom of God and the meaning of the kingdom of God is very wide. In general it is the community of the people of God.

#### **(b) Discipleship**

Discipleship means being a follower of some teacher. Jesus had his disciples who followed him and accepted his teaching and as disciples they had to follow Jesus totally.

#### **(c) God's Love**

Luke says God's love is different from man's love, for God loves the gentiles (Luke 4:25) publicans (5:25), sinners (15:3-32). This means that God loves everyone.

#### **(d) Messianism**

The Jews were waiting for a powerful ruler to deliver them from their enemies. They hoped for a ruler who would deliver them from the Romans.

#### **(e) Judgement**

Luke uses the word judgement to mean punishment. He says the Jews will be judged (Luke 20:47).

#### **(f) Joy**

Luke speaks of joy in his gospel and this is in connection with the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

#### **(g) The Holy Spirit**

Luke uses the word “**parakletos**”. This word means advocate or counselor. In the gospels the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove, wind or breath. The Holy Spirit plays a big role in the Gospels. From the very beginning of the Gospel we see the Holy Spirit at the conception of Jesus and other places.

#### **(h) Parables**

A parable is a story taken from everyday life, Jesus used parables to teach. Parables are sometimes short and sometimes long.

#### **(i) Tax collectors and sinners**

Tax collectors were considered sinners. Both sinners and tax collectors did not receive any respect from the Jewish community.

Sinners were people who broke God's laws and tax collectors were people who collected taxes on behalf of the Romans. For this very reason that they were enemies of the community because they supported the Romans who oppressed the people of God.

#### **(j) Worship and praise of God**

In the Old Testament people worshipped God in the temple and synagogues. The same is true in the New Testament, people worshipped in the temple as well as synagogues.

#### **(k) Jesus' authority**

Jesus was the son of God. He came to save mankind. Whatever he did, he did it with authority. Many people were amazed at Jesus' authority and his authority came from the Father, God.

### **(l) Jewish Law**

The Jews received their law from Moses and they studied the law and interpreted it. The interpretations of the law became tradition. Jesus said that he did not come to destroy the law. His job was to make the law complete. Jesus did not like the traditions because they did not make the law clear.

### **(m) Faith**

Faith means trusting in God. The gospel recommends such an attitude.

### **(n) Repentance**

Repentance means change or turn to the other direction. It can mean change of mind or intention. Repentance means having sorrow for one's sins and deciding to leave sins.

### **(o) Riches**

Riches means material possessions and Jesus did not condemn riches because it is a gift from God. But what he condemned was the attitude of having and believing in them. He did not approve that people should forget God because of riches.

### **(p) Universalism**

Universalism means the whole world. The gospel of Luke was meant for everybody in the world. It was written for the gentiles as well as Jews.

### **(q) Outcasts**

These were people thrown out of the community in other words rejected people. Jesus sympathized with these people and emphasized that he came for sinners.

### **(r) Gentiles**

The gentiles were people who did not belong to the Jews (non-Jews). Jews had a negative attitude towards them because they believed that God created the Gentiles to be fuel for hell.

### **(s) Jews and Romans**

Luke points out the conflict between the Romans and the Jews. During the time of Jesus the Romans ruled Palestine a thing which the Jews did not like.

## **4. The birth of John and Jesus**

John the Baptist and Jesus were born in Palestine. Palestine was under the Roman Empire and King Herod was the ruler in Palestine.

### **4.1. John the Baptist**

John was the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth. Zachariah was a priest and he used to serve in the temple. Both Zachariah and Elizabeth were old without a child.

#### **How was John born?**

While Zachariah was serving in the temple the angel of the Lord appeared to him and this angel was Gabriel. The angel told Zachariah that his wife would conceive and bear a child and the child will named **John** by Zachariah.

Having heard this Zachariah found it difficult to believe and it was because of his unbelief that Zachariah was punished by God. Zachariah became dumb until the child was born.

After sometime Elizabeth conceived and gave birth to a son. Elizabeth followed all the Jewish **rituals** (ceremonies), John was circumcised after eight (8) days, this was the time the child received his name. Elizabeth named the child **John** and her husband Zachariah confirmed it by writing because he could not speak. After confirming Zachariah began to speak and sing a song of praise (Luke 1: 67-79). This song is called the **BENEDICTUS** (Blessed). The name of the child was a surprise to the relatives because none among his relatives bore that name.

#### **The song of Zachariah (the Benedictus- Luke 1:67-79)**

1. **God is praised:** because salvation has now come through one of the house of David; liberation from enemies and from fear, so that we, the Jews, may serve God in holiness.
2. This is the fulfillment of God's promise made to: (a) prophets, (b) made to the father's, (c) made during the time when he established the covenant and (d) when he called Abraham.

3. About his child, John (a) He is prophet of the Most High; (b) will prepare the Way of the Lord (c) and give knowledge of salvation.

**Luke describes John the Baptist in such a way that he appears as a prophet in the Old Testament tradition:**

1. Like Isaac and Samuel, John is born from a barren woman and in answer to the parent's prayers.
2. The births of some O.T. prophets were sometimes announced by angels, so is John's.
3. Isaac received his name from God; John's name too was given by God.
4. Many prophets abstained from strong drink as a sign of their dedication to God, so did John.
5. John's work will be like Elijah's: he will prepare the way for the Lord.
6. Like many prophets before him John stayed in the wilderness to prepare himself for his task

#### **4.2 The birth of Jesus**

##### **What was Mary's reaction?**

Mary was surprised. At this time Mary was only **betrothed** (promised to be married) to Joseph. According to Jewish culture, those who promised to marry did not involve themselves in sexual relation until they were married. The angel told Mary that she would have the child through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit told her that she would call the child **Jesus**. This son was to be God and Messiah and the sign for this was Elizabeth's conception, because Elizabeth was old beyond the age when she could give birth. After this Mary went to stay with Elizabeth.

##### **How was the census conducted?**

Jesus was born during the Roman census. Every 14 years the Romans ordered a census to know who had pay tax and who could be enlisted in the army. The census was supposed to be conducted in 8 BC for the whole empire. Herod postponed it possibly because of resistance by Jews, who hated the registration: (a) it hurt their national pride; (b) its main purpose was the organization of the poll tax (tax per head). The census was conducted for the following reasons:

- Count the people in the empire
- Assess the age of the people in order to recruit some for military service (although Jews were exempted from military service)
- Assess the wealth of the people in order to increase tax

The meaning of the census: The counting of people and there were reasons as to why people were supposed to be counted (reasons given on page 11). The census was conducted every 14 years and it was during the reign of Herod the Great that the Romans conducted this census. They followed the Jewish ways of conducting census by asking all the Jews to go to their home town or village to register. Joseph and Mary too had to go to **Bethlem** the town of their ancestor, David. It was this time that Jesus was born. He was born in Jerusalem this was according to the prophecy made by Mica 5:2. The first to know that Jesus was born were the shepherds who were taking care of their sheep nearby. These shepherds went to worship him.

##### **How was Jesus born? (Luke 1:26-38)**

Jesus was born six months after the birth of John.

The angel of the Lord (Gabriel) appeared to Mary at Nazareth. The angel told Mary that she would conceive and bear a child.

Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great (it was in the 15<sup>th</sup> year Tiberius Caesar- since he assumed power in 11AD or 15AD that must be in 26 or 29AD). Why did Luke include the historical narrative in his book? The following are the reasons:

- God is the controller of History he controls all events (as we saw in the book of Isaiah that Cyrus the Great the Persian king was used to accomplish God's mission in freeing the people of God), so God used Tiberius Caesar in bringing census so that the Son of God may be

born according to the prophecy in Micah 5:2. **Both rulers issued edicts which served God's purpose.**

- Luke sets the birth of Jesus against the background of Roman Empire (at that time Rome meant the whole world- universalism of the Gospel of Luke).
- Luke wanted to contrast Jesus and Caesar (Caesar was also viewed as the saviour of the people who brought peace- pax Romana- the time that Rome enjoyed peace. Jesus brings peace not by political powers or through the power of government armies, but his peace is the gift from God to men and women with whom he is pleased.

### The meaning of Jesus' birth for Luke's various readers

1. **The Jews:** *To the Jews Jesus' birth fulfills the prophecies. Luke teaches this by:*
  - (a) *Using elements of Micah 5:2-5 for his infancy narrative, e.g. the mention of Bethlehem.*
  - (b) *Presenting devout Jews who welcome Jesus as the Messiah they had been waiting for (Luke 2: 21-39)- (1) The consolation of Israel (Simeon), which was a reference to Isaiah 40:1 (Consolation is the peace that comes through the Messiah).(2) The redemption of Jerusalem (Anna).*
2. **The Gentiles:** *Without knowing it Caesar and his officials are part of God's plan. As a result of their decree to hold a census Jesus was born as foretold- in Bethlehem. Thus Luke teaches that not only the Jews but the Gentiles too are included in God's plan of salvation.*
3. **The unbelieving Jews:** *Jesus will be rejected, as symbolized in the fact that there was no place for them in the inn.*
4. **The outcasts and the poor:** *Jesus is born in the first place for the poor and outcasts Luke brings this out by recounting how the first invited were poor shepherds.*

*Shepherds belong to a class of unclean people, like tanners and camel drivers: "lowly, stinking, bathless and unclean." One of the reasons they were regarded as unclean sinners may have been the fact that they were with their sheep day and night and lacked time to observe the numerous Jewish religious rules and regulations. They were of the city of David, who in his youth was a shepherd.*

### Other teachings in the birth of Jesus' birth are found in:

#### A. **The angel's message to the shepherd 10-12**

1. ....good news of great joy... (joy)
2. ....all the people... (universalism)
3. ....city of David....Jesus is of the House of David, the promised Messiah.
4. *Saviour. (Jesus= Yahweh saves.) Among Luke's Gentile readers there were some in Egypt who believed that goddess Isis could save people from the bad influence of stars. The Roman Gentiles believed in a different god who saved them from ill health. Citizens of the Roman Empire believed that the emperor was their saviour as he had brought peace in the 'whole world'. The Jews were also looking for a saviour to free them from the Roman rule, restore the independence of the Jewish nation and make it great as in David's time. He would also purify them from their sins which had brought this punishment of foreign rule.*
5. ...**Christ, the Lord...** *For the Jews Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ); for the Gentiles he is 'Lord', Lord of all, Lord of the universe, Lord above all their gods.*
6. ...swaddling clothes...*Jesus is like any baby, though he is Lord and king.*
7. **Manger...** *(Open box for animals to feed from). Jesus is food for the life of mankind.*

#### B. **The angel's song (verse 14)**

*...Glory to God...God's glory on earth is man fully alive. Jesus reveals this glory as he himself is man-fully-alive. He saves man, i.e. makes it possible for all to be fully alive in this world, in preparation for after-life.*

*Through Jesus man is saved from all that prevents him from being fully alive:*

(a) **Sin**

(b) *Worry and anxiety (caused by the fear of sickness and death, fear of the powers of nature, evil spirits and the rulers of this world; fear of the future, of lack of food and clothing etc.)*

(c) **Poverty**

(d) *Ignorance, especially ignorance of the Creator as the Father who is utterly good.*

*...on earth peace among men... Man, freed from all these forms of oppression is at peace with himself, with fellow men, with nature and with God. In the view of the Jews peace means total well being, including food, shelter etc., health, love and keeping God's Laws.*

*...with whom God is pleased... God takes pleasure in all men and women not because they deserve it, but simply because they are his creatures.*

### **The Jewish Birth Ceremonies (2: 21-24, 39)**

When Jesus was born three religious ceremonies were performed:

- i. **Circumcision-** It was on the eighth day that the child was circumcised and Jesus was also circumcised (Luke 2:21). On the eighth day the child was given a name. Circumcision was an outward sign and this reminded the Jews of the covenant with God. (This covenant started with Abraham in the book of Genesis).
- ii. **Purification-** After giving birth, a mother was considered unclean for 40 days. This was only if she gave birth to a son. If the woman gave birth to a baby girl, she was unclean for 80 days. During this period, she was not allowed to attend any worship. After the period, she was offered some sacrifice in the temple for purification. Rich people sacrificed a lamb. The poor sacrificed two doves.
- iii. **Redemption-** All the first born of human beings or animals belonged to God. They had to be offered to him (Luke 2: 23). For human beings they had to serve in the temple instead of being sacrificed.

When Jesus was born, he was taken to the temple.

### **Simeon and Anna- with Jesus was at the temple (Luke 2: 25-38)**

Simeon was a man from Jerusalem and was righteous and devout before God. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel (He was waiting for the comfort of Israel) and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He received revelation by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So moved by the Holy Spirit he went into the temple courts (remember the divisions of the temple) and Simeon took Jesus in his arms and sung a song in praise of God. This song is called the **Nunc Dimittus** (which means "now let your servant depart"- Luke 2: 29-32).

- **The Nunc Dimittus**-Is the song Simeon sang when Jesus was brought to the temple. The song is important because it stated that Jesus was the messiah. It reveals God's plan of salvation to all people. This song emphasizes that Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the book of Isaiah, which stresses that God's salvation is universal (**Universalism**) and express the correct messianic expectations of the Jews.
- Simeon talks about "the fall and rising of many in Israel...A sign that is spoken against..." The messiah, Jesus will not have an easy victory as was popularly thought (Messianic expectations). He will meet with faith but also with unbelief

Simeon spoke to Mary (Verse 34-35) "*a sword will pierce through your soul also*:

#### **A. The sword may refer to the suffering of Jesus' mother-**

- She would not understand and so had to accept the mission of her son which was to die on the cross for the salvation of the whole world.
- She would see how many of her own people would 'fall' because of her son.

- She would see her own son suffer a painful death. The sword could also be referred to the nation because it will be divided as if the sword- some will be for and some against Jesus

### **Jesus in the temple the second time (Luke 2: 40-52)**

Jews were expected to visit the temple three times a year to celebrate the:

- i. Passover (celebrated how God saved from the hands of the Egyptians).
  - ii. Pentecost
  - iii. Tabernacles (thanks giving for the harvest when all crops and fruits had been harvested)
- Jesus went to the temple when he was twelve years old. It was at this age that the Jewish boy was graduating from the religious education which he was going through since the age of two.

What was happening at the temple?

- a) At 12 or 13 years the boy was tested in the temple (oral exams- on the Law and Traditions).
- b) Received a prayer shawl and became ‘Bar-Mitzvah’ which means “son of the Law”.
- c) He was then responsible for living up to his circumcision- to live as a Jew.
- d) He was then considered to be an adult and was allowed to read scriptures in the synagogue.  
It was at this time that the boy was accepted as an adult in Judaism and old enough to make decisions.

When Jesus went into the temple together with the parents, he stayed behind, and his parents did not know it.

### **Why did they fail to recognize that Jesus was left behind?**

1. The pilgrims travelled in large groups so it was not easy for them to notice.
2. A young boy did not have to stay with his parents till in the evening families would gather together.

### **“Did you not know.....my Father’s house:-**

- ❖ Jesus called the temple his Father’s house.
- ❖ Jesus called God his Father.
- ❖ The twelve year old Jesus is aware of his special relationship with God.
- ❖ Jesus expressed his obedience to God and to his parents. This obedience causes a separation between Mary and her son. A sword will pierce her soul and Mary did not understand, she understood after the Pentecost in the book of Acts.

### **Luke’s two Passover stories- look at the parallels:-**

#### **At the age of 12**

Questions  
Jesus disappears  
Re-appears after 3 days  
Astonishment (of parents)  
It must be (I must be in my Father’s house)  
Journey to Nazareth

#### **During the last week**

Questions  
Jesus is buried  
Appearance on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day  
Astonishment (of disciples)  
It had to be (I had to die)  
Journey to Emmaus

### **JOHN THE BAPTIST (Luke 3: 1-20; 9: 7-9; 20: 1-8)**

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus. He prepared the Jews to receive the Messiah (Jesus).

“*The voice of one....*” Luke chapter 3: 4-6 is a quotation of Isaiah 40: 3-5. This passage in Isaiah refers to the return of the Jew from the Babylonian exile. Luke quoted the last lines “*the rough ways.....all fresh*” to stress the **universality** of salvation. All fresh means the whole of mankind.

**There are several elements in Isaiah's prophecy which made Luke to apply Isaiah's words (40: 3-5) to John the Baptist:**

- I. Isaiah mentions the wilderness; John is in the wilderness
- II. Isaiah had proclaimed "prepare the way of the Lord" announcing the return of the exiles (the second exodus). John announced Jesus, who through his death to the resurrection would make the final exodus.
- III. Isaiah: Make his paths straight. John makes the path straight by urging the Jews to repent.
- IV. The word of Isaiah "All fresh shall see the salvation of our God", will be fulfilled through Jesus. John's work is preparation for this.

### **The message of John**

John preached that people should ***repent*** (change their heart). In this way he aimed at preparing the coming of Jesus. He preached the following issues:

➤ **Repentance:** Repentance means change of heart or mind/ to turn away from sin/ to obey Jesus' word/ to entrust oneself entirely to God: - a willingness to give up old ideas an openness to receive the Good News and enter the Kingdom of God. And for John's mission repentance meant:

1. Change of life
2. Sorrow for sins
3. Resolution to obey God
4. A new understanding of what is important in life.

### **John preached that:**

- i. The Jews should repent and share their property with the poor (the rich must share with the poor).
  - ii. He taught the tax collectors to be honesty when collecting tax and show justice without overcharging.
  - iii. Soldiers had to be just; they should not take things which were not theirs and also they must not force the people to pay them.
- Forgiveness; John also taught that God will forgive those that will repent their sins

### **The meaning of baptism**

1. **The Jewish Baptism of Gentiles:** Gentiles were unclean, so when they became converted to Judaism they had to be made clean. This was the meaning of baptism of the Gentiles.
2. **The Baptism of the Jews by John (Compare with Acts 19: 3f):** John said that the Jews were unclean as Gentiles were because of their unfaithfulness to God. They needed Baptism like Gentiles who wanted to become Jews. Some found this message shocking because for the Jews the person whose father is Abraham cannot be like a Gentile. And those who believed the message of John gave themselves (offered) for baptism as a sign of their repentance. They were drowned in the river Jordan as a sign that they died to their former life to come out of the water with a new life.
3. **The Baptism of Jesus by John:** Jesus insisted that John baptize him because:
  - i. It was a sign that he obeyed the Father by accepting his mission.
  - ii. It was a sign that he would take his place among sinners. He wanted to identify himself with mankind.
  - iii. It was a sign that he believed that John was from heaven (20: 3) a prophet sent from God.
  - iv. Baptism symbolized his death and resurrection.
  - v. It was a sign that he accepted his death since his baptism foreshadowed his second baptism which was death and resurrection. The **dove** and the **voice** were signs that the Holy Spirit descended and that Jesus is the divine Son of the Father.

### **When Jesus was being baptized the following things happened:**

- i. The heavens opened.
  - ii. The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended on Jesus from heaven.
  - iii. The voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased".
4. **Baptism after Pentecost (compare with Acts 2: 41)-** "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3: 16b) and this meant that:
- I. Faith in Jesus was a condition; it was baptism in the name of Jesus.
  - II. It was a (effective) sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - III. It made baptized member of the Church to be New Israel to replace the old Israel that has failed to live according to the expectations of God.

### **John's testimony was related to Jesus**

1. He prepares the way of the Lord- Jesus.
2. He tells the Jews that the Messiah will soon come to judge
3. That he is greater than him because he will baptize with fire.

### **The Messianic Expectations**

When John started preaching people began to question him since as Jews they have been waiting for the Messiah and also the Jews were complaining that there was no prophet among them.

This was a bad time for the Jews because the Romans occupants and their Jewish henchmen oppressed the people as in the days of slavery in Egypt. The nation was devastated in many ways and the was a split of many parties;

- The priests were out for power and money
- Some Jews like the tax collectors, collaborated with the pagan foreigners.

In this troubled situation John made his appearance whereby

- ✓ He dressed, lived, preached and acted like a prophet.
- ✓ He announced that God will intervene soon.
- ✓ There will be judgement, an end to wickedness and sin, the destruction of those who did not repent.
- ✓ John's baptism reminded the Jews of their ancestors as they had passed through the **waters** to escape the oppression of the Egyptians.
- ✓ John raised the expectations even higher by announcing that one greater than himself, a man of violence, would baptize Israel with fire and separate the chaff from the wheat, the wicked from the upright.

From Jerusalem and the whole country people came to be baptized and it is possible that Jesus assisted John for some time. When John was put in prison Jesus started his own ministry.

### **Conflicting Messianic expectations**

- i. It was popularly thought that the Messiah would be another David, a victorious king, who would successfully fight the Roman occupants and lead the nation of Israel to independence and glory, a much loved national hero.
- ii. John the Baptist proclaimed that the Messiah would separate the good from the bad and destroy the latter. (Jesus came and did the opposite "**the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost**" (Luke 19: 10).
- iii. Luke gives an idea of the true hope that lived among God's chosen people in the song of Mary (the Magnificat song) "**put down the mighty....filled the hungry.... Rich sent empty away...**" And Simeon's song: the Messiah would be a light for the revelation to the Gentiles i.e. to the nations', **a sign that is spoken against**, a suffering servant.

### **The disciples shared the popular expectations:**

- i. James and John asked for the best places in the future government (Luke 10: 35ff).
- ii. When Jesus approached Jerusalem they thought he would soon assume earthly power (Luke 19: 11ff).

- iii. The disciples were still waiting for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 6)
  - iv. Judas may have betrayed Jesus to force him to defend himself and seize power.
- Jesus rejected the temptation to make himself popular, powerful and spectacular. He did not identify himself with his glorious ancestor king David, but saw himself as the suffering servant of the second Isaiah.

### **The mission of John and Jesus was closely linked**

1. **Prepare the way of the Lord**:- The Lord Jesus' way- by calling them to repentance John prepares the Jews for the coming of Jesus and the Kingdom
2. **The axe is laid to the root tree**: John expects that:
  - i. The Messiah will come soon;
  - ii. He will judge so as to separate the good from the bad and condemn the latter. Jesus did not judge; he had not come to condemn but to save. He was different from John's expectation that John sent his disciples to inquire, *Are you the one or we should wait for another...*? Jesus is mightier; he baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
  - iii. John preached that the judgement was imminent and describes how God will deal with the unrepentant. Jesus used the great powers in truth and love.

### **Differences between John and Jesus**

1. John receives sinners after they have repented; Jesus goes after sinners and befriends them even before they have repented.
2. John's lifestyle is in line with his stress on repentance and the imminent judgement (fasting, ascetic food and clothing, desert life away from the society). Jesus' way of life is in line with the joyous news that he brings (he is open to the world; he eats and drinks and does not make his disciples fast).
3. John stays around the river. Jesus **travels**; he goes after the lost sheep.
4. John attracts people from all walks of life, and proclaims that all must repent. Jesus has a **preference** for the despised, the poor, the sinners and outcasts.
5. John is the last prophet of the **old age**. Jesus is the first (and the last) prophet of the **new age**.
6. John does not heal, exorcise or teach. Jesus performs **miracles and teaches**. Miracles and teachings are signs that God starts his rule on earth; the kingdom among you.
7. Jesus' mission involved the Gentiles; John's did not involve the Gentiles.

### **The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3: 21ff)**

The voice addressed Jesus after baptism "***Thou art my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased.***" ***Beloved Son***: This title refers to Psalm 2 and indicates that Jesus is anointed as King to rule God's people; it implies that he is the Messiah.

My chosen, with whom I am well pleased. Isaiah 42: 1-4 describes God's suffering servant as one who is filled with God's Spirit to bring justice and true religion to the Gentiles. Together the texts announce that Jesus is the Messiah, not 'great and glorious'. On the contrary: a suffering servant as described by Isaiah.

### **The death of John the Baptist (Luke 3: 19ff) also Mark 6: 17ff**

\*John's preaching was powerful; it made Herodias (the wife of Herod Antipas) angry. John was finally arrested and put into prison. It was Herod Antipas who imprisoned John because he rebuked Antipas of his immoral acts where he married his brother's wife. And also because Herod Antipas did not like the growing influence John had on the people in his district John was eventually killed during a feast.

### **Jesus' Genealogy (A list of Jesus' ancestors) Luke 3: 23-38**

The list of names that you find on this passage is called genealogy.  
Luke gave this list of names to show that:

- i. Jesus is a king because his ancestor was king David (he is a true messianic king as foretold by the prophet)
- ii. Jesus is the son of Adam and therefore the king of all people since Adam is the father of all people. This stresses his relationship with all mankind. Jesus is the universal king (universalism). Matthews's genealogy goes back no further than Abraham. By going back to Adam Luke stresses on Universalism.
- iii. Jesus is from human stock, yet the Son of God (Luke 1: 35)

### **The Temptations of Jesus ( Luke 4: 1-13)**

Jesus went into the wilderness to pray to a desert, why?

- i. He was moved by the Holy Spirit.
- ii. He wanted to relive the history of his ancestors who were tempted in the desert.
- iii. He accepted his mission and now had to make up his mind about the way in which to establish God's rule.
- iv. It was by being tempted by the devil that Jesus would establish God's rule. And by being tempted he would share the life of all people who are tempted and experience the lure of sin.

Jesus was to establish God's Kingdom on earth. He had extraordinary powers which he could use to accomplish his mission quickly, successfully and painlessly (Jesus rejected it that way because it was not the will of God. As a result he had to choose the painful way to establish God's kingdom on earth. He did this by becoming God's humble servant who uses only the power of truth and love.

Why Jesus did used Love?

- a) Love excludes violence
- b) It demands patience
- c) It is ready to suffer.

### **The three temptations were:**

- i. To command stones to turn into bread because he was the Son of God.
- ii. To worship the devil to gain the kingdom of the world.
- iii. To win popularity by throwing himself down the temple pinnacle.

### **The first temptation**

If you are the Son of God (the Messiah) command the stones to become bread. The devil was telling Jesus to:

- Satisfy his personal needs
- Feed the hungry people, fulfill their expectations, make yourself popular, gather a large following and so gain political power.

During Jesus' time the Romans used to distribute food to the people, Jesus could be tempted to do the same thing too. Jesus answered that "man does not live by bread alone." This meant that Jesus did the will of God.

### **Second temptation**

This temptation concerned the worship of the devil. In this temptation Jesus was tempted to achieve his aims through wrong methods. The Jews expected a Messiah who would deliver them from the Romans. It would have been easy for Jesus to fulfill his messianic duties if he won all the people.

The devil told Jesus that "***to you I will give all this authority and their glory....if..***..Jesus refuses to use political power as a means to achieve his mission. Jesus did not want to take the devil's advice because he came on earth to save people from sin. His mission was not political one. Jesus' answer to the devil was "only God had to be worshipped".

### **Third temptation**

The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle (pointed small tower) of the temple. There he asked Jesus to throw himself down and the devil said that the angles will come to protect Jesus. The devil wanted

Jesus to use his extraordinary power to impress the people and make them follow him. He wanted Jesus to convince the people that he was the Son of God by performing miracles. Jesus performed miracles not for himself but to help others.

***Jesus full of the Holy Spirit .... Led by the spirit....:*** This is another example of Luke's special interest in the Holy Spirit. Jesus fasted to express that he made himself completely dependent on God as the only one who can sustain life; and that he would obey God's plan and His will.

### **The confrontation with Satan took place in the desert**

1. In the desert man is alone with himself and with God. In this situation he faces Satan; he has to decide to follow his own ambitions and desires or to do the will of God.
2. In Jesus the history of the Jewish people is repeated. They stayed in the desert for forty years- Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights. Their faith was tested and they failed when they doubted God's care for them (you can find this in Exodus 16: 1-3; 17: 1-7). Jesus passed the test; he put all his trust in the Father by accepting God's plan with him although it was hard and would lead to suffering and even to his death.

### **The use of Holy Scripture:**

Satan and Jesus both quoted from the book of Deuteronomy which had the greatest authority among the Jews. Satan abuses the Bible by quoting only the texts to suit him and his needs. In this way he produces half truth- in other words the devil was lying. In all the temptations Jesus exposed the lies of the devil by quoting the Scriptures but in truth.

The devil departed from Jesus until an opportune time. Jesus was tempted all his life. James and John tempted him to take revenge (Luke 9: 54). His opponents tempted him to come down from the cross (Luke 23: 35).

### **Jesus in the Synagogue (in Nazareth which was in Galilee) Luke 4: 14-30**

When John was arrested Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee (Mark 1: 14). While there he went into the Synagogue and was given a chance to read the Scriptures and preach. What did Jesus do?

1. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 61: 1-2, but left the last line: and the day of vengeance of our Lord.
2. The quotation from Isaiah stresses the role of the Spirit of God who brings Good News for the poor, captives and oppressed. '*The acceptable year of the Lord*' refers to the Messianic era which starts now. He used some words like release which may mean *released from the bondage of sin*- which is forgiveness. **Blind** may refer to spiritual blindness. And **oppressed** refer to those that are being burdened by sin, or by evil in the world, by being despised and exploited (the suffering servant as portrayed by Isaiah).
3. ***Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing:*** this means it has been fulfilled while you are listening to these words. God has started his reign on earth now and he has done that by:
  - Granting forgiveness
  - Through healing and by bringing freedom

By applying the text of Isaiah to himself Jesus declared he had started his ministry.

### **How did the audience (the listeners) react?**

They first **admired** Jesus, and later they began to doubt when they came across that:

- i. Jesus was just one of them, an ordinary person (that is why they were asking "*is this not the son of Joseph?*"")
- ii. He had performed more miracles in Capernaum than in his home town; they wanted proofs, which are signs and miracles that Jesus was from God. Jesus made them aware of this when he said "*Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb...*" This doubt changed into anger when Jesus reminded them that salvation might go to the Gentiles rather than to God's chosen people.

### **The four division of Herod's Kingdom after his death (3: 1ff)**

Luke chapter 3: 1-20 discusses the message of John the Baptist. When Herod the Great died the Roman emperor divided Palestine into four parts. Each part had its ruler; in this sense each ruler is called a Tetrarch (a ruler of a fourth part). Three parts went to the sons of Herod the Great. These three sons are:

- a) Archelous (who ruled Judea, Samaria and Idumea)
- b) Antipas (became a ruler of Galilee and Perea)
- c) Philip (became a ruler of Betanea, Trachonitis and Auranitis- and the fourth part went to:
- d) Lysanias (he became a ruler of Abilene)

Pilate was a Roman procurator (person controlling a province). He was appointed to rule Judea, Idumea, and Samaria. Under this passage there is mention of Annas and Caiphas:- these were the high priests and Annas was appointed high priest in AD6, he was deposed in AD15. His five sons and a son in-law became high priests. Caiphas was high priest when John the Baptist began his preaching. He worked together with his father in-law.

## OPPOSITION AND DANGER

### Herod (4BC – 39BC)

Herod Antipas was one of the three sons of Herod the Great. He was a tetrarch over Galilee and Perea (tetrarch: a minor king who rules of one quarter of a territory). He built Tiberius (South West on Lake Tiberius) as his new capital. He was boastful, pompous, lazy and crafty (fox). He married a wife of his half-brother and killed John the Baptist who had denounced him for this unlawful marriage. In Luke's gospel he is mentioned three times.

#### 1. Herod hears about Jesus

#### Luke 9: 7-9

The tetrarch heard of all that was done. This refers to all Jesus' activities from Luke 4: 16 (Nazareth) to Luke 9: 6 (Mission of the twelve in his territory).

#### 2. An indirect threat or a ruse?

#### Luke 13: 31-33

- a. It appears that these Pharisees were friendly to Jesus. Herod may have let them know that he wanted Jesus to leave the territory because:
  - i. He feared Jesus because he believed that he might be John raised from the dead. Herod had killed John so he could expect revenge.
  - ii. He feared that the popular Jesus and his disciples would cause disturbances in his province. His superiors in Rome might then blame and dismiss him.
  - iii. Arresting and killing Jesus was risky as it might cause unrest among the people. So the cunning, sly Herod devised a trick (a fox is a trick, sly person). He would frighten Jesus, who then might go to Jerusalem where other leaders were only too willing to get rid of him.
- b. It is also possible that the Pharisees were only too willing to advise Jesus to leave. Luke writes: "At that very hour...." i.e. when Jesus had told them the parable of the Closed Door (24-30) followed by saying: Some- meaning the pious of Israel- are last who will be first. This must have upset them. Perhaps the Pharisees invented the threat; when Herod got a chance to do harm to Jews by pronouncing him guilty he only made fun of him (Jesus before Herod on page.....).

**Fox** unlike his contemporaries Jesus did not take it for granted that people in authority were beyond criticism and could use their position to subdue, terrify and exploit their people.

**Jesus gave a twofold answer to the threat:**

- i. God, not mighty Herod, controls history. Jesus will do God's will even in the face of threats and dangers.
- ii. Eventually he will leave Herod's territory, not because of him since it is God's will that he goes to Jerusalem.

***It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.*** This is a judgement on Jerusalem, i.e. all the Jews. They have often killed prophets, the servants, God sent them. They will now also kill Jesus, the last sent by God, the son. The killing of Jesus will "make

the measure full” and lead to the destruction of the city and temple and the scattering of the Jews (Diaspora). Jesus loved Jerusalem and wanted to save it (following verse 34ff) by inviting the Jews to believe in him as the one sent by God.

### **Useful terms**

**Jews:** Those that observed the Law of Moses and regard the O.T. writings as revelation from God. One can be a Jew through birth from Jewish parents or through conversion.

**Gentile:** This word is from the Latin word “gentes” which means nations- meaning anyone who is not a Jew. To distinguish or differentiate themselves from Gentiles, Jews set great store to customs and traditions which marked them as different. They did this by observing the Sabbath, circumcision, and abstaining from unclean food. **Pious** (devoted) Jews would avoid all contact with Gentiles and Samaritans.

**Proselytes:** Gentiles who had been converted to Judaism.

**God-Fearers:** Gentiles who adhered to the Jewish faith, and they practiced the Laws as Jews, except the law of circumcision. Unlike the Proselytes, they were not full members of the Jewish community. Gentile eunuchs could not become full members of God’s chosen people- but the early church in the book of Acts made many converts among these God-fearers (an example of the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized by Philip in the book of Acts).

**Diaspora:** A good number of Jew, proselytes and God-fearers lived outside Palestine or in diaspora-meaning that land that was outside of Palestine.

**The Law:** the social and religious rules including the 10 commandments found in the Torah or Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses).

**The Tradition of the Elders:** A collection of rules which guided the Jews to apply the Law in changing circumstances. They were formulated by respected rabbis or elders (these are not the same as elders of the Sanhedrin).

### **THE MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE (Luke 4: 14ff)- continuation**

There was only one Jewish temple in Jerusalem when Jesus began to preach. It was difficult for all the Jews to go to Jerusalem to worship. The Jews that lived far away from the Jerusalem Temple built prayer houses which were also schools during the week (remember how synagogues served the community). The Jews came to these Synagogues on every Sabbath.

There were no ministers or pastors at the Synagogue but a group of elders and an attendant Luke 4: 20 says “And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the Synagogue were fixed on him.” Any male Jew, educated in the meaning of the Law and instructions would lead the service at the Synagogue.

#### **How did they conduct the service at the Synagogue?**

- The leader would read a passage from the Torah and the Prophets.
- The Leader would give a sermon.

Jesus taught in various Synagogues, and when he came to Nazareth, Jesus read the passage (Isaiah 61: 1) which has been explained on page 20.

Before preaching the people in Nazareth had favourably accepted Jesus as a son of the carpenter. Hearing his message the people thought that Jesus was arrogant (proud). People thought that he was a good preacher but cannot be the Messiah (the anointed one, promised leader, the saviour). Previously Jesus had refused to perform miracles in front of the people in Nazareth to show that he was the Messiah. Jesus knew that the people were angry and what did Jesus say:

- ✓ He said that prophets were not acceptable in their own country.
- ✓ He gave examples of prophets who were not accepted in their own home but were accepted by the Gentiles. These prophets were Elijah and Elisha.

This remark made the Jews furious because the Jews despised the Gentiles. They did not want to hear about the Gentiles' obedience. In saying this Jesus wanted:

- ❖ To warn the Jews about their attitude in their religion. The implication was that if the Jews would continue rejecting God, God would abandon them. The people were angry and they took Jesus away to brow of a hill to throw him down. Jesus managed to free himself and went away.

### The Sabbath

The word **Sabbath** means: - to stop in order to praise God. It was a day of rest, even for animals, in honour of God who rested on the seventh day. The Rabbis came up with 39 activities forbidden (activities not allowed on the Sabbath) on the Sabbath such as:

- preparing food, making fire
- walking more than 1250 meters
- hand clapping

### Keeping the Sabbath

Keeping the Sabbath was a way for the Jews to show in public that they were Jews and breaking the Sabbath was like ceasing (stopping) to be a Jew and it was after one warning that the person was punished by death. The Sabbath was a gift from God for the benefit of man but the way it was observed became a heavy burden rather than joy. The leaders would forget that it was made for man, not man for Sabbath.

### Jesus' attitude towards the Sabbath

1. Jesus respected and observed the Sabbath rules (Luke 4: 16)- he had time to go to the Synagogue to worship like any other Jew.
2. Jesus understood the Sabbath as a day of good works – for Jesus if the Law caused unnecessary suffering then it was better to help man because man is more important than the Law. The Law is for the good of man.
3. His mission was to inaugurate (to start) the Kingdom of God, he preferred the Sabbath to do his healing work. As a day of rest the Sabbath was a reminder of the past, when God rested from work (Gen 2: 3). And also the Sabbath points to the end of time when his Kingdom will be fully established and all suffering will cease. By healing on the Sabbath, Jesus made the future to happen. He brought the Kingdom of God there and then.
4. Healing on the Sabbath was also a sign that he was the ***Lord of the Sabbath, the Messiah.***

The teaching and deeds of Jesus surprised greatly many people because he taught and acted with authority. Jesus did not quote words or sayings of well-respected teachers or prophets of the past. Jesus was different because:

- ❖ Jesus taught with authority
- ❖ Jesus taught people of what he knew about God (these things impressed the people because the Rabbis did not do this).

### How did Jesus use his authority and power?

- ❖ To teach the people
- ❖ Heal and cure the sick
- ❖ Heal the possessed
- ❖ Feed the people

Jesus was different from the other **exorcists** (people who drove out evil spirits) because the other exorcists used strange and unnatural treatments. The demons recognized Jesus and they called him the Holy One of God (**Luke 4: 41**). The demons recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

### Some of the incidents that took place during the Sabbath

### **1. In the grain field (The picking of corn in the grain field) Luke 6: 1-5**

Jesus' disciples broke the law by picking corn on the Sabbath. They broke the law in four ways:

- i. They reaped corn
- ii. They threshed the corn by rubbing in their hands
- iii. They winnowed by throwing the husks
- iv. Ate it that is they prepared food on the Sabbath.

On every Sabbath 12 loaves of bread were placed on a table; only for the priests were allowed to eat them. **This was called the bread of the presence.** As indicated above the disciples broke the Sabbath by harvesting, threshing, winnowing and eating which means they prepared food on the Sabbath. Jesus reminded the people by bringing the story of David the king (David is a model of a true Israelite- 1 Sam 21: 1ff) who ate those loaves that were only for priests. David by eating loaves designated for priest meant that: - man's needs are more important than the observance of ritual rules (remember the Sabbath was made for man).

The Son of man is Lord of Sabbath: This sentence that was used by Jesus meant that it was wise to follow his understanding of the Sabbath as what the early church did when they broke away from Judaism.

### **2. Cure of a man with a withered hand (in the Synagogue) Luke 6: 6-11**

The Pharisees gave laws that only in extreme cases one could give medicine on the Sabbath. For Jesus the following things were very important on the Sabbath:

- Mercy
- Love
- Forgiveness

Jesus taught that a person must love his neighbour and this is God's will. This was more important than observing the ceremonial laws.

Differences between the Pharisees and Jesus

- i. The Pharisees were concerned with obedience of the law to what has been written while Jesus was concerned with God's will.
- ii. The Pharisees were concerned with their traditions; they observed them with the intention to achieve God's blessings while Jesus was concerned with mercy, love and forgiveness.

***Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or harm?*** This was the question that Jesus asked the Pharisees. Jesus did not expect an answer because it was a rhetorical question. Jesus was only trying to make his opponents (the Pharisees) realize that they were doing harm in destroying life. Jesus was doing good by saving life on the Sabbath:- love of neighbour.

### **3. Cure of a woman with Arthritis (in the Synagogue) Luke 13: 10-17**

Arthritis was a serious disease causing pain and swelling in the joints of the body. The Pharisees were not happy with Jesus' healing activity. Luke described the woman to have been bound by Satan who crippled her spine. And according to the Jewish religious system, this woman was unclean and an outcast, rejected instead of getting help.

**Jesus gave the following signs of the work of the Satan**

- He considered disasters like diseases and powers as enemies of God's kingdom.
- Every healing was a victory of the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus eventually conquered death of Satan

For Jesus she was not rejected but the daughter of Abraham:- someone who deserved assistance. Her cure was a release from the Satan's captivity which Jesus had announced as a sign that the acceptable year of the Lord had come (Luke 4: 18).

## **Why did the Pharisees crash with Jesus?**

The religious leaders allowed a man to take care of his domestic animals on the Sabbath. Jesus taught that if people can take care of animals on the Sabbath, they should also do the same for human beings.

The ruler instead of talking to Jesus he addresses the audience because he might be afraid that the sick will not be happy for they were waiting for their turn. Jesus defended his actions with the following arguments:

4. If looking of animals is allowed on the Sabbath then caring for the needs of a human being must be allowed.
5. The Sabbath is meant to relieve man of the burden of work; Jesus frees the woman from her burden of sickness.
6. Satan is active all the days; therefore Jesus should fight with him all the days which include the Sabbath.
7. She is the daughter of Abraham:- she also belongs to the people of God and deserves the same respect as the sons of Abraham.

## **4. Healing a dropsical man in the house of a Pharisee on Sabbath (Luke 14: 1-6)**

Dropsy is a disease which causes liquid to collect under the skin (some parts of the body retain too much fluid). The way how Luke explained this disease shows that he was a physician or a doctor. Before healing Jesus asked whether it was lawful to heal someone on the Sabbath or not because the Jewish law did allow work of any kind on the Sabbath. Giving treatment to the sick was regarded as work (remember that there were 39 forbidden activities with regard to the Sabbath).

Though it was forbidden to work on the Sabbath but it was supposed to be a festive day where acts of mercy/ kindness and hospitality like preparing food for the guests were not forbidden. Healing was such kind of an act and therefore allowed, like the works of mercy mentioned in Isaiah 58: 6ff “.....*share your bread with the hungry...let the oppressed go free....*” Such works were better than fasting.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? According to Jesus it was allowed or lawful to heal the man on the Sabbath. Denying this would mean that the opponents of Jesus had no mercy. Jesus gave an example of “a son or ox....which has fallen into a well or pit....on the Sabbath, are you going to leave it until Sabbath is over or you can take care of it? In other words Jesus is saying that if taking care of animals is allowed in situations where the life of that animal is in danger, how much more for human beings? Jesus was to point out that it was more important to take care of human beings than animals.

**Then when they were at the table Jesus taught about humility (the parable of choosing places-Luke 14: 7-11).** In this parable Jesus talks about invitation to a feast. The man with the dropsy was assigned to the lowest place, as sickness was associated with being unclean.

**He continued to tell another parable in which he speaks about the kingdom of God. Take note of the following points in the parable about the banquet and the parable of inviting guests (Luke 14: 12-14):**

- The people invited did not come. They gave excuses that they had their own priorities.
- The banqueter sent out his servant to the street to invite anyone to the banquet

In these two parables, Jesus wanted to teach about:

- ❖ The Kingdom of God:- many Jews thought that the Kingdom of God was only for Jews. Jesus corrected this false idea. He taught that the Kingdom of God is for everyone, especially those who accept God's call.
- ❖ Advice to invite the poor, the maimed (the dropsy man falls into this category).

- ❖ God invites the poor, the maimed.

## **5. The question about Fasting and the Levi's party (2 parables Luke 5: 33-39)**

### **What is fasting?**

Fasting is abstaining from food or it is the practice of not eating any food or only a little. The Jewish law asked people to fast at-least once a year and this was a **Day of Atonement** (bringing together). A day when God and people would reconcile (Leviticus 16).

### **Reasons for fasting**

- The Greeks practiced fasting to assure that the soul was in command of the body.
- Some fast for reasons of health
- Others to protest (hunger strikes)
- Jewish fasting was a preparation to meet God. It meant mourning over sin and asking for forgiveness. It went with prayer and alms giving, a sign of love for the poor.

Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, to gain more merits (and more honour from the people).

John's disciples fasted every Monday and Thursday like the Pharisees and may be they fasted because of John who was in prison at that time. And another reason might be hoping to **speed up** (hasten) the day of judgement, predicted by John.

Jesus fasted as a sign that he submitted himself to the Father: desert and Last Supper.

### **At Levi's party**

The parables were told at the house of Levi where there was a party. The Pharisees and their scribes had murmured (talk with a low voice) against Jesus' disciples (verse 30 is clear on the reason why the Pharisees murmured). They were making comparisons between John's disciples and Jesus'.

### **The response of Jesus:**

Jesus defended his attitude towards fasting with three arguments, using four pictures:

- i. Presence of the Bridegroom
- ii. Wedding feast
- iii. Garment
- iv. Wineskin

- ❖ Guest (these are the disciples of Jesus) do not fast in the presence of the Bridegroom (Jesus). During the wedding feast nobody fasts. This was the time of joy.
- ❖ The wedding feast has started (the kingdom has come). This means that the time of fasting is over, as fasting means mourning over evil and sin. But evil and sin have no place in God's Kingdom.
- ❖ Jesus brings in a new age, the time of the kingdom. Old customs are not good for the new times, just as an old wineskin is not good for fresh wine and the new cloth for old cloth (this is the lesson of the twin parables: the Wineskin and the Garment).

An old wineskin cannot stretch because with the new wine there is expansion and fermentation and if put in the old wineskin it will burst.

The old is good:- some people rely too much on tradition; being suspicious of change they resist anything new. Such an attitude hinders development; it stands in the way of the kingdom.

### **The parable emphasized the same truth:**

- a) Jesus message is completely new.
- b) The religion of the Pharisees could not contain it.

- c) The Gospel of Jesus is completely different from that of Pharisees.

### **Clean and Unclean**

In Judaism it was only those that are clean that were appearing before God and those that were not clean were not fit to appear before God (they were supposed to be shunned).

### **How can one become unclean?**

By touching or coming in contact with :- Gentile or Samaritan, a leper, a corpse, a grave or eating unclean food, eating with unwashed hands, giving birth.

### **Jesus respected the rules concerning defilement (Luke 5:14b); but he also showed a free attitude:**

- He touched a leper
- A dead child/ a boy of Nain and a bier
- He ate without the prescribed ritual cleansing.
- Mixed with sinners
- Allowed a sinful woman to touch him

In the Kingdom that Jesus inaugurated the old rules concerning clean- unclean are no longer binding because God is concerned with the heart that is clean than ritual cleansing. It is the one who has a clean heart that can hate evil and love justice and will care for the poor.

### **Eating with unwashed hands (Luke 11: 37-46)**

This is another occasion when Jesus dines (eat with) with a Pharisee. Luke uses the scene to give seven judgement or criticisms that Jesus made to address the Pharisees and Scribes

- a) Inside of you are full of extortion and wickedness.
- b) Woes against Pharisees
- c) Woes against the Scribes (we will deal with these later)

**All things are clean:** Some of the first Jewish Christians found this hard to accept; they would not allow Gentile converts freedom from the rules concerning clean and unclean

### **Why the early church needed this teaching?**

- ✓ To defend themselves when attacked by fellow Jews in matters of clean and unclean. Since the Jews accused the Christians of tolerating anyone the Gentiles etc.
- ✓ To examine themselves if they did not make the same mistake, because any person of any faith can become guilty of the same mistakes that Jesus noticed in his opponents.

### **The choice of the twelve**

Jesus chose the twelve people to go with him every time and they are called **Apostles** (those sent). These are the people that witnessed the teaching of Jesus and his deeds after the **ascension** (going to heaven).

An apostle is a man (women apostles are not mentioned in the New Testament):

- Sent out by Jesus.
- Who has been a witness of the Jesus teaching and deeds and was given particular authority.
- Because of his authority he represents Jesus in a unique way, as no other disciple can represent him.

### **A number of apostles is restricted to twelve because:**

- i. Twelve represent completeness in Judaism
- ii. Reference to the twelve tribes of Israel (Old Israel) and these twelve represented new Israel (God's chosen people).
- iii. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament by bringing together a new people which will live with God in a new relationship (agreement, covenant and testament)- New Israel which

replace Old Israel and this New Israel was founded on the twelve apostles, the leaders of God's new people.

\*\*\* After the feeding of the 5000 there were twelve baskets of left-overs: Jesus gives life; he himself is the bread of life (reminding people of the Exodus when God gave the people Manna in the desert). It was through the twelve God called together a **new people**, those that put their faith in Jesus as Son of God, the Lord and Messiah. Acts 1:21-22 lists the qualification of an apostle:

- ⊕ He must have been with Jesus from the time of baptism, teachings, suffering (crucifixion and death on the cross) and ascension.
- ⊕ His main task is to be a witness to the resurrection.

Jesus had some followers and these are called disciples (learners).

### A disciple was a man or woman:

- Called by Jesus.
- Who listens to Jesus and follows him.
- Ready to accept suffering for the sake of Jesus.
- He who seeks to do the will of God, so that God's reign on earth becomes visible.

### The comparison of disciples and rabbis

#### Disciples

1. Jesus called sinners- like Levi (a tax collector).
2. Jesus accepted also women as his disciples.
3. One could be Jesus' disciple only if chosen.
4. Jesus stressed the practice of love above faultless teachings.
5. Jesus taught on his own authority which was greater than that of Moses and other prophets.
6. Jesus did not encourage the disciples to use his words exactly as he taught them.

#### Rabbis

#### Calling of disciples

The disciples had different experiences some of them were:

- Fishermen like Peter, Andrew, James and John (these could be educated).
- Some were not educated like Philip
- Tax- collectors like Levi (Matthew)

#### Jesus taught from a boat:

1. A voice carries well over water.
2. The crowd had a better view of Jesus.
3. The separation between Jesus and the people prevented disturbances so that Jesus could concentrate on his teaching and the people to concentrate on listening.

**Peter's call (Luke 5: 1-5):** He was a fisherman and at the time that Jesus called him, he was fishing, they did not catch anything the whole night and Jesus told to launch into the deep. They managed to catch a lot of fish to the point of calling friends to help them. Peter asked Jesus to go away from him because he realized that he was a sinner. Jesus told him that he will be catching men instead of the fish.

#### Lessons about discipleship

1. Jesus takes initiative- he calls and without his call one cannot be his disciple.
2. No one is worthy to be a disciple.
3. It is not easy to be a disciple; a high price has to be paid.
4. Jesus calls disciples so that they may bring people into the kingdom. One is not called for one's own sake.

1. Rabbis accepted only respectable men to be their disciples.
2. Only men were allowed as disciples
3. A Jewish young man chose himself his favourite rabbi.
4. Rabbis took great care to remain faithful to approved teachings.
5. The authority of the rabbis was assured as they followed the Scriptures and the teachings of the famous rabbis of the past.
6. Their disciples had to memorize the words of their master and repeat them verbatim.

- The success of the disciple's work is miraculous- which means beyond the power of man (this is a sign that the work of disciples is God's work, it is not just human enterprise).

### **Lessons for Peter**

- Peter must obey Jesus also when things look hopeless.
- Peter's mission is to catch, be a fisher of men. Using the bait of God's word he will catch men and women for the kingdom.
- This he will do despite his unworthiness (am a sinner).
- His work will be successful (in the end not while Jesus was still on earth).
- The work of catching men is team-work not one man business.

### **Lessons for the Early Church**

- Peter has a special position among his fellow apostles.
- There will be many Gentiles that will be converted "**Great catch of fish**" compare this with Acts 2: 41 where almost 3000 were baptized and added to the church. Paul was needed in Antioch because there were a great number of people that were brought to faith.
- It is through Jesus powerful word that the Apostles catch fish; this will give the Apostles confidence that when catching men Jesus will be with them (5: 27ff).

**Calling of Levi** (Matthew the tax collector) showed how Jesus viewed the people that were taken as unclean by the Jews. List down what happened during this occasion.

When listing you will discover that:

- When Levi began to follow Jesus, he did not do it secretly- he had a great banquet.
- Jesus came for the sinners not those that were clean "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
- Jesus was fulfilling his mission that is 'to call the sinners to repentance' (to bring people back to God).

### **Incidents which led up to the election of the twelve (Luke 6: 12-16)**

- Forgiving and healing a paralytic which led to criticism from the Pharisees.
- Feast with Levi- this also led to criticism and led to anger. These events showed that leaders were not open to Jesus and his mission. They had to be replaced by other leaders- the election of the twelve.

Jesus spent the night in prayer to God: He prayed all night, a sign that he was about to make a serious decision. It looked as if the growing opposition led Jesus to make a fresh start.

After the choosing of the twelve a great Jewish/ Gentile crowd followed Jesus. Jesus heals and proclaims the New Law (replacing the Law of Moses) that will guide God's new people.

### **The Blind Beggar near Jericho (Bartimeus) Luke 18: 35-43**

Yahweh had promised a son to David through whom He would establish a lasting Kingdom (2 Samuel 7: 13b). Like all kings this son would be anointed (the Messiah). So when the blind man (Bartimeus) shouted "**Son of David!**" he proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus did not command him to be silent in contrast to the people who told him to be silent because:

- They knew that Jesus did not like to be indicated as the Messiah or
- They were afraid that Jesus might get into trouble if the Romans knew that the Jews hailed him as their Messiah.

### **Bartimeus is an example of a true disciple:**

- He admits that he is blind, in contrast to disciples who are also blind (spiritually) but don't know it. They don't see that suffering rather than worldly success is the way to glory. We will see Peter stopping Jesus on the way to Jerusalem and wanted to enjoy the glory of

Transfiguration without having to go the agony (suffering) in Jerusalem. And notice James and John who wanted to get the most glorious places in Jesus (earthly) kingdom.

2. He shows strong faith. He does not give up even when the crowd tries to silence him.
3. He does not delay or hesitate when Jesus calls him.
4. He accepts suffering. He follows Jesus although suffering is imminent (about to happen), Jerusalem is close only 25 km away (remember that this was Jericho).

### **Friendship with sinners**

#### **Curing and forgiving a paralytic Luke 5: 17-26**

While Jesus was preaching, some people brought a paralyzed man on a bed. Jesus was in the house. The caretakers took the paralytic to Jesus through the roof of the house. It was on the Sabbath when they brought this man to Jesus. Jesus healed him and the Pharisees were angry.

**Forgiveness:** Is the healing of the relationship between God and man that has been cut or weakened by man through lack of trust or disobedience to the law. It is only God who can restore this relationship and he is the only one that can forgive in restoring this relationship.

Jesus has power to heal the body and this can be observed, it does not require faith. According to Jesus he saw that physical healing was not enough, it could not have gone to the root of sickness which is the power of evil (the cause of all miseries). And remember the mission of Jesus is to establish God's reign (Kingdom of God) on earth and to do that he must overcome the power of evil. Jesus can do this by doing his work as God- the power to forgive sins which cannot be seen or observed; it needs faith to believe that Jesus has the power to forgive.

Jesus says "***which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or to say rise and walk?***" Jesus tries to say that the power to forgive sins cannot be seen because it takes place in the secret of the heart; it is a personal matter between God and man. Physical healing is plain for the eye to see, the power of the word "*rise and walk*" can be checked.

By showing that he has power to cure the man Jesus invites the bystanders to believe his invisible power to forgive sins.

#### **This miracle is unlike (different from) other miracles**

1. As a rule Jesus did not perform miracles to draw attention to himself and his power, but to the truth that the kingdom had come. He usually ascribed a cure to the power of faith rather than his own power.
2. Jesus does not mention the faith of the paralytic but that of his friends.
3. Jesus heals the sick man not so much out of pity, but just to perform a miracle.
4. Jesus seeing the paralytic does not at first heals him; he forgives him. As a rule he healed people without mentioning sin.

The Pharisees had problems with Jesus because for them only God could forgive sin. In the eyes of his opponents Jesus acts as if he is God, insulting God, a blasphemy and it was punishable by death.

#### **Why Tax Collectors were hated?**

- a) Because they collected as much as they could and became rich
- b) Collected taxes for a foreign government (the government of the Romans was considered a foreign government because it was ruling the Jews like slaves).
- c) They cheated their fellow men.
- d) Worked with the enemy of the Jews- the Romans.

Tax collectors were not ceremonially clean because they served the pagan government. The Pharisees considered the Sadducees as sinners

#### **A sinful Woman at Simon's house Luke 7: 36-50**

It was a custom in Palestine to treat visitors as follows:

- a) Give them water to wash their feet. This meant to wash completely.

- b) To kiss them. This was to welcome them.
- c) To anoint them with sweet-smelling oil. This was to make them clean and flesh.

Simon the Pharisee neglected all these signs of hospitality. During festivals, anyone would enter the house where there was a feast and the purpose was to listen to the discussion among the rabbis.

A woman had been a sinner (prostitute) and as she realized that her sins have been forgiven, she went to Simon's house where Jesus was at that particular time. She might have been baptized by John the Baptist. She is happy, so grateful to what has taken place. She showed great love (verses 38, 44-46). Jesus says that her great love shows that she has been forgiven much. By saying that your sins are forgiven, he confirms what the woman knew already- that she was forgiven.

Jesus allowed the prostitute to show her respect and love. The woman did the following:

- a) She wetted Jesus' feet with tears.
- b) She wiped the feet with her hair.
- c) She kissed Jesus' feet.
- d) She anointed Jesus' feet with oil.

Simon, a pious Pharisee, did not think that he was a sinner. He believed that God did not have to forgive him much, so he never experienced the joy of being forgiven. This is the reason as why he did not have as much love as the prostitute. The way he treated Jesus showed that he had little love.

Jesus uses the parable to explain why the woman should no longer be looked upon as a sinner, and why she was so exuberant in her way of showing love. The person who was forgiven 500 denarius represents the prostitute because he was forgiven much, and the one who was forgiven only 50 represents Simon.

### **The Lepers**

Leprosy in the Bible is either the incurable, real leprosy or minor skin disorder like psoriasis. Leprosy was understood as a sign of sin, and its cure was a sign that the New age had come, the time of the Messiah.

#### **Lepers:**

- Were not allowed in towns and villages. T
- They had to keep at a distance from their clean fellow Jews, who were shouting when they see a leper "unclean, unclean (Leviticus 13: 45ff) and clattering their rattles.
- They had to walk in torn clothes, heads bare and lips covered.
- Touching a leper was forbidden as it made one unclean.

#### **When someone found himself cured of leprosy he/ she had to:**

1. Show himself to a priest
2. Be sprinkled with blood
3. Bathe and wash his clothes
4. Have his hair cut and the priest had to do the following:
  - Sacrificed a bird
  - Gave him a letter which allowed him to rejoin the community.

#### **Cure of a leper in Galilee Luke 5: 12-16**

Leprosy was a skin disease. The Jews considered lepers unclean people. They sent lepers outside the city.

#### **Why did the Jews exclude lepers from society?**

The Jews feared leprosy because they thought it was a contagious disease. This is why the leper had to:

- Live in lonely places away from the community.
- Shout that they were unclean in order to warn other people.
- Cover the upper lip with a piece of cloth to show that they were unclean.
- Put on torn clothes.

### **What did Jesus do when he found the leper?**

- i. **Jesus touched the leper:** Jesus showed compassion by touching the leper. In the eyes of the Pharisees and Scribes, this touching made Jesus unclean. The Jews found this to be unusual.
- ii. **"I will"** :- Jesus said that I am willing be cleansed. From the context of Luke 4: 18 Jesus came to set at liberty those who were oppressed (this included the lepers- the unclean) and also Luke 4: 19 Jesus came to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The cure of lepers was one of the signs that this liberation of the Kingdom had come
- iii. **Tell no one:** This is a Messianic secret.
- iv. **Go and show**.....: This indicates that Jesus respected the Law and Traditions. According to the laws found in Leviticus 14, a leper who was healed had to perform several ceremonies. Some of them were:
  - To show himself/ herself to the priests.
  - Give clean birds (probably doves).
  - Give cedar wood, scarlet stuff, **Hyssop** (plant whose twigs were used for sprinkling in Jewish rites).
  - Kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water.
- v. He withdrew and ..... An instance of Luke's interest in prayer.

### **MESSIANIC SECRET**

#### **Jesus did not want to be known as the Messiah because:**

1. The Romans would have arrested him because they understood the Jewish Messiah to be a rebel.
2. If the people had looked up to him as ‘their Messiah’ they would have expected him to take the lead in liberating their nation from Roman rule. Such prejudice would have closed them for his message and his person. He forbade his disciples not tell people who Jesus is (8: 21; 9: 36), the witness of his miracles (8: 45-56) and the devils (4: 33-37, 40ff) to make it known that he was the Messiah.

#### **Why did Jesus call him the “Son of Man”?**

- a) To hide that he was the Messiah.
- b) To stress that he was human like any man, because son of man is an Aramaic idiom meaning “I”, often used in a situation where the speaker is humiliated and suffers: remember that verse where Jesus said that “the son of man has nowhere to lay his head... (Luke 9: 58).
- c) To hint that he was the Messiah who brings God’s judgement and his Kingdom, because the Son of Man may also refer to a vision in the book of Daniel 7:13 where someone is given **glory and power**. The Son of man has authority (Luke 5: 24; the Son of Man is master of the Sabbath (Luke 6: 5); the Son of Man coming in the cloud (Luke 21: 27).

### **SAMARITANS**

In 722 BC the Assyrians deported many Jews from Israel repopulating it with Gentiles. The offspring of the marriages between the Gentiles and the Jews who had remained behind are the Samaritans. They themselves claimed to be the descendants of the Jews who had been exiled from the Northern Kingdom, Israel, in 722BC and who had returned 50 years later.

The hostility between Jews and Samaritans dates back to the time after the return from exile (538 BC). The Samaritans had offered their assistance with rebuilding of the temple (520 BC), but they were rebuffed, for they were “unclean” according to the Jews. This was a serious insult. The Samaritans accepted only the first five books of the Bible (Pentateuch- five books ascribed to

Moses). They prayed at Mount Gerazim (not Jerusalem) and were unfriendly towards Jews who passed through their territory on the way to the Holy city Jerusalem.

#### A. Jesus rejected by the Samaritans (Luke 9: 51-56)

Samaritans were hostile towards Jews and this was mainly when they pass through their territory on the way to Jerusalem, which in the view of the Samaritans was the wrong place of worship. Jesus was rejected by the Samaritans when he wanted to pass through their territory and this is significant because this rejection at the beginning of the journey foreshadows his rejection at the end of the journey.

## B. Cure of the ten Lepers

Luke 17: 11-19

This section discusses the grateful Samaritan.

## What was happened?

- Jesus was going to Jerusalem through Samaria and Galilee.
  - He entered a village where he met ten lepers.
  - The lepers stood at a distance (remember how lepers were treated by the Jews- unclean).
  - They called on Jesus to have mercy on them.
  - Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests (remember Leviticus 14- what were lepers required to do when healed or made clean?).
  - On the way to the priest they got healed.
  - One of them who was a Samaritan came back to thank Jesus.
  - Jesus remarked that out of the ten lepers only one came back to give thanks.
  - This leper was a foreigner (Samaritan)
  - Finally Jesus told the man to go because his faith made him well.

### **C. The grateful Samaritan**

The Samaritan “see”, has faith and is saved. Luke wants to show that the Gentiles accepted the gospel with gratitude and this teaches that salvation is for all (universalism). Salvation received by outsiders rather than the Jews although they were the first chosen. This same lesson is taught in the parables of the Places of honour (Luke 14: 7-11), the parable of the Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24), the parables of a Good Samaritan, the Fig tree (Luke 13: 6-9); the Pounds (Luke 19: 12-27) and also the parable of the Closed door.

#### **D. The parable of the Good Samaritan**

Luke 10:25-37

Jesus showed that he did not share the prejudice of the Jews that all Samaritans (Gentiles) were bad; he portrayed a Samaritan as the good man in this parable.

### **The analysis of the passage:**

1. The lawyer's question
  2. Jesus' counter question
  3. The Lawyer's answer
  4. Jesus' imperative (verse 29)
  5. A further question by the lawyer
  6. Another counter question by Jesus with the parable
  7. The Lawyer's answer
  8. Jesus' final imperative

#### E. The questions of the lawyer

a. *What shall I do to have eternal life?*

The lawyer thinks that eternal life can be earned by keeping their 365 “you shall not” and their 248 “you shall” rulings. Then Jesus confirms that they are summed up in the commandment of love for God and neighbour. To keep this one commandment is eternal life which starts on earth.

## *b. Who is my neighbour?*

This question was often debated because the neighbour could have been the next of kin, the people of my village and any other Jew not Gentile. According to the Jews a Gentile could not be the neighbour because they were unclean people who ate almost everything and were uncircumcised.

c. ***Go, do this:***

- Jesus said this twice.
- Jesus is practical he does not go for theoretical discussions; the lawyer would have liked this, as he was a trained debater.

**F. Comment on the parable**

- Touching the blood of the victim renders a person unclean; so the priest and the Levite did not take the risk of approaching him. Perhaps the priest was on his way to Jerusalem and touching the blood would make him unclean for the whole week preventing him from carrying out his priestly duties.
- The Samaritan who doesn't observe these clean and unclean rituals did not consider all those rules. He acted out of compassion and his help is prompt, efficient, generous and loving. He may not be aware that he practices religion but in fact he fulfills the greatest commandment.
- Jesus' listeners expected that after the priest and the Levite, a layman would appear on the scene, as was usual in such stories. So when the Samaritan came in as the third man it was a bolt from the blue. Samaritan was such a bad word for the Jews that the lawyer could not bring himself to say it (verse 37).

**The Samaritan in the story was a challenge to:**

**I. The Lawyer**

He had to give a thought to the possibility that a half-pagan, ignorant of all rules of Judaism, might do the will of God than those who knew, like the lawyer (who knew his religion very well).

**II. John and James**

They had suggested that a Samaritan village should be punished for having been hostile to Jesus, they passed on their way to Jerusalem (Luke 9: 52-56).

Jesus did not answer the theoretical question "who is my neighbour?" Instead he gave an answer to a more practical question: "How can I act as a neighbour?"

**G. GENTILES**

Jesus' mission was to Jews. However in the latter days' salvation would be shared by the Gentiles as was foretold (in the book of Isaiah 45: 14-25 and the Second Servant Song). Jesus showed respect and care for the Gentiles at the risk of his life when he cleansed the court of Gentiles in the temple. His attitude towards Gentiles inspired the early church- which at first consisted of Jews only- to enroll Gentiles.

**1. Cure of the Servant of a Centurion      Luke 7: 1-10**

Jesus cured the servant of a centurion. A centurion was an officer in the Roman Army and he was in-charge of 100 soldiers. So Cornelius was a Roman Officer for the army. The centurion was different from the other Romans:

- He loved Jesus- usually the Roman and Jews were bitter enemies.
- He treated his slaves in a human way (was kind to a slave).
- He was humble. Since Jews were not allowed to enter houses of Gentiles, he wanted to save Jesus from embarrassment.
- He believed Jesus' authority over diseases.
- Had money to build the synagogue (probably was a god-fearer).
- Admired the Jewish religion

### **What happened?**

- Jesus went to Capernaum where a centurion had a slave.
- The slave was sick at the point of death.
- The centurion hearing about Jesus, sent for him.
- The elders told Jesus that the centurion was worthy of the services because he built them a synagogue and loved the Jewish nation.
- Jesus went with them.
- On the way Jesus met the centurion servants.
- The servants told Jesus that their master was not worthy that Jesus could visit his home.
- The centurion said he had faith in the word of Jesus.
- He asked Jesus to say a word only to heal the servant.
- Jesus did as the centurion had asked and said that he did this because the centurion had great faith.

Like the centurion Cornelius in the book of Acts 10, who sent three men to Peter, this centurion did not go to Jesus himself, because he knew that by entering the house of a Gentile a Jew became unclean. That is why this centurion said “I am not worth to receive you under my roof.”

We see also that Jesus is realistic: He will not- without any good reason- make himself ‘unclean’ in the eyes of fellow Jews by entering the house of a Gentile. This suggests that this centurion was a good man.

The Jews expected Jesus to help this centurion because he is **a good man and loved the Jews**. However, Jesus grants his request because of **his faith**, rather than his goodness (Verse 9).

As is in many Bible stories especially in parables, the point of Luke 7: 1-10 is made at the end. Luke 7: 9 shows that the story stresses faith. With parables and other stories please pay special attention to the end because the main lesson or teaching comes clear at the end.

### **What is faith?**

1. It is firmly believing religious truths
2. It is to have complete confidence in God shown by accepting and obeying the will of God.
3. It is accepting the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, Lord, Saviour and Son of God.

The story about the centurion illustrates one of Luke’s favourite themes: salvation is for all (universal). It also shows the positive attitude Luke had for the Gentiles that is why his Gospel was mainly written to Gentiles.

### **2. Cure of a Gentile Demonic in Gerasa**

### **Luke 8: 26-39**

The people living in Gerasa were not Jews and you can observe that they kept swine (pigs). Although the Gentiles did not know Yahweh, the God of Israel but they also had the idea of a Supreme God.

### **What happened?**

- Jesus went to the country of the Gerasenes.
- As he arrived, a man with demons met him.
- This man for a long time was without clothes (naked) and lived among the graves, abnormally strong; does not feel pain and is very aggressive. He is a madman.
- When the man saw Jesus he recognized him as the son of the most High God (Jesus Son of the Most High, is a typically pagan way of speaking).
- He asked Jesus not to torment him and Jesus asked for his name.

- He said that he was Legion which meant that many demons had entered him. A legion may also refer to 6,000- a number of soldiers in a Roman army division. Jesus has authority over pagan religions and pagan powers just as he has authority over a legion of devils.
- Jesus commanded the demons to leave him.
- The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs (swines).
- The herdsmen seeing what had happened, they run away to the city.
- The people in the city came to see what has happened.
- They found that the man clothed and sitting at the feet of Jesus.
- The man wanted to follow Jesus but he refused. Jesus refused the man to follow him because he wanted the man to witness what had happened.

**The story gives information about the belief of the Jews in demons and the casting out of demons (exorcisms):**

- a) Demons have close links with the dead; the madman lives among the tombs.
- b) They recognize the power of exorcists: - for he said “do not torment me.”
- c) By giving his name a demon subjects himself to the power of the exorcists (take note that at first the madman “boasted” he knew Jesus’ name, and so had power over him).
- d) Devils fear to be locked away in underground abysses (that is why “they begged not to” verse 31).

The pigs are the symbol of power of the pagan religion (pigs were commonly used in sacrifices) of the Roman rule (some legions carried a pig in their emblem).

**This story of a demon possession man show that Jesus regarded:**

1. Devils as enemies of God’s Kingdom
2. Madness as a sign of Satan power over man.
3. His mission as a task to overcome Satan to which end God had given him **authority**.
4. Any exorcism as a sign that the Kingdom had come.

**“how much God has done for you”**- this may mean that there is a difference between the time before his cure and the time after the cure.

**He had worn no clothes:** - To be clothed is to be counted as a free person who is in control of his life.

**“at the feet of Jesus”:** - the posture of a disciple (compare with what Mary did— Luke 10: 39)

**The story teaches that:**

1. Jesus has more power than the most powerful evil spirits (this include pagan religion s and pagan empire).
2. Jesus’ power is also for the benefit of the Gentiles.
3. Gentiles too are called to preach the Good News (Luke 10: 39).

## H. OUT CASTS

**Outcasts:** People who are not accepted by their society; they are avoided, neglected, despised or looked down upon as second class citizens.

**Who were the outcasts in Jesus’ society?**

1. People of low morals, like prostitutes, adulterers, thieves, robbers.
2. Lepers, the sick, deaf, maimed, the demented and the poor. Their misfortune was seen as a sign that God was not pleased with them because their sins or the sins of their parents.
3. Those of unclean professions: the shepherds, tax collectors, tanners, camel drivers etc.

### A. Tax Collectors

The Roman government sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidders. In their turn the toll farmers sold their right to sub-tenants, the tax collectors or publicans. Toll farmers as well

as tax collectors wanted to regain the money they had paid to obtain their license and make a handsome profit. This led to extortion, asking much more than was just and fair.

**Tax collectors were rejected by society, they were the outcasts; hated and despised for the following reasons:**

- a. They were known as dishonest people and greedy.
- b. They cooperated with the hated, Roman occupants, betraying their country: they were traitors.
- c. The tax was painful reminder of their dependence on Rome; some of the tax used to be money given to the temple, the Jewish tax.
- d. Tax collectors were unclean as they had contacts with the unclean Gentiles and their unclean money. But Jesus called Levi, who was Matthew to be his disciple.

**Zacchaeus, the Tax collector**

**Luke 19: 1-10**

**Zacchaeus** means ‘clean’. He was a chief tax collector, probably a toll farmer.

Jesus addressed the crowd: “**today salvation has come to this house**”. At the banquet people were allowed in at the edge (Luke 7: 37).

**He also is a son of Abraham:** One of God’s chosen people, not just an outcast.

**To this house:** the entire household shares Zacchaeus’ blessing (compare with Cornelius- Acts 10: 48, his whole household was baptized).

**Half my goods.....fourfold:** He gave away half of his riches and had enough left to pay back four times the money he had obtained by cheating (Leviticus 6: 5 demanded repayment plus 20%).

**Zacchaeus changed:**

- i. He calls Jesus ‘Lord’, which might mean he became a disciple who;
- ii. Followed Jesus’ advice (make friends by means of unrighteous mammon- Luke 16: 9).
- iii. His repentance was real: he paid back four times the.....

Lucan themes: joy, God’s care for outcasts, detachment of riches, salvation for all.

**The Pharisee and the Tax collector**

**Luke 18: 9-14**

This parable is about:

**1. Judgement**

- The Pharisee looks down upon sinners; exalting himself. He makes himself unacceptable to God.
- The Tax Collector admits before God that he is spiritually poor and therefore he is blessed.

**2. Prayer**

**The prayer of the Pharisee:**

- a. He prayed....with himself- in other words he speaks to himself, not to God.
- b. His prayer is boastful: - Jews had to fast only on the Day of Atonement; tithes had to be paid on the main crop.
- c. He seems to have no need of God

**The prayer of the Tax Collector:**

- a. He is aware of God’s presence:- He stood far off and talks to God, not to himself.
- b. He admits his sinfulness.
- c. He knows his need of God’s mercy.

**3. Jesus’ love for the lost**

It is through this parable Jesus defends his friendliness and table fellowship with sinners. If God accepts sinners Jesus is justified to eat with them.

**The Narrow Door. The Closed Door.****Luke 13: 22-30**

The question that we should address is that: - ***will those who are saved be few?*** The speaker probably referred to the Jews who would survive all disasters and remain faithful to the Covenant, the **REMNANT**.

***Sit at the banquet in the kingdom*** .i.e; enter the kingdom (the parable of the Banquet). The picture that has been presented here of the banquet was used to indicate the feast which God has prepared for mankind at the end of time as predicted by Isaiah 65:13. The Messiah will then bring total happiness. In Jesus' time the Jews believed that the banquet was only for Jews and proselytes, **to eat the bread at the banquet means to be saved.**

**The lessons of this parable:-**

- a. Those who want to enter the Kingdom have to be ready to make a great effort, and that should be urgently, before the door will be closed.
- b. Being a Jew does not mean that one enters automatically.
- c. Table fellowship with Jesus and even having listened to his word do not guarantee entrance.
- d. Those who are called first, the Jews, may be last; the Gentiles enter the kingdom before them.

**The Rich Fool****Luke 12: 13-21**

A fool is someone who has broken with God or lives as if there is no God (Deuteronomy 32: 6; Psalms 14: 1).

**Our wealthy farmer is a fool because:**

1. He thinks that he has secured a good future forgetting that only God can assure the future (cf Isaiah 40: 6-7....grass).
2. He is also pre-occupied with his own interests that the idea of caring for his needy neighbour does not enter his mind (take note of the "I's and My's in his short story).
3. He never asks the question, "***What is life all about?" "What makes sense and what does not?"*** He might have come to such questions had he wondered who would get his good/ belongings after his death.

**The lesson of the parable:**

Verse 15b gives the lesson of the parable: - one should not covet wealth as if it could assure one's future. Instead of securing a good life by amassing riches on earth one should make oneself rich in God's sight by using one's wealth to help the needy.

**The Rich Man and Lazarus****Luke 16: 19-31**

The rich man is sometimes called "Dives"- Latin word for Rich man.

**The name Lazarus means: he whom God helps**

Hades (Greek); Sheol (Hebrew): This is a pit under the earth. The spirits of those who died, good or bad went there to lead a shadowy, half-life. The Jews had this understanding that the one the day of Judgement the good go to their own place in Sheol, Paradise, and the wicked to Gehenna

Moses and the prophets: The Old Testament writings command the rich to care for the powerless poor. Deuteronomy 26: 12 tells the Jew to give 10% of his crops to the poor. Isaiah 1: 17 teach that God is not pleased with worship if justice for the fatherless and the widows is neglected. He denounces those who have enriched themselves at the cost of the poor (Isaiah 3: 14b); Leviticus 19: 9f tells land owners that they must leave part of the harvest in the field for the poor. If the brothers' according to scripture take care of the poor they will not land up in Hades.

The miserable condition of the poor was seen as a sign that God was not pleased with them. Jesus taught the opposite, **"Blessed are the poor."** He had warned **"you cannot serve God and mammon"** (wealth).

**At which the Pharisees laughed** (16: 13) because in their view God was on the side of the rich, so the rich had to be given extra honour. Their wealth was a sign that they were justified (verse 15). To them Jesus' teaching that the poor were blessed was subversive; it undermined their prestige and authority. They were shocked to hear that the poor Lazarus was received at Abraham's bosom, remember the parable of the "the place of honour at a banquet".

The **rich Sadducees** had an added reason to dislike the parable. It mentioned life after death; whereas they taught that there is no such life.

The **Scribes** also felt criticized because according to their teaching Lazarus was unclean, unfit to be with God, since the dogs came and licked his sores, which according to their teaching that makes a person unclean.

### **Two lessons of this parable:**

- a. If the rich do not help the poor and thus bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, the gap will remain after death. They will find themselves at the wrong side.
- b. No sign or miracle will save the five brothers, if they refuse to listen to Moses and the prophets, i.e. God's word which comes to them through the Old Testament Scriptures and through Jesus. The parable is then Jesus' answers to the quest for a miracle, a sign from heaven (Luke 11: 16).

### **The parable on the Lost**

The Pharisees and Scribes were angered by Jesus' friendliness towards sinners:

1. Pharisee kept themselves separated from sinners. Jesus' closeness to them was an attack on this practice. And on the teaching of the scribes that contact with sinners was defiling.
2. As Jesus was a good man his friendship with sinners was confusing because it was against religious customs and traditions. It made the pious less sure of themselves.
3. The Pharisees were afraid they would lose the special respect of the people when Jesus showed respect for sinners.

### **Lost Sheep/ Lost Coin**

### **Luke 15: 3-7; 8-10**

These are called twin parables because they were taught at the same context and also the point made by these two parables is the same and the point is:

- ❖ God is like a shepherd or the woman (remember man/ woman, is characteristic of Luke) in these parables.
- ❖ He goes after the Lost one and rejoices when she/ he is found. God is like this, the pious should not murmur when Jesus shows love for sinners.

In his dealings with sinners God seems somehow foolish and exaggerating. What shepherd will leave ninety-nine sheep unattended to look for just one? What woman will turn the whole house upside down just for a silver coin, a drachma which is a day wage?

What elderly Jew will run to embrace his son who has practically become a Gentile?

### **The Prodigal Son**

### **Luke 15: 11-32**

This parable has two peaks (it teaches two lessons) like the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus:

1. One lesson in the story of the **younger son** and another lesson in the story of the **elder son**.
2. The second peak is higher, i.e. the story of the elder son gives the main lesson. The parable might be called the "**parable of the elder son**". Another suitable title would be "**the parable of the forgiving Father.**"

### **The Younger Son:**

With the money went away from home and his Father, he leads an independent life. He sins; worse, he is practically forced to give up his religion; employed in a pagan land cannot observe the Sabbath and feeds swine (compare with Leviticus 11: 7). The pigs or swine get plenty, he goes hungry. When he comes to his senses he does not expect to be forgiven; he can't imagine that his father could accept him as a son. If only he may be a worker in his service. He realizes that even this he does not deserve.

The story of the younger son is based on real life. Palestine was a poor country where people often suffered famine. Many Jews went abroad (in diaspora) in search of greener pastures.

### **The Elder Son**

He is model of a Pharisee because:

1. **In his relationship with God-** he always works for God, keeping the Law, not so much out of love- look at what he said "I have served you. I never disobeyed your command". He was expecting for the rewards for his good works but he said to the father "you never gave me a kid."
2. **In his relationship to sinners:** -He does not accept the sinful young man as his brother; he judges and condemns him. He shrinks his company declining to join him at the feast "this son of yours....who has devoured your living with harlots".
3. In his reaction to Jesus and God's love for sinners: - He is angry that God loves sinners. Thus he refuses to enter the kingdom of God. He excludes himself from the joyous feast of the kingdom. "Angry refused to go in."

**The Father** does not cut the elder son off. He still loves him. "His father came out and entreated him. Son you are always with me and all that is mine is yours."

### **The three parables of chapter 15 compared (similarities or what they have in common)**

1. In all three sinners are regarded as the lost that must be found.
2. All show that God takes the initiative; God is the one who goes after the sinner, taking great pains (carrying the sheep; sweeping...., waiting a long time);
3. He forgives and greatly rejoices when a sinner returns; that joy is always shared.

### **Relevance of the three parables on the Lost to the Church**

1. The parable guided the first Christians communities to accept not only the upright, but also the 'lost' and to forgive them joyfully.
2. Like the shepherd who had lost a sheep and the woman who had lost a coin, Christians must go after the members who have lapsed.
3. Care for just one person who is lost is not a waste of time as is exemplified by the Shepherd and the woman.
4. No one in the Christian community must think of him/her self more deserving in God's eyes than those who seem less good.
5. In case Pharisees oppose the Church her members must yet remain open to them.

### **The Two Debtors**

### **Luke 7: 41-42a**

This parable is woven into the incident in the house of Simon the Pharisee where a sinful woman had entered (7: 36-50).

### **Prayer in Luke's Gospel**

**Prayer/ to pray:** Is spending time with God, alone or with others. It is putting oneself in his presence in silence or speaking to Him; thanking and praising God, asking forgiveness and for the knowledge of his will; telling Him about one's needs and the need of others.

**Prayer is one of Luke's interests.** In his gospel he tells how Jesus prayed at the important moments of his ministry.

**The following are instances where Jesus was praying or went to pray:**

1. When Jesus also had been baptized and was praying... Luke 3:22
2. But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5: 16
3. All night he continued in prayer. Luke 6: 12
4. As he was praying alone the disciples were with him. Luke 9: 18
5. He went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying.... Luke 9: 28ff
6. He was praying in a certain place and when he ceased.... Luke 11: 1
7. And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed. Luke 22: 41

### **Jesus' teaching on prayer**

Luke records a special lesson on prayer (11: 1-13) given by Jesus at the request of one of his disciples (verse 1). On this occasion Jesus taught the Our Father (verses 2-4) and told the parable of the friend at Midnight (5:8), adding that one should ask with absolute confidence. (9: 10) he stressed this comparison

## **WOMEN**

In Jesus' society women were under-valued and regarded as inferior to men; their husbands were their lords. Women had no importance:

1. They could not testify in court;
2. In the temple their place was with slaves and children;
3. They were not obliged to pray.
4. Girls could not attend school;
5. Rabbis did not teach women and were not seen with them in public.

\*\*\*\*\*Luke shows a special interest in Jesus' attitude towards women and their role in the kingdom. It fits his universalism and his preference for the underdog. He represents Jesus as the one who shows respect for all, especially for the downtrodden.

He may also have in mind his Gentile readers among whom women enjoyed a higher status than among the Jews.

### **I. Women in Luke's Gospel**

- a. In the infancy stories: Mary, Elizabeth; Anna.
- b. During Jesus' travel (Luke 8: 1-3).
- c. During Jesus' passion (Luke 22: 27-31)
- d. 2 witnesses to the resurrection (Luke 24: 1-8).
- e. Healing: a woman with a flow of blood; Jairus daughter; woman in the synagogue; the son of the widow of Nain;
- f. Forgiving: a woman in Simon's house.

### **Martha and Mary                  Luke 10: 38-42**

Jesus did not follow the customs:

- i. He is alone with the women who are not his relatives.
- ii. A woman serves him.
- iii. He teaches a woman in her own house

**Martha** receives Jesus as a guest for whom she cares;

**Mary** receives him as a teacher to whom he listens as a disciple. She has chosen the better part because listening to Jesus is more important than even caring for him as a guest. This why Jesus recommends Mary.

### A woman with the flow of blood

#### The daughter of Jairus

### Luke 8: 43- 48

Luke 8: 40-49- 56

These two miracles are found in the same periscope (passage) from Luke 8: 40- 56. You may notice that the first story is ‘mixed’ (**sandwiched**) in the second. The first miracle deals with a woman who was suffering from ‘**haemorrhage**’ (flow of blood). She suffered for 12 years, spent all the money she had in paying doctors. But when she touched Jesus’ garment she got cured. Jesus noticed this.

The other miracle deals with the raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead. Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue. He was responsible for administration and ordering of public worship of a synagogue. Jairus had a daughter who died when he had already sent for Jesus. Jesus told Jairus not to be worried. The hired mourners laughed at Jesus when he said that the child was not dead but was sleeping.

According to the Leviticus 15 and other Jewish traditions someone suffering from such a disease was unclean and unfit for any human contact. Touching this person meant that person was also unclean for **eight** (8) days.

There are four similarities between these two miracles (compare verse 42 and 43; 48 and 50; 46 and 54:

1. As touching a dead body makes a person unclean, Jesus became unclean by touching the dead girl and also by the touch of the woman with flow of blood could have made Jesus unclean. In touching others, the woman would make them also unclean, this might be the reason why she has to touch Jesus herself.

Jesus said, “**Do not weep; for she is not dead, but sleeping.**” The reaction of the bystanders shows that they had no faith, in contrast to Jairus. Since they have no faith it will be of no use for them to witness the miracle.

2. Jewish mourning customs: Corpse in a room with relatives, friends and others around (mostly women). There was weeping and loud lamenting. Friends provided food and drink as these had become unclean because of the corpse. Also shaving of hair, or parts of beard, wearing a sack cloth. Mourning lasted for 3-30 days, usually 7 days.
3. The woman who touched Jesus is unclean on account of her sickness. She was an outcast. Jesus makes her ‘**daughter**’, i.e. a member of the New Israel. Jesus said that “Daughter your faith has made you well”. The moment the woman touched Jesus’ garment she was healed. It looks like as if it was magic rather than faith which healed her. This is why Jesus insisted that the woman come forward so that he may stress that it is her faith, not magic that has cured her.

Keep in mind that the story which precedes the cure of these two ‘daughter’ is about the Gerasene demoniac. The latter was set in a Gentile context or setting. But this story has a Jewish setting:

1. Jesus had returned to Galilee (Luke 8: 26, 40).
2. There is a synagogue.
3. The story uses Jewish symbols:
  - a. The **number twelve** (*twelve tribes of Israel- and also can represent completeness*).

- b. The mention of ‘**Daughter**’, a reference to the **Daughter of Zion**= God’s people. The salvation that Jesus brings to the daughters alludes to the salvation which he is to bring to the Jews.
- 4. He charged them to tell no one what has happened. Jesus would not give this injunction in Gentile territory (Messianic secret)

## **J. MIRACLES**

A miracle is an event in which man sees God at work. It can be ordinary, like the birth of a child, the growth of maize etc. Or it can be also extraordinary, like a sudden cure. It is evident that someone who does not believe in God will not see God at work. For such a person miracles don’t exist. If he reads or hears about an extraordinary event he will not believe that it really happened or he will try to prove that there is nothing extraordinary in it, that it can be explained scientifically.

Believers will verify if the amazing, wonderful event really took place, being ready to accept it as something in which God is at work. If the event can be scientifically explained and it appears that it is not extraordinary or that it did not really happen, they will not be disappointed or confused as they believe that God is at work anyhow, also in ordinary things.

Extraordinary events can also be explained as signs that devils or spirits are at work. This happens when a miracle worker is suspected to be evil and possessed by the devil.

Both Jesus’ miracles and his teachings were signs that a new time had come, the time of the Kingdom of God. With Jesus’ coming God started to rule on earth. This is something new, in other words something extraordinary. So we can conclude that Jesus’ teachings and the signs which he performed were extraordinary. Jesus had the power to bring the Kingdom.

### **The meaning of Jesus’ miracles (signs) in the book of Luke**

In the book of Luke the miracles which Jesus performed were signs that the power of Satan in this world was over; God had started to **reign** (rule). Jesus said that “The Kingdom of God has come near you” Luke 10: 9. In the view of Jesus’ contemporaries Satan showed his power in natural disasters, sickness, death, sin and even by taking possession of a person. Through his miracles Jesus showed that his power was greater.

#### **i. Healing miracles**

These were signs that evil of sickness is overcome, but also the power of sin, because it was believed that sickness and sin were related.

#### **ii. The raising of the dead**

This was a sign that the power of death was broken. It foreshadowed the ultimate triumph over death; Jesus’ own resurrection and the resurrection of all mankind at the end of time.

#### **iii. Exorcisms**

Exorcism is the driving out of evil spirits. These were signs that Satan has been deprived of all power over those who have entered the Kingdom.

#### **iv. Natural miracles**

These were signs of security and abundance of the life in the Kingdom of God.

### **Characteristics of Jesus’ miracles**

1. Not many, after the transfiguration very few.
2. Unselfish: - Jesus did not use his miracle power to advertise, defend or save himself.

3. Simple and without effort. There were no formulas or medicine; no dance, no assistants, just a word or touch.
4. With the purpose to save rather than to punish. He performed miracles out of compassion.
5. Refused to those who lacked faith (Luke 4: 23ff- compare with Mark 6: 5ff).

### **THREE NATURE MIRACLES**

#### **1. The miraculous catch of fish**

#### **Luke 5: 1-11**

The miracle was performed when Jesus preaching off-shore at the Sea of Galilee. On this occasion he saw the fishermen who failed to catch fish the whole night. He called Peter who was an experienced fisherman and asked what transpired and Peter told Jesus that there was no fish. Jesus told Peter to put the net back into the deep waters and this resulted into a great catch of fish. After this great miracle then Jesus called Peter and two sons of Zebedee (John and James) as his disciples.

#### **2. The stilling of a storm**

#### **Luke 8: 22-25**

Jesus was still across the Sea of Galilee and on his way he fell asleep. A storm arose and was threatening to sink the boat. He was informed of the situation by his disciples and was told that they were about to perish. Jesus rebuked the Sea and the storm stopped.

**Wild** (storm) waters symbolize chaos and death and the powers which oppose God. By stilling the storm Jesus creates order and overcomes the evil powers; he inaugurates the Kingdom.

- Faith is needed to enter that Kingdom; and Jesus being asleep is a picture of the man of faith, who is at peace even when the storms of life rage around. In him; dangers, temptations, troubles, chaos have no powers. He has authority over anything.
- The disciples, who wake up the Master, are not at peace because they lack faith. Jesus asked them “Where is your faith?”
- This miracle showed that Jesus had authority and control over nature.

It was after this miracle that Jesus said **“Let us go across to the other side of the lake”**- this marked the healing of the **“Legion”** and also the coming to pagan territory. The lake referred to above is Lake **Garesene**.

#### **3. Feeding the five thousand**

#### **Luke 9: 10-17**

**Context** (what was happening before or during that time)

- a. After the death of John the Baptist (Luke 9: 9)- Jesus may have felt that his mission was very urgent and therefore,
- b. Sent his disciples on a mission (Luke 9: 16);
- c. Their activities in Galilee alarmed Herod Antipas (some Pharisees warned Jesus of danger);
- d. When the disciples returned from their mission (Luke 9: 1-6)- Jesus took them to Bethsaida, in Trachonitis and this is outside of Antipas’ territory.
- e. The people found Jesus (Luke 9: 11).

**Food** is a Lucan theme (remember Jesus was put in the manger where animals were feeding; Jesus shared food with sinners when he sat with them at the table he “blessed, broke and gave...”). Luke links the feeding of the crowd with the breaking of the bread at the Last Supper (Luke 22: 19) and the meal in Emmaus (Luke 24: 30).

**The account of the feeding of the crowd refers to:**

- A. **The past:** Jesus repeats what God had done for the Israelites in the desert (Exodus 16; 2 Kings 4: 42ff).
- B. **The end time:** Meal or banquet symbolizes the fullness of salvation at the end time when mankind’s hunger for truth and love will be fully satisfied (Jesus referred to the coming of the Kingdom in pictures of food, table, and banquet (*1. Luke 5: 34 ...fast... while the bridegroom is with them? 2. Luke 6: 21 Blessed.... Hunger now, for you..... 3.*

*A man once gave a great banquet..... 4. Luke 13: 29 ...from east and.... And sit at the table in...).*

- C. **The time ‘in between’:** which is the time of the Church whose members come together for the breaking of Bread (Acts 2: 42; 46; 20: 7, 11, as instructed by Jesus (Luke 22: 30).

The number twelve (baskets of left-overs) refers to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, the foundation of New Israel, who will later distribute the Food of Life, i.e. Jesus and the Message of the gospel.

### **The widow of Nain                  Luke 7: 11-17**

1. Luke balances stories of **men** and **women** because after the **father** of the epileptic boy Luke tells the story of a **mother**. Parallel to the raising of a **daughter** of Jairus Luke relates the raising of the son of a widow. A man and woman cured in the synagogue.
2. Jesus performs the miracle out of compassion, not because of the woman’s **faith**.

A widow from Nain lost a son. She went weeping but Jesus raised the son from death. Jesus raised the son of this widow because:

- The dead son was the only son for the woman.
- The woman was a widow.

Jesus felt pity and asked the widow not to weep. Jesus touched the **bier** (movable frame on which coffin or dead body is taken to the grave). This miracle could have reminded the people of what Elijah and Elisha in the Old Testament.

**“He who touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean.....”** (The learned scribes taught that this rule included touching the brier on which the dead is carried. Jesus overruled such laws when they would prevent him from showing compassion.

**“A great prophet”:** Jesus had done the same as Elijah who raised the child of the widow at Seraphath and the child was given to his mother (1 Kings 17: 23)

**“God has visited his people”** At chosen times God visits people, i.e. an extraordinary event takes place; it can be a special blessing or a special punishment, but it is always for the sake of saving his people, also when it is a punishment.

Jesus’ extraordinary power Bring about the Kingdom is often called **his authority**. It refers to his **power to perform signs** and to his **authority to teach**.

### **EXORCISMS**

In the gospel **illness** (fever, epilepsy, madness etc) and **being possessed by the devil** often occur together. The sick person is not only cured; the evil spirit in him/ her is subjected and driven out. This is explained as follows:

- ✓ Jesus established God’s reign on earth, destroying the reign of Satan, defeating the power of evil. Diseases, misfortunes, storms, hunger etc were signs of the power of evil spirits. So the cure of diseases, the calming of storms etc were signs that their power is crushed.
- ✓ Note that when Jesus gave his apostles power to cure, the sick, he gave them also the power over devils (Luke 9: 1-6; 10: 17-20; 13: 23). However, in Jesus’ absence they are powerless if they lack faith (Luke 9: 41- the epileptic boy).

### **Six exorcisms in Luke’s Gospel:**

1. The madman in the synagogue (Luke 4: 31-37)
2. The woman who had been bound by Satan for eighteen years (Luke 13: 16)
3. The Garesene demoniac(Luke 8: 26-29)
4. And some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities (Luke 8: 2)
5. The epileptic boy (Luke 9: 39-43)

6. The stilling of a storm is described as an exorcism: “he rebuked the wind” in other words Jesus speaks to the evil spirit who caused the storm (Luke 8: 22-25).

### **The epileptic boy**

### **Luke 9: 37-43**

This was after the transfiguration and Jesus went down the mountain where he found his disciples arguing with the man who had a epileptic boy.

Jews understood epilepsy as the results of being possessed by demons. Jesus told the disciples that they failed to cure the boy because they had no faith. Jesus cured the boy. The people praised God because they realized that God was with Jesus.

- The healing of a boy is sign that Jesus had power over the evil spirits.
- Faith is demanded, firstly, because it is only through faith that the healing can be **understood as a sign that Jesus defeats evil and establishes the kingdom**; secondly, it is through faith that **one can enter the kingdom and so share in Jesus' power over evil**.

### **A man with an unclean spirit**

### **Luke 4: 31-37**

This is the first miracle in Luke's gospel and it was in the synagogue in Capernaum. In this miracle Jesus showed that he had authority to perform signs and wonders, he did that by casting out the spirit of an unclean demon, or by healing the sick.

**I know who you are...** The demon knows Jesus' name. In Jesus' society it was believed that knowing someone's name was a sign that one had power over that person. Jesus showed that he had greater power than the unclean spirit by ordering him to be silent and come out. **“Holy one of God”**. Jesus is intimate with God, who is holy. In verse 41 the demons call Jesus Son of God, i.e. Messiah. The demons know who Jesus is, but he will not allow them to speak because it is only after Jesus has suffered that the people are ready to know his identity.

### **Be silent”**

1. Jesus shows that his power is greater than the power of demons.
2. He makes it clear that he did now want to be known as the Messiah.

**Judea:** stands for the entire land of the Jews, including Galilee (Luke 1: 5; 6: 17; 23:5).

### **Simon's (Peter's) mother-in-law**

### **Luke 4: 38-39-44**

It was the following day, the day after the healing of the man with an unclean spirit. Jesus rebuked the fever (remember he also rebuked the storm or wind). After cure she began to serve them which mean she was completely cured.

## **PARABLES AND ALLEGORIES**

### **A parable is:**

1. An imaginary story (mostly short) or a description of something observed in life, or an action, like sowing, going abroad, choosing one's place at the table etc.
2. There is something in the story, the picture or the action that points to a spiritual truth, which is the lesson, the point of the message of the parable.
3. This point is usually made at the end.

### **The difference between allegories and parables**

The parables of the banquet, the pounds and the wicked tenants are not really parables; they are allegories. The details or elements of a parable do not refer to anything particular and not important, but in an allegory they refer to specific people or events; the listener must know what or whom these details refer to so as to understand the message.

Jesus' listeners understood his allegories; as they knew what he meant with highways and hedges or whom he had in mind when he spoke of Wicked Tenants. For us we don't know so we have to learn their meaning.

### Why did Jesus teach in parable?

1. A story or a vivid picture catches the attention and is easily remembered.
2. To avoid debates and discussions (attack and counter attack, squabbles, quarrels) which are often bitter, useless and divisive. A parable does not argue, it doesn't try to convince or impose the truth. It is a challenge to the listener who, when he thinks about it and is willing to change his thinking, may find the truth.
3. Many parables were addressed to Jesus' opponents, who had no faith in Him and his message. Jesus told them to give them a last chance to see the truth.
4. Parables were powerful teaching aids to convey the truths about the kingdom.

We deal with these parables in groups, parable on:

- ✓ The Kingdom (Mustard seed, leaven, and banquet).
- ✓ Judgement (rich man and Lazarus, places of honour, Pharisee and the Tax collector, fruitless fig tree, pounds and royal claimant; wicked tenants; narrow door/ closed door).
- ✓ The Lost (**Lost sheep, lost coin; lost son**).
- ✓ Prayer (Pharisee and Tax collector, friend at midnight; unjust judge).
- ✓ Wealth (social relationships)- rich man and Lazarus, rich fool and unjust steward.

### Parables on the Kingdom

#### What is the Kingdom of God?

**Old Testament:** The chosen people believed that God was their King; the nation was His Kingdom and all the kings ruled on God's behalf. But God had not taken full control yet and as a result the nation still suffered all kinds of misfortunes. Also the foreign nations were not yet subjected to Yahweh's rule. According to the prophets this was due to the sins of rulers and people. They pointed to the future when God's Kingdom would be fully established and in that Kingdom there would be no more suffering because God- or Messiah, a king like David, one of David's House – would reign over the entire world. The enemies of God's people would be defeated.

**Last centuries before Jesus and the idea of the people in Jesus' time:** the gentile nations appeared so powerful that the Jews lost hope they could be conquered. Moreover, many faithful Jews had died without seeing 'the day of Yahweh'. So they now began to believe that on the day Yahweh God would destroy the world and create a new heaven and a new earth. The Messiah would not just be a son of David but a supernatural being. The faithful who had died would rise to enjoy the blessings of God's reign.

#### The Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus

1. God is to rule **on earth as in heaven**. His rule affects all man's dealings.
2. The Kingdom of God **has come**, God starts to rule now; the forces of evil are overthrown for those who can see the signs: cures, feeding, calming of storms etc.
3. It is **not easy** to enter; the demands are high: sermon on the plane (plus cost of discipleship).
4. **Jesus is the Messiah**, but not violent, militaristic or political. **His weapons** are truth and love; humility and suffering. He is like the servant in Isaiah.
5. Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom brings with it **judgement**: those who know him either believe in Jesus or don't; there is no way to between.
6. Jesus looked forward **to his death** as the way to resurrection when he would be glorified and **to the end of time** when the kingdom will be fully established.

## **The Gospel: The Good News of the Kingdom and about Jesus**

The word ‘gospel’ comes from ‘good spell (good story) and refers to the Good News announced by Jesus namely that “the Kingdom of God has come.”

The **Good News** is also about Jesus himself namely that it is he who brought that Kingdom about; he made it come; he made it happen.

- **For the Jews** who believed in Jesus it the Good News meant that: through Jesus God fulfills the promised He had made to their ancestors; he is the Messiah they had been waiting for.
- **For the Gentiles** who believed in Jesus, the Good News meant that: they no longer had to live in darkness and without hope. Through Jesus they know God, who he is, what he is like; from him they could learn how to go through life, what to live for, how to act and behave so as to be really happy.
- **For the Jews and Gentiles, Good News meant:** the barrier between them had been removed.

### **1. Mustard Seed**

### **Luke 13: 19 (Parables on the Kingdom)**

Luke likens the Kingdom of God with a Mustard seed. When planted it grows into a large tree. This means that the Kingdom starts in a small way but grows to be big. It eventually takes many people.

This may mean that Jesus’ ministry was insignificant and unsuccessful. But this was no reason to doubt whether God’s Kingdom had really come. The Kingdom is God’s work; it can’t fail. Looking small in the beginning, it will be a huge success in the end.

**The birds of the air:** allegorical detail, a reference to **the nations** (i.e. Gentiles)

This parable is the same as the **parable of the leaven** (Luke 13: 21) because they teach the same lesson. In fact they are also twin parables.

### **2. The Great Supper or Banquet**

### **Luke 14: 15-24**

Refer to page 26 and 27 of your notes.

The parable is based on the custom of the Jews to send two invitations: the first well in advance of the feast and the second shortly before the feast. Also during the first year a Jew as exempted from military service.

The lame excuses were given:

- One who has just married can surely be away from his wife for a short while.
- The one who buys oxen or a piece of land inspects them before the deal.

Jesus said “**Blessed is he who eats bread in the Kingdom of God.**” By being a pious Jew one could have considered himself fit for the Kingdom of God, and Jesus tells them that only those are willing to be with him in the Kingdom.

While they were enjoying the food, Jesus tells another parable to warn them that they will have no place at all at the banquet in heaven in spite of their efforts to earn that place by acts of piety. It appears that they have not learned the lesson from the parable on **inviting guests.** For the Jews it was difficult to imagine that God invites the **outcasts of Israel:** the poor, the maimed, the blind including the dropsy man and even Gentiles. All this is taught in the parable of the Banquet.

Keep in mind that Jesus addressed the parable of the banquet at the Pharisees, the pious of Israel, who condemned him because of his table fellowship with sinners (the outcasts). The

parable is a warning and Judgement: “You will not enter the kingdom, as you don’t allow God to love the lost. Salvation will go to fellow Jews whom you think unfit; and even to the Gentiles..... rather than to you who are first invited.”

**The parable of the Banquet is an allegory rather a parable proper; the meaning is clear only if one who knows what the various elements of the story stand for:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Bread in the kingdom:                                 | <b>Salvation at the end of time</b>            |
| 2. Those in the streets and lanes (in the holy city):    | <b>Jews</b>                                    |
| 3. Those in the highways and hedges (outside Jerusalem): | <b>Gentiles</b>                                |
| 4. The poor:   | <b>the Jewish outcasts</b>                     |
| 5. The first invited:                                    | <b>the pious in Israel, the Pharisees.</b>     |
| 6. The second invited:                                   | <b>the sinners and outcasts among the Jews</b> |
| 7. The third invited:                                    | the Gentiles (universalism).                   |

### **Choosing Places at table**

### **Luke 14: 7-11**

The Pharisees were convinced that they deserved the best places in the Kingdom of God. They worked hard (fasting, prayers, alms giving) but in vain to attain the best places in the Kingdom of God but they were the people that were hypocrites (people who serve two masters). But according to Jesus they are excluded as they have no compassion on the poor, the maimed, the sinners and outcasts whom they will not invite to their feasts (verses 13, 21). Jesus told them that “woe to the self-satisfied” (verse 24).

### **Inviting Guests**

### **Luke 14: 12-14**

God invites the poor, the maimed, the blind, 21 sinners and outcasts, i.e. those who have no merits and seem unworthy. Jesus told the Pharisees that “Do likewise! Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate” Luke 6: 36. Believe that God invites the outcasts, and then you too will welcome them. This will give you great joy, a joy which will be complete at the resurrection of the just (verse 14).

## **JUDGEMENT PARABLES**

Judgement is a separation between those who do the will of God and those who don’t; those who receive the gift of the Kingdom and those who refuse. Te Judgement is given in words and deeds. Like the prophets Jesus **pronounced** condemnation and **announced** punishments.

For those who know Jesus the judgement depends on their faith in him and obedience to his word. Those who have not heard the gospel will be judged according to their attitude towards the needy neighbour. As you did to one of the least of my brethren you did it to me (Matthew 25: 31-46)

**Daily** one is judged by one’s own conscience. **In death** the judgement is pronounced which determines one’s fate for eternity. **On the last day** judgement will be given on all mankind.

**The following parables give yardsticks (criteria) by which man is judged worthy or unworthy of the kingdom:**

1. **The rich man and Lazarus:** condemns the rich who lack concern for the poor (Luke 16: 19- 31)
2. **The rich fool:** one should rely on God rather than on earthly success.
3. **Places of honour at table:** one should rely on God’s mercy rather than on merits of pious acts (prayers, fasting and alms-giving).
4. **The Pharisee and the Tax collector:** the **contrite** (repentant) sinner enters the Kingdom, not the self satisfied law keeper who looks down on his sinful fellowmen.

## The fruitless fig tree                          Luke 13: 6-9

### Allegorical details:

- **The vineyard** stands for God's chosen people (as in Isaiah 5: 1-7, the song of the Vineyard).
- **Three years:** is a complete period (three for completeness), so the tree, the Jewish nation, has been given enough time and every chance to do what was required of them as the chosen people of God but they failed.
- **One more year:** perhaps a reference to Jesus' final year.

**Lesson:** in the spiritual sense the nation of Israel has produced nothing. It is now given a last chance. The parable emphasizes the warning which Jesus had just given: "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (verse 3, 5). He had given this warning when they told him two disasters which had recently taken place in Jerusalem.

## The Killing of Galileans by Pilate

## Luke 13: 1-3

These Galileans were probably Zealots, Jews who fought to free their country from Roman rule. They used force and were often armed.

## The death of 18 people crushed by a tower

## Luke 13: 4-5

It was believed that being struck by disaster was a sign that one has sinned. The pious would say, "if only they had repented! And as it did not happen to us, God must be more pleased with us than with them." Jesus did not agree that is why he is saying "all must repent before it is too late."

## JESUS PREDICTS HIS PASSION

### A. Jesus foresaw his passion and death

1. He knew that the opposition from the religious leaders grew stronger. This spelled danger, since these leaders would judge his case in the Sanhedrin.
2. He knew he was accused of crimes which were punishable by death
  - a. Breaking the Sabbath rules;
  - b. Blasphemy
3. Jesus knew he was the last of the prophets, the "son" (parable of the Wicked Tenants) and would share the fate of so many prophets (Luke 11: 47) "Woe".
4. Jesus identified himself with the suffering servant of the Second Isaiah 4: 18).

### B. Predictions of the Passion and Resurrection

#### 1. After Peter's confession

#### Luke 9: 22

Peter answered, "The Christ of God". Jesus commanded them to tell no one and predicted his passion and death.

#### 2. After the cure of the epileptic boy

#### Luke 9: 44

"Let these words sink into your ears" and it showed that they did not understand what Jesus meant.

#### 3. Towards the end of the journey

#### Luke 18: 31-34

Jesus told his disciples before that those who have left everything for the sake of the Kingdom will "receive manifold more in this time". This may make them forget that they are on the way to Jerusalem, the way of suffering. So Jesus gives them a detailed description of his sufferings and death (always adding that he will rise).

**But they understood none of these things**.... This statement has been repeated three times in the same verse (verse 34), they lack the Holy Spirit. Then the Blind Beggar of Jericho, "**Bartimeus**" appears on the scene. How is he compared with the twelve?

#### 4. Implicit predictions of passion and death

Jesus in answer to Herod's threat:

- i. “it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem” Luke 13:33
- ii. Parable of the Wicked Tenants- they cast him (the son) out of the vineyard and killed him. Luke 20:13-15
- iii. In the lament over Jerusalem: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets”. Luke 13: 34.
- iv. Sayings at the Last Supper: “This is the cup, poured out for you....” Luke 22: 20
- v. The Son of man goes as it has been determined..... Luke 22: 22

## LAST WEEK

(Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)

### 1. Entry

Luke 19: 28-40

From Jericho the road to Jerusalem climbs, reaching its highest point on Mount Olives (Olivet).

*.....those ...found it as he had told them* Jesus knows what is going on; he is in control. All that is to happen he accepts. His obedience leads him through death to glory. He requests a donkey in the manner of a king. The Lord has need of it. Jesus is welcome as a king: garments are spread out (cloaks, the most precious clothing) and the people shout, “*Blessed is the king who comes*”.

- 2. Lament
- 3. Cleansing of the temple
- 4. Four controversies
- 5. The apocalyptic discourse

## THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS IN JERUSALEM

### THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Jerusalem was the capital of Judah in Jesus' time and it was where the temple was found. The temple was very important to the life of every Jew. What happened was that Jesus came all the way from Galilee and entered this city of Jerusalem like a king. All the actions and words of the people proclaim him the Messiah and Jesus accepts this proclamation as due to him (Luke 19: 40). No need of any more Messianic secrets because his ministry is nearly over.

### Jesus as king

#### 1. The borrowing of the donkey

**Luke 19: 29-35:** It was pre-arranged for them to borrow the donkey and this fulfilled the messianic prophecy made by Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9). According to Zechariah (14: 4) the **Luke 19: 37:** Messiah was expected to enter Jerusalem from Mount of Olives and it was at this mountain that Jesus left his disciples and ascended to heaven (Acts 1: 9-12).

**Luke 19: 35:** Kings went to war upon horses, but in times of peace they rode donkeys. Jesus rode on the donkey to show that he was a peaceful king unlike other kings.

#### 2. Spreading of the clothes

This gesture is [art of the ritual surrounding the **coronation** of a king (2 Kings 9: 13).

#### 3. People rejoiced and praised God

The people praised God because of the works of Jesus (e.g. miracles of healing). The people sang for him. They called Jesus the son of David.

- 4. “**Blessed**” (Luke 19: 38): this is the greeting of the priests to pilgrims approaching the temple (Psalms 118: 26) and here the people use it to greet their king Jesus.
- 5. “**Peace**”: recalls the angels’ message at Jesus’ birth (Luke 2: 14). Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9: 6).

6. “**Rebuke**” (Luke 19: 39): Perhaps the Pharisees see Jesus’ entry as a political demonstration and are afraid of the Romans’ reaction. People reminded of the parable of the Pounds (Luke 19: 14).

Jesus is fully aware of what is going on. Jesus’ recognition as Messiah has been prepared for centuries by Israel’s history. Nothing can prevent its accomplishment. Jesus’ proclamation as King and Messiah ends and crowns a series of public acknowledgements: at his birth, his baptism, his Transfiguration, Peter’s confession, from the devil and from the prophets themselves.

Jesus wept for Jerusalem because as David descendant, he was expected to be received as an heir to the throne of David but Jerusalem rejected him (Luke 19: 41), and go through his agony and be betrayed by Judas and arrested by the Jews.

**Luke 19: 41-44:** In Luke’s Gospel, it is the first time since his boyhood (Luke 2: 41ff) that Jesus sees Jerusalem. He brings her peace, the one proclaimed in verse 38, but Jerusalem- the city of peace rejects it. The Jews did not recognize true peace of salvation and of the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ prediction underlines the fact that the Jews had misunderstood the real purpose of his coming and taken his triumphal entry into Jerusalem as a successful political demonstration. Jesus foresees the destruction of the city and his prediction was fulfilled when in **AD 70**, the Roman soldiers destroyed the city and the temple.

### **JESUS IN THE TEMPLE**

### **LUKE 19: 45-46**

We have here a direct confrontation between Jesus and the religious establishment of the Jewish nation.

**Background:** The thousands of pilgrims who came to the temple to offer sacrifices had to find animals and birds which had to be tested according to the standards of the law. So trading was going on all the time. Each visitor had to pay something to help defray (settle or pay) the expenses of the temple, and no foreign money was accepted, money-changers exchanged Roman coins for Jewish ones. These money changers took an exorbitant (over-priced) commission. There were abuses in the sale of animals; this was the reason that Jesus had to accuse the people for turning the house of prayer into the “den of robbers.” The set there tables in the court of Gentiles, the only place in the temple where all the non-Jews were allowed to stay and worship.

All this explained above made the temple authority to run a profitable business. When Jesus came to the temple, he saw trade going on. He beat out the traders and threw away the tables. The following are the reasons why Jesus had to beat the traders:

1. Commerce in the temple failed to respect God’s temple.
2. The temple authority made money in the name of God’s temple.
3. The traders cheated the people.

Jesus objected the trading and money changing because these spoiled worship in the temple. In condemning this Jesus quoted Jeremiah 7: 11. In this verse Jeremiah rebukes those who turn the temple of God into the den of robbers. Jesus quoted this verse to justify his action.

### **Jesus challenged by religious leaders**

Three important groups to take note of:

- a) Chief Priests:
- b) Scribes
- c) The principal men of the temple

Luke records the parable of the pound for the Christian communities which had come into existence after the Pentecost. He had their Christian leaders in mind. Jesus directed this at his disciples who, then were close to Jerusalem, supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately (Luke 19: 11, compare with Acts 1: 6).

The parable of the Royal Claimant is a last warning to the Jewish leaders. The parable of the Royal Claimant may be based on a historical event when Herod the Great had died in 4BC his son Archeleus went to Rome to ask if he could become king like his father. As the Jews did not want him as their king they sent a delegation to Rome to protest and as a result Archeleus became ruler over only Judea and Samaria in AD27 he was then replaced by Pilate.

### **Allegorical References**

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. A nobleman depart: | Ascension  |
| 2. Absence:           | Time between the Ascension and the Parousia  |
| 3. He returns:        | The Parousia: - Jesus second coming  |
| 4. Servants:          | The disciples who will be leaders in the Church  |
| 5. Hostile citizens:  | Hostile Jews (Jesus' opponents, Acts)  |
| 6. The Pounds:        | Gifts to the Jewish leaders but also the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church leaders (Acts). |

### **Meaning of some phrases**

- ❖ Slay them before me: Them refers to the unbelieving Jewish leaders, who had not made good use of the pounds given to them.
- Gifts to the Jewish leaders:
  1. Authority – they sat on the chair of Moses: Instead of using it to serve they enjoyed it for their own benefit by looking for honour “you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market place” (Luke 11: 43).
  2. Knowledge of the Law: -they, especially the scribes, had received knowledge to guide the people to love God. But they had made the Law a heavy burden, which they themselves did not touch with one of their fingers.
  3. Prophets to guide them: - but they had no faith in John the Baptist and would reject Jesus the prophet of the end time (compare with Luke 11: 47-51).
- ❖ I will condemn you out of your own mouth: - “you” refers to the Church leaders and all Christians; they receive a pound, i.e. the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They must trade with them, i.e. expand God’s reign on earth. Laziness or fear must not make them **slothful** (being idle or sluggish), passive and inactive.

### **The points made by the combined parable of the Pound (A) and the Royal Claimant (B)**

1. The second coming of Jesus (Parousia) will be delayed. (A) (B).
2. Till that time Christians, especially the leaders have serious responsibilities. (A)
3. At the Last Judgement there will be rewards and punishments. (A) (B)
4. Jesus will go to heaven to be appointed as Messiah-King. (A) (B)
5. The unbelieving Jews refuse to be ruled by him. (B).

### **THE WICKED TENANTS**

### **Luke 20: 9-19**

Tell us by what authority you do **these things**? (Luke 20: 2). “These things” refer to:

1. Entering Jerusalem as the Messiah (Luke 19: 29-40).
2. The cleansing of the temple (Luke 19: 45)
3. Teaching in the temple.

**To this question, Jesus responded in two ways:**

1. By a counter question: “Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?” (Luke 20:3)
2. By narrating the parable of the Wicked Tenants, which gives Jesus’ opponents to understand their authority will be entrusted to new leaders taken away.

**The parable is based on the following custom:**

1. The owners of large estates in Palestine who lived abroad rented their land to tenants who had to pay with part of their harvest.
2. If the heir of the owner died the tenant had the first right to the land. The parable is also a reminder of the parable of the Vineyard well known by Jesus’ listeners (Isaiah 5: 1-7).

**Comparison with the parable of the Vineyard**

1. In Isaiah the whole Vineyard (people and leaders) is blamed; **judgement:** Judah does not get other leaders but will be invaded, plundered and devastated.
2. In Luke’s parable only the care takers are blamed; **Judgement:** they will be replaced by new leaders who will be in charge of a new people, the new Israel, the Church.

The parable was addressed to people who exclaimed, “**God forbid**” (verse 17). But the scribes and chief priests had also listened. Their reaction: “..... *they tried to lay hands on him at that very hour.....for they perceived that he had told this parable against them* (verse 19). *But they feared the people.*”

**They perceived that he had told this parable against them:** they knew this because:

1. There had just been a discussion on Jesus’ authority on leadership.
2. They may have suspected that Jesus hinted at Old Testament texts which spoke about the rejection of God’s messengers (2 Chronicles 36: 16).
3. As Jews they understood that the Tenants stood for religious leaders.

The contrast between people (who are open to Jesus) and their leaders (who oppose Jesus) is typical of Luke; it is one of the characteristics of his gospel.

It is no wonder that the parable infuriated the religious leaders. They understood every detail of the story (it is an allegory, not a parable) in which it is they who are the wicked tenants who will lose their leadership position. Their authority will go to others. How hard on leaders and no wonder they wanted to kill Jesus.

**Everyone who falls on the stone will...** Those who reject Jesus will themselves be rejected. In Psalms 118: 22 the corner stone is Israel, without which the Gentiles cannot be saved. Christians identified the stone with Jesus, without whom no one can be saved. The stone is rejected: Jesus will be killed and thus become the corner stone (Acts 4: 11).

**But when it falls on anyone....** Those who follow Jesus will be crushed because they must renounce everything and even accept death as the way to glory.

**Allegorical traits**

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Vineyard                     | God’s chosen people                        |
| 2. Owner                        | God  |
| 3. Tenants                      | Its leaders                                |
| 4. Servants                     | The prophets                               |
| 5. Son and heir                 | Jesus, the Messiah                         |
| 6. Cast him out of the vineyard | Jesus was killed outside of Jerusalem      |
| 7. Others                       | those who follow Jesus, New Israel/ Church |
| 8. Rejected stone               | Jesus                                      |

## 9. Cornerstone Church

Jesus is the cornerstone of the new building, the Church

### **Importance of this parable for the early church**

The first Christians were Jews who had always obeyed the Jewish religious leaders. It was difficult to stand against them. But by killing Jesus who is the Son the leaders lost their authority (Acts 4: 1-12)

### **The Question about paying taxes**

### **Luke 20: 20-26**

The teachers of the Law and the Chief Priests tried to arrest Jesus on the spot, because they knew that he had told this parable (The Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard- Luke 20: 9-18) against them but they were afraid of the people. So they looked for an opportunity. They bribed some men to pretend they were sincere and they sent them to trap Jesus with questions. They aimed at handing him over to rulers, “Teacher, we know that what you say and teach is right. We know that you do not pay attention to anyone’s status, but teach the truth about God’s will for people. Tell us, is it against our Law for us to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, or not?”

The response of Jesus: shows that Jesus knew that they wanted to trick him and he said to them, “Show me a silver coin. Whose face and name are these on it?” “The Emperor” they answered. Then Jesus said to them “Well, then, pay the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and pay God what belongs to God.” The people failed to catch Jesus; they were amazed at his answer.

The Herodians (Sadducees who supported the family of Herod in political power) and the Pharisees teamed up against Jesus in spite of their antipathy (opposition) in religion and politics. The main aim was to trap Jesus into saying something which they might accuse him. They sent their young men who were good at pretending like they were sincere with what Jesus was teaching.

These young men wanted to find out from Jesus whether the Jews should pay the annual pool tax which the Romans began to levy (tax) about AD 6. When it was imposed for the first time this tax provoked a rebellion under Judas the Galilean (Acts 5: 37). The tax still antagonized (upset) the Jews, especially because the Romans required it to be paid with a silver coin stamped with the image of the Emperor’s head, contrary to Jewish scruples (principles) against images.

The dilemma into which the questions tried to put Jesus was that if Jesus said that Jews should pay tax, he would lose his popularity with the crowds, who hated the tax. If he advised the Jews not to pay tax, the Jewish officials could accuse Him before the Romans of political subversion (rebellion or treason), perhaps even zealotry. The Kingdom of Christ which He came to establish was not a political one, the dilemma could have come if it was a political and therefore could have opposed the political authority of Caesar. The Kingdom of God did not contradict Caesar’s authority to tax. Jesus asking for the kind of coin, with which the tax was paid, embarrassed the Jews. By producing it, they demonstrated their tacit acceptance of Caesar’s dominion since it was generally acknowledged that a king’s domain extended as far as his coins circulated. In producing the money, they also showed that they were using Caesar’s money and this obliged them to pay back his property to him. Jesus then indicated that both Caesar and God have their rights and what is given to them is not gift but the payment of debt.

### **The question about rising of the dead**

### **Luke 20: 27-40**

Be reminded that many Sadducees did not believe in resurrection of the dead and they came to Jesus and said “Teacher, Moses wrote this Law for us (Deut. 25: 5-6 the levirate marriage). If a man dies and leaves a wife but no children, that man’s brother must marry the widow so that they can have children who will be considered the dead man’s children”. They talked about a story of the seven brothers who all married the same woman after the death of the other. They all died without bearing

children and then the woman died too. On the day of resurrection, whose wife will she be? Because all the seven had married her.

Jesus answered them that the men and women of this age marry but those who will resurrect will not marry. They will be like angels and cannot die.

The way how the Sadducees asked Jesus showed that they did not understand the Scriptures which they claimed to have understood.

### **Why did Jesus quote from the book of Exodus?**

Jesus quoted the book of Exodus to show them that the Pentateuch did not give a basis for the resurrection of the dead.

### **Jesus teaching about resurrection**

- Jesus taught that the conditions in life after the resurrection are not like these on earth, since there is no need of continuation of race, no need of procreation.
- He taught that we should not think of heaven in terms of this earth because life in heaven will be different and the people will be different.

### **Sadducees**

They were a party chiefly drawn from priesthood (Levite). The Sadducees were another main party although in the time of Jesus their influence was declining. This party was composed of the rich people who owned land and they used to manipulate (use of one's advantage) their political positions to dominate the state. They were perfectly happy with the status quo and supported the Romans, since they were unwilling to risk their wealth, their comfort and place in the society. They controlled part of the seats in the Sanhedrin. Many of the priests were Sadducees and in religion they were Conservatives (maintaining the existing institutions). They refused to accept any revelations beyond the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). This meant that anything that is new which was not part of the five books of Moses was not allowed by these Sadducees. Some of the things that were denied by the Sadducees were beliefs in: immorality, angels, resurrection and demons.

### **The question about the Messiah**

### **Luke 20: 41-44**

Jesus asked them a question, "how can it be said that the Messiah will be the descendant of David? For David himself said in the book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit here on my right until I put your enemies as a foot stool under your feet." David called him 'LORD', how, then, can the Messiah be David's descendant?"

The initiative in the theological debate again passed to Jesus. Both Jews and the Pharisees recognized it as a Messianic prophecy by David under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Jews did not generally believe that the Messiah would be a divine being. In asking why David spoke of the Messiah, as "My Lord", the Jews were implying that the Messiah must be divine as well as human.

Jesus' comment on the Messiah reveals people's inadequate idea of the Messiah. The Jews looked forward to the coming of an earthly deliverer and king, a descendant of David (Luke 18: 38). But in Psalm 110 David called the Messiah "My Lord, showing that the Messiah was greater than him. He was simply an ordinary earthly king. He was God (LORD). A purely earthly messiah was an inadequate conception of the real Messiah.

### **Verse 44: "So how is he his son?"**

If David called the Messiah "My Lord" how could he be referring to his son? He was referring to somebody greater than him. He was referring to the Messiah, who is Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jesus warns against the teachers of the Law and the Widow's offering      Verses 45- 21: 1-4  
As all people listened to him, Jesus said to his disciples, "Be on your guard against the teachers of the Law, who like to walk about in their long robes and love to be greeted with respect in the market place, who choose the reserved seats in the synagogues and the best places at feasts, who take advantage of widows and rob them of their homes, and then make a show of saying long prayers! Their punishment will be the worst.

Jesus again saw rich people dropping their gifts in the temple treasury, and he also saw a very poor widow dropping in two little copper coins. He said,  
"I tell you, that this poor widow put in more than all the others. For others offered their gifts from what they had to spare of their riches, but she, poor as she is, gave all she had to live on."

The story of the widow happened in the treasury, a place in the Temple area where the Jews deposited their money offerings.

### **Attitude of Scribes and the widow to God**

By giving only part of their wealth to God the rich showed lack of total dependence on God. The widow, by giving all she had, showed her complete dependence on God. She placed her life in God's hand without, worrying anxiously (Luke 12: 22-23).

### **Jesus' attitude to outward display and genuine devotion**

The rich gave a lot of money to shoe off (See Luke 20: 40-47).

This is vanity and it was hypocrisy. Jesus' followers have a humble heart before God and men. The Gospel of Luke is a gospel of poor, women and the humble.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **Preparation for the Passover**

### **Luke 21: 37- 22: 13**

Jesus spent those days teaching in the temple, and when evening came, he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives. Early each morning all the people went to the Temple to listen him. Then Satan entered Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples. So Judas went off and spoke with the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard about how he could betray Jesus to them. They were pleased and offered to pay him money. Judas agreed to it and started looking for a good chance to hand Jesus over to them without the people knowing about it. The day came during the festival of unleavened bread when the lambs for the Passover meal were to be killed. Jesus sent off Peter and John with instructions. "Go and get Passover meal ready for us to eat."

**"Where do you want us to get it ready?** "They asked him and he answered, "As you go into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house. The teacher says to you, where is the room where my disciples and I will eat the Passover meal? He will show you a large furnished room upstairs where you will get everything ready." They went off and found everything just as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Jesus predicted his arrest and crucifixion two days before the Passover. The Sanhedrin was already seeking an opportunity to arrest him in the absence of sympathetic Galilean crowds. Their desire and Jesus' predictions were fulfilled in that the betrayal offer of Judas Iscariot provided the Sanhedrin an opportunity to seize Jesus secretly during festival.

Some have white-washed the motives of Judas Iscariot by saying that he was trying to force Jesus into a situation where Jesus would have to crush the political power of his enemies to establish his own kingdom. But the New Testament consistently portrays Judas as a man who was disappointed in the spiritual nature of Jesus' messiahship, decided to salvage what he could for the time he had

wasted in following Jesus. He did this by stealing from the apostolic treasury and, at satanic instigation, by betraying Jesus for a price.

### **Summary about the preparations of the Passover**

**Luke 22: 7-13**

- i. Find a room inside the walls of Jerusalem.
- ii. Lay the carpets (there was no table)
- iii. Buy a spotless lamb.
- iv. Sacrifice it in the temple.
- v. Remove all leavened bread from the house.
- vi. Buy a unleavened bread, herbs and wine.

### **Jesus' disciples follow a man carrying a jar of water to his house**

Jesus told two of his disciples to enter Jerusalem, look for a man carrying a jar of water, follow him into the house, and there prepare the Passover.

- According to the Jewish customs men carried water skins while women were carrying water in jars. A man carrying a water jar was very noticeable.
- The absences of names and the preparedness of the upper room suggest that Jesus had secretly made pre-arrangements with an **acquaintance** (associate/ colleague) in the city of Jerusalem.

### **Suggested Reasons why Jesus held the Passover secretly**

- Probably Jesus did not want Judas Iscariot to know where they were going to celebrate the Passover meal for fear that Judas would inform the Jewish authorities too soon and Jesus would not have time for the Passover meal, this could have had problems in terms of the institution of the Lord's Supper and the Upper Room discourse.
- It could have been difficult to hold a Passover with a large following of people since wherever Jesus went- the crowds was attracted and were following him. The crowd could have disturbed the very important time that he was supposed to be with his disciples.

### **Suggested reasons why Judas betrayed Jesus and why this was helpful to the Jewish Religious authorities**

- ❖ **Greed:** He was greedy for money (John 12: 6) and wanted to get some money.
- ❖ **Self-preservation:** As Jesus was losing he chose the winning side to save himself. He was afraid of being caught if Jesus was arrested and thought he would escape suffering if he had a service of the priest.
- ❖ **Ambition:** He thought he could trick the priests: he planned to take their money, but expected Jesus to disappear by a miracle when the soldiers came (as in Luke 4: 30). It would then become clear how powerful he was; everybody would recognize him as the Messiah.
- ❖ **Disillusionment (disappointed):** He was angry that Jesus did not fight and set up an earthly kingdom (most of the disciples shared the same- Luke 24: 21).
- ❖ **Satan:** Luke gives a clear reason, the devil tempted him and he fell. Whatever motives Judas had, the religious leaders were happy because they had to arrest Jesus when there were no people around. They feared that people might start a riot if they took Jesus openly. Judas' betrayal helped them to arrest Jesus secretly.

### **Steps taken by Jesus to ensure secrecy for the Passover meal**

- i. A man carrying a jar of water was unusual sight in that country where only women carried water. It must be a pre-arranged signal between him and a friend.
- ii. The disciples had just to follow this man up to his house without asking for directions and so risk being overheard by spies from enemies of Jesus (Religious authorities and Judas as their collaborator).

### **Features of the Passover and unleavened Bread and reasons**

- ❖ A lamb was sacrificed and eaten.
- ❖ Its blood was smeared on the door posts. At first the feast was acknowledged by the supreme right of God over the first born man and beast. Later, it came to acknowledge the liberation of Jews from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12).
- ❖ It was celebrated on the **15<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nisan** (April). The fact that death “Jumped” or “Passed over” the Israelites houses on that fatal night, showed that Israel was God’s first born or God’s chosen.

### **Unleavened Bread**

- ✓ It was an agricultural festival celebrating the first harvest.
- ✓ On this feast of unleavened bread was left out because it was seen as a symbol of corruption. Later the unleavened bread recalled the haste of the departure from Egypt which had prevented the Jews from making the dough rise. And also during the exile, they had no time to prepare good bread.
- ✓ It was celebrated from the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Nisan (Exodus 12: 8, 11, 39).
- ✓ It also reminded them of the bitter slavery of their ancestors in Egypt (Deut. 16: 30) and of corruption influence of Egyptian life (Exodus 13: 8).

### **The Lord’s Supper**

### **Luke 22: 14-38**

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles. He said to them “I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given in full meaning in the Kingdom of God.”

- i. Then Jesus took a cup, gave thanks to God and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. I tell you that from now on I will not drink this wine until the Kingdom of God comes.
- ii. Then he took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.” In the same way, he gave them cup after the supper, saying, “This cup is God’s new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured out for you. But look! The one who betrays me is at the table with me! The Son of Man will die as God has decided, but how terrible for that man who betrays him.” The disciples began to ask among themselves which one of them was going to do this.

### **The hypnotists**

The hypnotists flatly state that on Thursday evening of the passion week Jesus and the twelve ate the Passover meal (Mark 14: 12, 17; Matthew 26: 17, 20; Luke 22: 7, 14). According to many scholars, John contradicts the hypnotists by indicating that the Jews did not eat the Passover meal till Friday evening after the death and burial of Jesus. John 18: 28 does not state “They themselves (the Jews) did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.” This is after John’s report of the upper room, where the hypnotists place the Passover meal. On the surface it would appear that according to John either Jesus or the twelve ate the Passover earlier than the main body of Jews, or they did not eat it at all. Elsewhere in the fourth Gospel, however, the term “Passover” refers to the whole weeklong festival, not just to the meal involving the Passover lamb. John may therefore be implying that the Jews, although they had eaten the Passover lamb the previous evening as Jesus and his disciples had done, did not want to make themselves ceremonially unfit to participate in the further observance of the festival. Jesus and the twelve had the Passover meal earlier than most of the Jews because he foresaw his death before the regular time for the meal.

### **Two versions of Luke’s account of the last supper that verses 17 to 18 and verse 19b to 20**

Verses 17 to 18 is a shorter version while verses 19 to 20 is a long version. Most experts favour the long one because it has links with the traditions recorded in 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26. The shorter text may have arisen from the misunderstandings on an attempt to keep the central Christian itself as a secret from the pagans (Jesus used ancient symbols and gave them a new meaning).

According to Jewish custom, the pupils of a rabbi were expected to perform the duties of slaves for him. Here the rabbi did for his pupils what was not even expected of him to do. Jesus indicated to the disciples that the washing of their feet was symbolic of cleansing from sin and the issue of servant hood (humble service towards others and one another).

Jesus warned that one of the disciples will betray him. The disciples began to ask who it was. Jesus replied that the betrayer was close enough to be dipping into the same dish with him. Still the disciples did not know exactly to whom Jesus referred. In the confusion Jesus said the one whom he was going to give a piece of bread dipped in a sop was he. Jesus gave it to Judas Iscariot who immediately went out of the room into the night.

After the command to love one another, Jesus went on to predict Peter denials and called him by his old name (**Simon**). When Jesus talked about swords, the disciples thought Jesus was talking about physical fight with the enemies because Jesus said it is enough when they showed him the two swords. They missed the whole point of what Jesus was teaching them, Jesus meant that the swords were enough to protect him.

### **1. Jesus fasts at this meal      Luke 22: 14-18**

"I will not eat it until..... 22: 16- share it among yourselves, 22: 17. I will not drink this wine until...22: 18. Jesus fasts as a sign of the coming of the Kingdom. The Kingdom will be established through his death and resurrection. At the end of time it will be fully revealed.

### **2. The New Covenant 22: 19-20**

Through his death and resurrection Jesus establishes a new covenant, i.e. a new bond between man and God.

### **Differences between old and new covenant**

- a) The New is between God and all mankind, Jews and Gentiles (the Old were between God and the Jews).
- b) The New is closer relationship. Like bond between father and child.
- c) The Old Covenant was established through Moses; the New Covenant through Jesus.

### **Bread and wine in the Passover meal symbolize**

- i. Unleavened bread: they did not have time to prepare to make good bread, which means time is not there to be wasted salvation has come. It symbolized purity of those that partake the bread.
- ii. Bread does not mean just food; it stands for life, God's gift to man.
- iii. Wine symbolizes joy and happiness. God promises to give this in full measure because he is righteousness-i.e. determined to save man (Luke 14:18-20).

### **Bread and wine at the Last Supper symbolize**

- a. Jesus identifies the bread and wine with his body and blood. The symbol points to death: the bread is eaten, destroyed; the wine is poured out. The separation bread/wine, body/blood also signals death.
- b. Given for you... 22: 19 poured out for you....20: 20 Jesus gives his life for others.

### **Do this in remembrance of me 22: 19**

Jesus tells the apostles to do the same. In the book of Acts, we find the early church coming together for the breaking if Bread (Acts 2: 46) mainly on the day of the resurrection of the Lord.

### **3. Woe to the man      Luke 22: 21-23**

Woe to the person who will betray the Son of Man.

Present at the Last Supper is a traitor, the apostle's squabble about who is the greatest; there is misunderstanding. The Son of Man will die as God decided (22: 22). This means God did not want Judas to sin, but it means God is in control of all that happens.

### **4. An argument broke out      Luke 22: 24-27**

After Jesus' death the apostles will be in charge of flock; they will inherit his authority. They must know that truly Christian leaders are totally different from those leaders who don't have the mind of Jesus.

### **5. Encourage      Luke 22: 28-30**

Through his death Jesus receives the power to rule. The disciples who are discouraged now that Jesus' case has made such a bad turn are promised a share in his power to rule.

### **6. The Power of Satan overcome      Luke 22: 31-34**

- ▣ Jesus' prayer will save Peter from being overcome by Satan in spite of his initial failure. Not only Peter, but all disciples.
- ▣ The "you" in 23: 31 is plural. Weakness will become a source of strength for others, because the leaders, especially Peter, (the "you" in 22: 32 is singular) who experience how Jesus' forgives their sins, will be able to strengthen fellow Christians who are weak and have sinned.

### **7. A different missionary style      Luke 22: 35-38**

- ≈ During his ministry in Galilee Jesus was popular and so his followers had been well received; they were provided for and did not need purse, bag and sandals (10: 4; cf 9: 3). But from the time of his arrest, his condemnation by the religious leaders and his shaming death, he, the leader, will be looked upon as a criminal. So his followers must be ready for a hostile reception, ready to suffer. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "Let him who has no sword sells his mantle and buy one."
- ≈ It is unthinkable that Jesus was talking about real swords, fighting or the use of violence. He preached and practiced love of enemies, 6: 26-36; 9: 51-55; 23: 34; and commanded non-violence, 22: 47-53. This saying only stressed that there was a crisis to deal with. The disciples did not understand, so Jesus stops the conservation as hopeless: "It is enough." This is another instance of lack of understanding.
- ≈ He shared the fate of criminals (23: 37). Jesus quoted from the 4<sup>th</sup> Servant song of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53: 12b), identifying himself with the figure.

Jesus is telling his disciples that the days of easy mission work are over the disciples will be faced with a lot of opposition from different people. They should be ready for tough mission but they did not get what Jesus was communicating instead they brought swords.

#### **Summary**

A. The way how the Last Supper was done shows that there was a crisis (a crisis is a time of difficulty or danger). The way how a crisis may lead to renewed life or death. **Happenings showing that there was a crisis:**

- i.The Supper has been prepared in secret.
- ii.Jesus fasts as a sign of seriousness of the moment. He will not eat with them until the Kingdom has fully come (Luke 22: 16, 18)
- iii.Jesus announces his **imminent** (about to come) suffering (Luke 22: 16).
- iv.He anticipates his death in the rite of bread and wine.
- v.He reveals his last will:
  - a. Do this in memory of me      (Luke 22: 19)

- b. The greatest among you must be like the youngest and the leader must be like one who serves (servant)- Luke 22: 26
- vi. He says how one disciple is **faltering** (uncertain) in this crisis and how the others will fail too.
- vii. He speaks encouraging words needed in a time of crisis.
- viii. He foretells that they will experience hostility instead of popularity.

## B. Fulfillment

The Last Supper that Jesus told his disciples about his suffering was the fulfillment of all the Passover feasts:

- i. The Old Passover celebrated the exodus of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. It will be through Jesus' exodus mankind will pass from slavery of evil (sin) to the freedom of the Kingdom which he came to inaugurate (establish).
- ii. The bread and wine of the Old Passover represented God's gifts of life and joy. Jesus' passage from death to life will give everlasting life and perfect joy.
- iii. The Israelites sacrificed bread and wine and a lamb. Jesus gives himself as the lamb for the sacrifice.

By giving bread and wine to his disciples, Jesus was offering himself as a sacrificial lamb through death that would bring salvation to mankind.

### Luke 22: 37 compared with Isaiah 53

In the passage of Luke, Jesus identified himself with the suffering servant which was foretold by prophet Isaiah. Jesus did not want the disciples to be caught in surprise when he will be hanged with criminals.

### GETHSEMANE

### LUKE 22: 39-53

#### 1. Jesus tempted; he prays      Luke 22: 39-45

To be tempted is to be under the influence of Satan and the attraction of evil. Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray in time of temptation so as to put themselves under the power of God's love and escape the influence of Satan.

- ❖ Jesus went off from the disciples about the distance of a stone's throw and prayed "not my will, however, but your will be done" 22: 42- Jesus was tempted when he was saying these words.
- ❖ Jesus faced the choice to choose between:
  - A. Establishing God's Kingdom according to God's will by patient suffering as described in the song of the Suffering Servant or:
  - B. Establishing the Kingdom of God by using worldly ways; making himself popular, playing on nationalistic feelings, seizing political power. Compare with the three temptations that Jesus faced when he was about to start ministry.
- 2. In turn Jesus accepted death in obedience to the will of the Father.
- 3. This acceptance and total trust gave Jesus complete self-control while he suffered putting the plight of others a priority (22: 61, 23: 28, 23: 34 and 23: 43)

Jesus found the disciples sleeping instead of praying for the trying time they were about to face. Jesus asked them "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you will not fail into temptation."

### Peter's denial      Luke 22: 31-34

#### What led Peter's fall?

1. Fear to be arrested and be put in prison (perhaps followed by crucifixion). It appears he had not understood Jesus' teaching on fear.
2. He did not recall Jesus' sayings about persecutions on account of the "son of man."
3. He was angry and disappointed that Jesus had not resisted those who arrested him.
4. Instead of praying in this time of temptation he had slept.

Peter and John followed Jesus while the other disciples vanished. Peter was tempted and he denied Jesus just as Jesus told him before.

## THE FOUR TRIALS

### 1. FIRST TRIAL: JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN LUKE 22: 66-71

**Sanhedrin:** The word Sanhedrin comes from a Greek word "**synedrion**" meaning council.

- It acted as parliament for national affairs.
- It was also the High Court; cases were judged according to Jewish Law.
- Composed of a chairman (High Priest of the Sadducee party plus 70 elders {these elders were the chief priests and Scribes (mostly Pharisees)}).

#### Rules for the conduct of a trial

- a. An accuser had to make a complaint.
- b. Supported by two eye witnesses.
- c. A witness or lawyer had to be called up to defend the accused.
- d. A death sentence could be passed only one after the trial and never in the night.
- e. A person could not be convicted on his own testimony.

Many of these rules were not followed during Jesus' trial

- **If you are the Son of God, then....?** In calling Jesus the Son of God, the Sanhedrin meant the Christ, the Messiah. It is only now, when he appears powerless that Jesus openly declares that he is the Messiah. At this moment there is no danger that his mission will be misunderstood, as it is obvious that he cannot lead the nation to earthly glory. The religious authorities take Jesus' statement as an insult to God, a **blasphemy**, which is punishable by death. How does this sinful man, who breaks the Law, who is powerless and abandoned by all dare to say he is the Messiah.
- **"Tell us, are you the Messiah?** 22: 67- the Roman would arrest anyone who claimed to be the Messiah. Later the Sanhedrin told Pilate that Jesus had said that he was **Christ a king-** 23: 2 (Greek word for Messiah) of which it was a crime according to the Romans. However for the Jews a claim to be the Messiah was not automatically a crime. The Sanhedrin should have to make sure that Jesus' claim was false but they didn't.
- **"If I tell you, you will not believe me and if I ask you a question, you will not answer:** this is like what happened in Luke 20: 3-8. In other words Jesus indicated that their question was pointless as they won't believe him when told that he is the Messiah. Instead of giving a direct answer, he told them that he is the glorified Son of Man, as described in Daniel 7: 13-24.

### 2. Second trial: Jesus appeared before Pilate Luke 23: 1-5

**Why did they present the case of Jesus to the governor?**

- i. The Sanhedrin needed Pilate's approval of a death sentence.
- ii. They wanted to see Jesus crucified the Roman punishment for non-Roman criminals. Jesus' death on the tree was to be a sign of God's curse on him (Deut. 21: 23), a proof that he could not be the Messiah.

Nature of the charges

- ✓ Pilate would have been indifferent to a charge against Jesus based Jewish religion; blasphemy was no crime to him.

- ✓ Jewish leaders realized this and therefore accused Jesus of crimes against the state. However in spite of Jesus' admission that he was the king of the Jews, Pilate did not find a crime in him; he knew that Jesus had not tried to undermined Roman law and order; he posed no political threat. Yet Jesus enemies insisted, "He stirs up.....on tax: 20: 20-25; on his kingship: 19: 38; 22: 24-27.

### 3. Third trial: Jesus' trial before Herod

**Luke 23: 6-21**

At the Passover feast Herod was in Jerusalem. When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee he sent him to Herod, as that was Herod's province, so:

- i. Jesus' case came under Herod's jurisdiction and
- ii. Herod could know more about Jesus who had operated in his district.
- When Pilate sent the case of Jesus to Herod, he thought that will be the end of the case.
- The way Herod mocked Jesus shows he did not take Jesus' claim to be the Messiah or king of the Jews seriously.

Jesus made no answer      Luke 23: 9

- i. Herod did not take him seriously
- ii. Herod sought entertainment not truth.
- iii. Jesus identifies himself with Isaiah 53: 7

The Pharisees and the Scribes and the Sadducees oppose Jesus. Each group had its own reasons. But they also held some grievances against Jesus in common.

#### 1. Opposition from the Pharisees

- i. The Pharisees were upset when Jesus appeared to have little respect for rules which they considered important: rules concerning the Sabbath, clean/unclean, fasting, the avoidance of sinners etc.
- ii. They were honoured by the people for their faithful observance of the Law and the Tradition of the elders. Now they were worried they might receive less honour if people learned from Jesus that faith, love and mercy are more important than the strict observance of religious rules.
- iii. Jesus had denounced them (Luke 11: 39-44; 12: 1).
- iv. The Pharisees enjoyed popularity. When Jesus attracted large crowds they became jealous.
- v. Jesus was so popular in Jerusalem, that he could lead an uprising against the Roman Government. This would lead to bloodshed, a frightening idea for the peace loving Pharisees.
- vi. They felt attacked by the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector and of the Elder son. Below are the common reasons why these groups attacked Jesus.

#### 2. Opposition from the Scribes

- i. Jesus taught with authority, yet he lacked formal training as a scribe; he was not qualified!
- ii. Jesus accused them in the hearing of all people! Of
  - c. Wearing their long robes to show off.
  - d. Being proud as they loved the reverential greetings in the markets and the places of honour in the Synagogues and at feast.
  - e. Abusing their holy status to cheat widows.
  - f. To make a show of praying (Luke 11: 45-52; 20: 45ff)
- iii. He challenged the teachings of the scribes on
  - a. **Divorce:** - following the Law of Moses Scribes allowed divorce if the wife erred seriously (as taught by Shammai) or even if she made a small mistake (school of Hillel). Jesus forbid divorce (Luke 16: 18).

- b. **Riches:** - woe to the rich (Luke 20: 45-47). The Scribes were greedy and Jesus said that they “who devour widows’ houses and .... Possible meanings:
- i. Lawyers (Scribes) gave the impression of being holy men, by saying long prayers etc; so they had a good chance of getting the job of running the estates of widows. They would then make sure they acquired a big part of the estates as payment.
  - ii. Overcharging for their services in court cases.
  - iii. Frequent visits and seeking gifts and presents.

Remember the story of a generous widow (Luke 21: 1-4). This widow was not honoured; her misfortunes, widowhood and poverty, were seen as signs of God’s pleasure. Jesus honours her, because “she put in all the living she had”. Her total giving foreshadows Jesus’ total gift of himself when his body will be broken on a cross.

### **3. Opposition from the Sadducees**

They had much power in Jerusalem, so as Jesus approached the city a clash became inevitable

#### **1. A debate with Jesus on the resurrection**

**Luke 20: 27-39**

The Sadducees used the Law of the Levite marriage (Deut. 25: 5-10) to prove that there could be no life after death. This Law demanded the following: if a man dies and his wife has no child the brother of the man must take the wife to raise a son for his dead brother. Sadducees reason that God-through Moses- would not have made this law if there was life after death, because it would create confusion in heaven.

#### **2. Why the Sadducees opposed Jesus**

- i. Being rich they felt attacked by Jesus’ teaching on riches.
- ii. They were upset when Jesus proved from the Law the truth of resurrection (Luke 20: 27-40).
- iii. As they were in charge of the temple, Jesus’ cleansing of the temple showed contempt (disapproval) of their authority.
- iv. It also threatened to reduce their income. The sale of clean animals and the change of foreign money (unclean money) into clean Shekels (Shekels= Jewish money) was profitable.
- v. They were afraid that Jesus might cause an uprising against the Romans. This would lead to the dismissal of the High Priest and a change in the political situation putting an end to their privileged position.

The opposition of the Sadducees was dangerous: they had much power in the Sanhedrin, which had to judge Jesus’ case. The chairman of the Sanhedrin was a Sadducee.

### **3. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees together oppose Jesus**

The following were the common views which these religious groups had when they were attacking Jesus.

- i. As religious leaders they felt provoked by the parable of the pounds: “Take the pound away from him!” i.e. their power to rule.
- ii. By the parable of the Wicked Tenants: “He will destroy.... And give the vineyard to other people (Gentiles).
- iii. They were alarmed at Jesus’ claim that he was the Messiah, they were jealous because of his popularity in the capital city, and disturbed by the comment he had made on the title “David’s Son”.

It was these leaders, united against Jesus, who would decide his fate in the Sanhedrin.

#### **4. The fourth trial: Second by Pilate**

**Luke 23: 13-25**

#### **Pilate’s position and authority**

- 1) Judea/Samaria was a Roman province where Pilate was in charge as Prefect Governor. He was directly responsible to Rome. The legate of Syria reported on him to the authorities in Rome.
- 2) His province was constantly in “a state of emergency” as the Jews were known for their hatred for the Romans. So Pilate could take immediate action, as he did with those Galileans (Luke 13: 1-3). His position depended on:
  - a. His ability to keep law and order
  - b. His obedience to Roman law.

**Pilate has recently made mistakes causing serious unrest. He had:**

- i. Allowed the army standards into the Temple. They bore the image of Emperor and so were unclean, the Jews were furious.
- ii. Used the Temple money to build an aqueduct.

**Pilate was suspicious of Jesus' accusers:**

1. They were against the Roman government, so it was strange that they accused a fellow Jew of being against Roman rule.
2. He must have had information that there was no crime (against the Roman rule) in him.
3. He knew these leaders were jealous of Jesus.

**Pilate's dilemma:**

- A. Letting Jesus go might cause a rebellion by the Jews. This may have led to Rome being despised.
- B. Condemning Jesus would be against Roman law, as he was innocent of any crime against the state. Either choice could have led to Pilate's dismissal.

**Note:** Jesus was executed under Roman law by, Roman soldiers, in the Roman way.

**Bar-abbas**= the name meant “the son of the father”: At the Passover the Jews had a right to demand the release of Bar-abbas, a popular rebel leader. They needed little persuasion to vote their hero rather than for Jesus (this crowd was not the same as the multitude of disciples who had hailed Jesus as Messiah on his entry into Jerusalem).

Pilate realized that Bar-abbas was guilty before the law while Jesus was innocent.

**Importance of this trial for the early church**

For the church to operate in the Roman Empire it needed the approval of the authorities so Luke stressed:

1. Both Pilate, a Roman prefect, and Herod, who served the Roman government, had declared that Jesus was innocent.
2. Pilate had even tried to save the founder of Christianity:
  - i. By a compromise Luke 23: 16
  - ii. Asking the crowd to re-consider their choice of Bar-abbas.
  - iii. Pilate had acted under pressure of the leaders and the crowd (Luke 23: 21-23) that is why they shouted:

“But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" 22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested.” (Luke 23: 21-23- NKJV)

**On the way to the Skull**

**Luke 23: 26-31**

**A. Simon of Cyrene**

- ❖ He was a Jew living in Diaspora, at Cyrene, near Tripoli in Libya, about 1300km from Palestine. He had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover feast.
- ❖ Acts 6: 9 shows that Simon of Cyrene was the father of Alexander and Rufus, probably church leaders.

- ❖ The Early Church meditated on his example of “carrying the cross”- Acts 9: 23; 14: 27.

## B. Wailing women                    Luke 23: 27-31

- “If such things as these are done when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” Luke 23: 31. Jesus is ‘green wood’ meaning innocent, as Pilate himself would repeatedly declare. Yet the Romans destroyed him! How much more terrible will be the fate of Jerusalem it being ‘dry wood’ i.e. guilty of rebellion.
- The Jewish war- 66-70AD: In 66AD the Jews started an armed rebellion against their foreign rulers. It was only when the Romans had brought up one seventh of their entire army and after a five months siege of Jerusalem that the Jewish resistance was crushed, AD70.

### **Jesus' innocence stressed by Luke**

1. Jesus referred to himself as the green wood.
2. Pilate for three times said that there was no case with Jesus.
3. Herod did not find any case with Jesus- Luke 23: 15
4. One of the two criminals- Luke 23: 41
5. The centurion at the cross – Luke 23: 47

**It is especially for his Jewish readers that Luke stressed Jesus' innocence because:**

1. They were inclined to impute the bad fate of a person to his or her sin- Luke 13: 1-5
2. Jesus died on a tree; as if cursed by God.
3. The religious authorities must have pointed out to the people that Jesus was sinful (Sabbath, unclean, friend of sinners).

## CALVARY                    LUKE 23: 32-49

### **Three words spoken from the cross**

1. “Forgive them, Father”
  - a. “them” refers to the Jews: Acts 3: 17, 19, 26; 7: 59f; 13: 27
  - b. Jesus said; Greek word for “said” better translates as: “kept on saying”.
  - c. Jesus practiced what he taught- Luke 6: 27f
  - d. Jesus imitated by Stephen              Acts 7: 60
2. “Today you will be in Paradise with me”- Luke 23: 43
  - a. Paradise: this is a Persian word for “garden”. Either the “place” where the blessed await the resurrection or heaven itself.
  - b. The criminal hopes just to be remembered; he gets more: He will be there.
  - c. It illustrates the Good News that God is infinitely more compassionate than man dares to think: He gives to those who don’t deserve (compare with the rich young ruler and the Parable of the Lost Son).
3. “Father, in your hands I place my spirit!” –Luke 23: 46
  - a. Psalms 31: 5- the entire Psalm is relevant to Jesus’ situation (“Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth”).
  - b. It is evening prayer for the Jews.
  - c. Jesus added the address “Abba”

## WORDS FROM OTHERS

1. **The Jewish leaders:** “And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" Luke 23: 35
2. **Soldiers:** The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" Luke 23: 36-37
3. **Inscription:** “This is the King of the Jews.” Luke 23: 38
4. **One of the criminals:** One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” Luke 23: 39

5. **The other criminal:** But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Luke 23: 40-42
6. **The army officer (centurion):** When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." Luke 23: 47

## JESUS' DEATH

## LUKE 23: 44-49

Darkness covered the whole country: this is apocalyptic language. It does not necessarily report what actually took place, but it indicates:-

### **The meaning of Jesus' death:**

1. Darkness; it looks as if evil has won; however
2. Universal darkness is also a symbol of God, the Lord who controls history. It signifies God's judgement: from now on man will be judged according to his attitude towards Jesus.
3. *Over the whole country*: the judgement is universal, on Jew and Gentile.

Curtain hanging in the temple was torn into two: this double curtain separated the Holy place from the Holies of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter it, only once a year.

### **'It was torn' meaning:**

1. The Jewish way of worshipping God ends. The time of the physical temple is over.
2. The Holy Holies is open: from now on all have direct access to God, through Jesus.
3. The barrier between Jew and Gentile is demolished. They are no longer separated as clean and unclean (Acts 10: 10-16).

## THE BURIAL OF JESUS

## LUKE 23: 50-56

### **Jewish burial customs**

- The body was washed, anointed, and perfumed with myrrh. The burial took place on the day of the death (Deut. 21: 22ff- this passage explains the timing of Jesus' burial).
- Poor Jews dug grave, usually outside town.
- Richer Jews had a grave cut out in a rock, closed with a rolling stone.

### **Joseph of Arimathea**

- i. 35km Northwest Jerusalem
- ii. He was a faithful to the Law
- iii. Waiting for the Kingdom of God with all eagerness: "Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God." - Luke 23: 50-51

Why he took care of Jesus' burial

1. To express that he did not agree with the verdict of his fellow members of Sanhedrin.
2. To obey the Law that the body of an executed criminal be buried before sunset (Deut. 21: 22-23).

## THE RESURRECTION

### **Three apparitions**

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Early Sunday morning= | Women at the tomb       |
| 2. Sunday afternoon=     | on the way to Emmaus    |
| 3. Sunday evening=       | In a house in Jerusalem |

### **1. Early Sunday evening**

### **Luke 23: 55-56; 24: 1-11**

- The women remembered his words – Luke 24: 8 (Jesus and women in the book of Luke)- which words? The words that Jesus spoke about himself- Luke 9: 22; 43-45; 18: 33
- They did not find the body- Luke 24: 3

All the Gospels and also Jesus' enemies agreed that the tomb was found empty. For those who believed that Jesus had risen it was a sign of the resurrection. Those who did not believe in the resurrection maintained that the disciples of Jesus had taken away the body.

The apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense when they brought a report.

- i. Unlike the women they did not remember Jesus' words which they had not understood anyhow- Luke likes to compare the women and men in his book.
- ii. They had failed to learn from the OT that the Christ would suffer these things and enter into his glory- Luke 24: 26
- iii. The testimony of women had no value according to the Jewish and Ancient Near-East cultures.

## 2. Sunday afternoon

## Luke 24: 13-35

Two of Jesus' followers (Luke 24: 13) one is named Cleopas (Luke 24: 18), the other was perhaps his wife.

They saw him, but somehow did not recognize him (Luke 24: 16). Why did they not recognize him?

1. Jesus had died. Not in the least did they expect that he was alive.
2. Jesus must have looked different from the way he had looked the morning of his death.
3. Their expectations about Jesus did not go beyond hoping that he would redeem Israel .i.e. restore is as a nation (Luke 24: 21).
4. They has failed to learn from Scriptures that in God's plan the Christ should suffer for him to enter his glory (Luke 24: 25).

## Their eyes were opened

## Luke 24: 31

The passive form indicates that God is the agent:

- a. **God** opened their eyes
- b. **Through** Jesus when he explained how the Scripture (Moses and All the Prophets) revealed that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and then enters his glory. This explanation prepared them to recognize him in the Breaking of the Bread.

## Similarities:

- ▣ Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35)
- ▣ Philip on the road to Gaza (Acts 8: 26-40)

## Both stories report:

- i. Moving away from Jerusalem
- ii. Ignorance of Scripture
- iii. Explanation that the Messiah must.....
- iv. Insistence to stop (stay)
- v. A '**ritual**': Breaking of Bread; Baptism.
- vi. Sudden disappearance.

## Emmaus: Lessons for the Church

1. Faith in the resurrection if a gift from God and the risen Lord.
2. This faith is confirmed and sustained by Peter and the apostles, the church which..
3. Through the Spirit of Jesus teaches the true meaning of Scripture and
4. Gathers around the table of the Lord for the Breaking of the Bread to celebrate and strengthen the resurrection faith.
5. Jesus is always present, but his presence can be seen only through the eyes of faith.

## Second appearance

## Luke 24: 36-49

## Last evening

Who were present? - The eleven, Cleopas, his companion (wife?) and others.

The importance of the event for the early church

- A. Disciples were terrified, alarmed, and full of doubts: this shows that acceptance of the truth of the resurrection is based on faith not on any ‘proof’, or on Jesus’ appearances, not even on Jesus’ announcements.
- B. “Look at my hands and my feet.” With the scars of the wounds, my ‘identification marks’ It is I myself, Jesus, the same you have known all along. He is the same Jesus the disciples knew before his death.
- C. **Feel me; have you anything here to eat?**
  1. The resurrection is as real as ‘body’
  2. The risen Jesus is not just a spirit or a ghost: He remains human, with body and all.
- D. **He opened their minds to understanding the Scriptures.** The early church learned to read scripture in the light of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. It was their experience that
  1. Scriptures can be fully understood only in this light.
  2. To have a true understanding of Jesus, of his words and his deeds the disciples have to re-read the OT writings.

The Scriptures, in particular the Songs of the Suffering Servant, teach that God achieves the purpose of history (salvation for all people) through sufferings. This is also expressed in the Psalms referred to in 23: 34 (Psalms 22: 19), 23: 35, 36, 46, 49.

### **In the OT God used the suffering of his people to**

- 1. Free them from the tyranny of foreign powers;
- 2. Punish them so that they repent and return to him;
- 3. Save other nations.

Sufferings precedes salvation

This is a basic theme in the history of the Jews:

- a. The Hebrews passed from the sufferings of slavery and the trials in the desert to freedom.
- b. They went through sufferings and trials during the exile before their joyful return to Jerusalem.

Mission or sending

Luke 24: 44-49

Late same Sunday

The main points:

- 1. Through his suffering and resurrection Jesus has fulfilled what was written about him in the OT Scriptures, (Moses, prophets and Psalms).
- 2. The Scriptures have foretold that in his name repentance and forgiveness must be preached,
- 3. To all nations, the mission is universal.
- 4. The disciples are sent to witness to all this.
- 5. To help them in their mission they will receive the Holy Spirit, promised long ago (Acts 2: 16).

### **Luke expands the ending of his Gospel in the beginning of his second book, Acts**

<b>Luke 24: 44</b>	<b>Acts 1: 1-5, 9-14</b>
Appearance on one day <i>What my Father has promised</i>	Forty days ... <i>I told you about You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit</i>
You are witnesses of these things <i>The Ascension briefly mentioned</i>	In Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and the End of the earth
They went back into Jerusalem	<i>A more detailed description of the Ascension</i> ...from the Mount of ..... and went up to the roof
	Those present are mentioned

	Prayer mentioned.
--	-------------------

**The ascension**

**Luke 24: 50-51**

**Same Sunday? Very late?**

- The Gospel starts and end in Jerusalem (Luke 1: 14).
- The Gospel starts and ends with joy (Luke 24: 52).

They went back to Jerusalem filled with great joy (Luke 24: 52)- reasons:

1. They know Jesus lives and remains with them.
2. They are again a community after been scattered at Jesus' arrest.
3. Their lives have been given a marvelous purpose: being witnesses of the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom of God.
4. They have been promised the Spirit.
5. They know evil has been defeated and mankind saved through Jesus.

END OF LUKE'S NOTES. J. M'bwana 2013