

John 4:16- 18 shows how Jesus told this woman her life history. The woman left her pot behind to run to the city and inform people of how she had come across someone who could give life-giving water.

In John 4: 19- 25, the Samaritan woman diverted the conversation to worship at Jerusalem and at Mt. Gerizim. When the disciples came back, they were surprised. When they asked him to eat the food, he answered that he had obtained refreshment and sustenance through the will of his father. The climax of the narrative is reached when many Samaritans believed and recognised Jesus as the saviour of the world.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

1. Jesus gives life that is eternal and more satisfying i.e. the giver of 'living water'.
2. Jesus was the Messiah who brought unity and reconciliation between the hitherto enemies. This is a new type of life he brought in this world.
3. By talking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals the universal redemptive work which he brought in this world. He ended the discriminative attitude that existed at the time.
4. One can have eternal life if he has a proper relationship with God. It is a call for monotheism.
5. The humanity and divinity of Jesus was shown. First, he was tired and thirsty in his human capacity but as a divine being he gives 'life-giving water'.
6. Believers can only receive relief by getting into personal touch with Jesus.
7. Everyone can be cleansed of his sins. The woman was a sinner, she was attended to and brought near to God.
8. The life which Jesus gives is eternal, and no other person can give it. The woman sought satisfaction from men but all in vain until she came to Jesus.
9. Eternal life is not given by Jesus but it comes from God who sent him.
10. Jesus is shown as the omniscience i.e. he is all knowing. He told the woman all the acts she had ever done in life and that she had no husband.
11. Jesus eradicated the barriers of culture which destroyed relationships. The rabbi was not supposed to talk to women so closely. Jesus broke this law to bring salvation in this world.
12. Through Jesus, the differences in worship and locality had ended. What was needed was sincere commitment to God's will. Jesus had come to abolish all the differences which had gone even to worshipping places.
13. In John 4: 36- 38, there is a reference to harvest as a proof that the messianic age had been revealed and that the results were at hand.
14. Jesus' power in bringing a sinner close to God is equally proved. The Samaritan woman had faith in Jesus despite her background.
15. The conversation shows various ways through which Jesus won the people to the Kingdom of his father. He came in contact with them, established a common interest with them that led to spiritual truth, treated sin in a manner that could remove it.

16. God's salvation through Christ became effective. The Samaritan woman ran to the city to tell everyone what she had seen. This is symbolic of the spread of the Good News by anyone who believes in the saving power of God.
17. Jesus Christ had come to sacrifice his life and win sinners to his father. Even when the disciples brought him food, he declined saying that it is the obedience to his father that is the source of his sustenance.
18. When Jesus promised her living water, he meant that whoever accepts him will be guided by the power of the holy spirit.
19. Jesus is a source of love and is full of mercy. He saved the woman from her sins.
20. The story of the conversation ended in convincing Samaritans and the whole world that Jesus is a universal saviour.

THE SECOND SIGN: AN OFFICIAL'S SON IS HEALED (JOHN 4: 43- 54)

After staying for two days with the Samaritans, Jesus left for Galilee where he received a great welcome. He visited Cana where he has performed the first sign and he was met by a noble man (official in the court of Herod). The officer asked Jesus to go to Capernaum to heal his son who was in critical condition.

Jesus rebuked this man because he could not believe until he had seen. But the officer continued to show faith and asked Jesus to come and assist him else his son would die. Jesus told the man to go home; he would find the child well. The man believed what Jesus told him.

When he was still on the way home, his servant met him and told him that his son had began to recover and that the fever had left him the previous day at the seventh hour. The man remembered exactly what Jesus had said.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABOVE SIGN

1. The importance of faith is realised.
2. Jesus is a Messiah who is the answer to every problem.
3. Most people came to him because of his healing power.
4. He is the source of God's power.
5. The necessity to believe without seeing can also be noted in this incident.
6. Jesus has come to restore life of those who yearn for his assistance.
7. Jesus is a giver of life. He healed the son without necessarily touching him.
8. The salvation Jesus brought is universal. The officer was a Roman but Jesus assisted him.
9. The sign provides a basis for the spread of Good News to the Gentile world.
10. Jesus had powers over the forces of evil and all forms of suffering.



THE THIRD SIGN: HALING A CRIPPLED MAN AT THE POOL CALLED BETHZATHA IN JERUSALEM (JOHN 5 1- 18)

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for a feast of Perim or trumpets. He went to the pool known as Bethesda or Bethzatha which means 'a house of mercy'. There was a man who had been crippled for 38 years. Jesus asked the cripple if he wanted to be cured.

Jesus ordered the man to pick up his mat and then go. Later the man was seen in the temple. A member of the Sanhedrin charged Jesus for breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus comes with a new teaching that he was the Lord of Sabbath.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS

1. The question Jesus posed to this man was meant to awaken a sense of expectation and hope.
2. This sign proves that he is a Messiah. That is, in the messianic age, the lame would walk, and indeed Jesus had fulfilled this.
3. The Old Testament prophecies about a Messiah had come to be fulfilled (Isaiah 35 6).
4. Jesus proved that he is the Lord of Sabbath. He was using it for the good of man.
5. It showed that he is full of love and compassion.
6. Jesus restores the health of those who are in despair.
7. The figure 38 is an approximation of the 38 years of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness. This showed the ineffectiveness of Judaism to free sinful man.
8. Those who are spiritually lame need Jesus to bring a transformation in their lives.
9. Both faith and obedience are pre-requisites for salvation.
10. Jesus came to perfect the law. He healed on Sabbath to show that the law was made for man but not man being made for Sabbath.
11. It shows that God cares for all his creatures even on Sabbath.
12. God's healing power was manifested through Christ Jesus. He simply commanded and the man picked his mat and walked away.
13. Jesus had nullified the Jewish view that suffering was as a result of sin. It proved that it was part of life.

THE DIVINE SONSHIP OF JESUS (JOHN 5 19- 29)

This section attempts to present Jesus answering charges against him especially that of blasphemy. That he claimed to be equal to God.

1. Jesus appreciated that he alone could not do anything.
2. There is a connection between the will of the father and that of the son.
3. Jesus is here identified as a life-giving son of God.
4. Jesus has prerogatives from his father to pass judgement.
5. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the father.

6. All men on earth should honour the son. Anyone who dishonours him, dishonours the one who sent him.
7. The term son of man points to his humanity i.e. his incarnate nature.
8. God has chosen to talk to his people through his son.
9. The relationship between Jesus and his father is so marked that through this, Jesus can perform miracles.
10. John 5: 28- 29 points to the final judgement when the good shall be separated from evil. This will be done by the son whose authority came from God.

WITNESS TO HIS DIETY (JOHN 5: 30- 47)

1. This section reveals the authority of Jesus. He bears witness to God.
2. It is derived from the father who sent him.
3. More so his judgement reflects perfect knowledge and thoughts of God
4. All along the Jews had been demanding for external evidence and questioning his authority. However, Jesus gave the example of John the Baptist, a messenger who was a witness to the truth.
5. Jesus is presented as a lamp that burns and shines; so they should rejoice as witnesses of the truth.
6. Jesus refers to the witness of the works God had enabled him to perform.
7. In this section, Jesus refers to the Old Testament scriptures which the Jews believed in. He showed that all these scriptures were fulfilled in his personality as the son of God.
8. He shows how the Jews had rejected God's prophets and how they were about to reject the one sent by God.
9. John 5: 45 points to the view that they regarded Moses as their protector. However, he would become their accuser because they had failed to follow essential elements of the law.
10. Jesus, here, shows that if they had accepted the law, they would not have rejected the son of God.

THE FOURTH SIGN: THE FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE (JOHN 6: 1- 14)

It took place as the Passover approached, on the hill (mountain). This is the second Passover mentioned in the Gospel according to John. Mountains were places of interaction between God and man. Jesus tested Philip by asking, "Where can we buy food to feed all these people?" This presents a contrast between human perception and divine perception.

Five loaves of bread represented the five law books. This feeding was a messianic sign pointing towards the Lord's Supper and heavenly feast of God. The miracle reminded people of the Old Testament *manna* which God provided to the Israelites. In this Gospel, the feeding stands as an introduction to the discourse on the bread of life.

THE FIFTH SIGN: CHRIST WALKS ON WATER (JOHN 6: 15- 21)

After Jesus had fed the five thousand people, he knew that some Jews wanted to seize him and make him a King. The disciples got into a boat in an attempt to cross Lake Galilee to Capernaum. By this time, Jesus had retired to the mountain for prayer and communion.

By night, the disciples had moved for 3 to 4 miles and were overtaken by a storm. Jesus came to them walking on water. The disciples were terrified.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. The miracle shows Jesus as a Messiah.
2. He has supernatural powers.
3. The importance of prayer can be seen (Jesus went to the mountain to pray).
4. Water in this miracle stands for challenge not for cleansing.
5. The storm refers to difficult life situations including evil forces.
6. Jesus' divine power is clearly seen.
7. He has control over forces of nature and other evil forces.
8. Jesus speaks of himself, "Don't be afraid, it is I". This is compared to, "I am who I am", in Exodus 3: 14 implying his existence before every creature.
9. It showed that the disciples would face some problems but he would always be with them.
10. They must have faith in Jesus in times of problems.
11. Jesus is a source of consolation. He could not leave his disciples uncomfortable in such an overwhelming storm.
12. Jesus is the Messiah whose nature is mysterious. They thought they had seen a ghost when they saw Jesus walking on water.
13. Jesus is a source of mercy, kindness and compassion. He told them not to be afraid since he was with them (Jon 6: 20).

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE (JOHN 6: 25- 70)

Many people followed Jesus. They decided to cross Lake Galilee so that they could reach Capernaum before Jesus. They were astonished to find Jesus already there. Jesus condemned their attitude because it was not spiritual but based on material refreshment. They were looking for bread from him not his message. He called upon them to labour for food that does not perish i.e. eternal life. He alone can give this food.

The Jews asked Jesus to give them such bread (John 6: 34). Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me does not get hungry; whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty". (John 6: 35). Jesus stopped the Jews from murmuring amongst themselves.

He told them that no one came to the son of God unless the father who sent him draws him. In John 6: 47- 51, Jesus shows that those who believe in him shall have eternal life.

He contrasts the manna of the exodus in the wilderness with the bread of life. He shows that whoever eats the bread he gives shall not die. Jesus said that he was ready to give his flesh for the life of the world.

The Jews show lack of understanding of Jesus' words. "I am the bread of life," meant that Jesus is a source of spiritual nourishment. What is important is to accept, believe and trust in the one who God sent (John 6: 29).

Jesus castigated their spiritual darkness when they demanded for a sign similar to that of manna which God gave to Moses in the wilderness. He called upon them to have spiritual enlightenment. According to Jesus' words, it is only God who gives bread from heaven which gives life. The meaning of Jesus' words was clear he wanted to mean that God is his father who sent him on earth so as to bring eternal life to whoever believes in him. Since eternity comes through God's actions through Christ the bread of life, Jesus meant that his salvation plan had been fulfilled. Jesus contrasts the spiritual bread he gives with manna of the Old Testament which could not stop death. Jesus is the spiritual bread because his flesh was about to be given for the salvation of the world.

The teaching of Jesus points towards the sacramental meal of the Lord's Supper. It foreshadows Jesus' redemptive work through his death where his body and blood were to be given for the salvation of all believers. This also foreshadowed the great heavenly feast of God's Kingdom. This was a messianic sign that reveals Jesus as a fulfilment of the Old Testament.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF SHELTERS (TERBERNACLES) JOHN 7: 1- 52

- ◆ During this time the Jews stayed in the tents and outside their homes. They performed the ritual of pouring water in the temple as a sacrificial act.
- ◆ They used to light many lamps after dark (before the ceremony ended). This was a reminder of the light provided to the Israelites by the pillar of fire in the desert.
- ◆ In verses 1- 4, the divine nature is shown as he suspected death in Judea and refused to go there. He knew that his time had not yet come.
- ◆ His brothers wanted Jesus to go to Jerusalem and show his power at the feast of tabernacles. Jesus gave a negative answer saying, "My time has not yet come." He was referring to his death and glorification.
- ◆ Jesus could have noticed that his brothers' lives were still influenced by the law, Judaism and earthly pride. He was changing Judaism which was based on external rituals, yet he operated at the will of his father.
- ◆ Afterwards, Jesus went to feast in secrecy and could not demonstrate his divine power. He had become a figure of national interest, that is why they were capitalising on his being good.

JESUS' TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE AT THE FESTIVAL (JOHN 7: 14- 37)

As Jesus taught, the Jews were amazed at his teaching. They doubted him because he was not a scholar. He confirmed to them that his teaching did not

originate from man but from God. Jesus was speaking from the authority of his father. He had come to glorify his father not to glorify himself. His father was the true God.

The Jews challenged him on allegations that he was breaking Sabbath laws or Mosaic laws. Jesus set a challenge to them stating that Moses allowed them to circumcise even on Sabbath he wondered why they opposed his charity.

By implication, Jesus had come to perfect and fulfil the Old Testament law of Moses. The Jews expected a messiah to be extraordinary in nature yet they knew Jesus' mother and father.

They attempted to arrest Jesus but since his time had not come, this could not happen. The chief priest sent some officers to arrest Jesus, but he continued preaching. He went further to foretell his death and resurrection (John 7: 33). At this time, they failed to understand Jesus' words.

STREAM OF LIFE GIVING WATER (JOHN 7: 37- 39)

It was on the last day of the feast, the day on which water was ceremonially poured out of a golden vessel to commemorate the provision of water in the wilderness. On that day, Jesus taught about the water of life.

"I will give water to the thirsty and make streams flow on dry ground," he said. According to John 7: 40- 44, people clearly discussed Jesus' conduct in the temple. Verses 45- 51 show that the guards went to the chief priest having failed to arrest Jesus because they had been convinced by his teaching.

In John 7: 51, Nicodemus, a Pharisee who had gone to see Jesus at night defended him.

COMMENTARY ON THE ABOVE

1. Jesus was water himself that can give life compared to the water in the wilderness.
2. Jesus' words fulfil the Old Testament scriptures especially the words of Isaiah 44: 3- 4.
3. Jesus teaching here meant that faith in Jesus would enable the Holy Spirit to come to all believers.
4. The spirit he would give would produce good fruits or rivers in man.
5. The words of Jesus meant that the messianic age as foretold by the book of Ezekiel 47: 1- 12 had come to be fulfilled.
6. Jesus is a spring who gives life-giving water to all believers of faith.
7. It is eternal life which he has brought to all believers.
8. The symbolism of water in John's gospel linked to baptism, a new order of his conversation with the Samaritan woman, wedding at Cana.
9. It means that he can heal.
10. He has come to cleanse all sinners of their sins.
11. Water was a sign of god's blessings to his people. Jesus is thus, a source of God's blessings.

12. It appears that people failed to understand his words when he said that he was to provide them with water of life.

A WOMAN CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY (JOHN 8: 1- 11)

After the feast of shelters, Jesus went to Mountain Olives. The next day when he was in the temple, the Pharisees and scribes confronted him and brought a woman accused of adultery and placed her in front of Jesus.

"This woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery," they said. They wanted to accuse Jesus of sinning if he acquitted the woman. They also wanted to know whether Jesus approved the act of stoning the woman according to the mosaic law (Deut 22: 22). They knew he would have conflicted with the civil law of the Romans.

Jesus turned to them and said to them, "The one who has never done it, let him be the one to first throw a stone at her." He bent down to write on the ground. By the time he raised his eyes to look at them, they had already gone away one after the other. Then Jesus told the woman to go home and never to repeat the same sin.

SIGIFICANCE OF THE ABOVE

1. Jesus is a Messiah that has come to perfect the Mosaic law.
2. The judgement of these people on the adulterous woman was partial and intended to trap Jesus but he is a fair judge.
3. Jesus, by writing on the ground shows that he was unwilling to pass judgement onto the woman. Some scholars say that he was writing down the sins of the accusers while others say he had ignored their accusations.
4. Jesus condemned the sin of adultery but not the sinner. This proves that he had come to liberate sinners.
5. The event calls for repentance. All who wrong god should confess their sins and turn back to God, "Do not sin again."
6. Man is not a judge of others it is God who is the righteous judge.
7. This story exposes the reality that everyone is a sinner. It is better to find faults in ourselves than condemning others.
8. Even if they used the law of Moses to challenge Jesus, they forgot that Moses was given the law and Jesus interpreted this law. To this end, he perfected the Mosaic law and above all, he was more than Moses.
9. It appears that those who brought the woman were in a state of spiritual blindness. They did not understand Jesus even when he talked to them.
10. This question was intended to antagonise Jesus with sinners so as to alienate him from them. It should however be stressed that Jesus came to bring salvation to sinners.
11. This story shows that by nature man is a sinner. When Jesus told those who had never committed that sin to stone the woman, each went out one by one.
12. Jesus Christ is a Messiah; regardless of the gravity sin committed, he can still save mankind and bring him or her close to God.

13. Mankind can fully be reconciled with God if he approaches Jesus personally. This woman was so worried but Jesus relieved her of her worries, "Go and do not sin again."
14. It can also be noticed that by the time of Jesus, sin had proclaimed the hearts of the people that everyone needed salvation. When Jesus asked the 'righteous' to stone her, even the self-imposed 'righteous' religious leaders confessed their sins before Jesus and they did this by walking away because of their guilt.
15. Jesus' act of setting the woman free indicated that it is good to invite a sinner to repent than embarrassing or condemning him the way they were dragging this woman.
16. Christ is full of love and forgiveness. He forgave the woman and told her never to repeat the mistake. He can forgive us even if our sins are so many.
17. The incident confirms the view that Christ had come not to judge or condemn or convict sinners but to save them from the wrath of God.
18. God seeks reconciliation with man through Christ. There is no sin beyond forgiveness. Since he called sinners in the Old Testament such as Isaiah, Moses, he can call anybody irrespective of their past mistakes or blunders.
19. Jesus is a true son of God who knows the hearts of men. Even at the time when the mob were condemning the adulterous woman, he had already sensed their sins and he knew they were guilty of similar sins.
20. All sinners who have received salvation or forgiveness of their sins are called upon to remain in a state of holiness. They should never revert to sin. This is only possible if they make Jesus the centre of their lives.

JESUS PROCLAIMS HIS DIVINITY (JOHN 8: 12- 50), DISCOURSE ON THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (JOHN 8: 12-20)

- ◆ Jesus referred to himself as the light of the world. Thus whoever follows him will have the light of life and never shall he walk in the darkness.
- ◆ Jesus as the light of the world has fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures, especially Exodus 33: 22 in the pillar of light that guided the Jews.
- ◆ Whereas the pillar guided the Jews under Moses, Jesus is a new Moses who is the light of the world that leads all believers from darkness to light in a new exodus from slavery of sin to freedom.
- ◆ In John 8: 13, the Pharisees challenged Jesus because it was rare for a true prophet to declare himself.
- ◆ Jesus justified his words because he wanted to show them that he told them the truth about his father. This shows that Jesus is a revelation of the father. He is therefore the light of God.
- ◆ He has come to enlighten the people about the law and the Jewish rituals.
- ◆ He brought salvation to all believers from the bondage of sin.
- ◆ He portrays his divinity because he asserted that he stands by his father.
- ◆ He is compared to one sun which lights the whole world.
- ◆ Jesus has brought joy, happiness to this world. People must therefore follow him, believe in him, walk in his light and those who follow him no longer walk in darkness.

- ◆ Because he is the light of the world, he will lead all believers to heavenly glory.
- ◆ All believers through Jesus shall have the light of life, the light of spiritual life in this world and of everlasting life in the heavenly world.
- ◆ It is true that the Pharisees opposed his testimony, however, Jesus gave three proofs to justify his proclamation of himself.
- ◆ That he was conscious of his own authority, "I know where I came from and where I go." He knew he came from the glory of his father and he was going back to it.
- ◆ He knew that they were incompetent judges; they were ignorant because they judged Christ and his Gospel by outward acts.
- ◆ His testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and approved by the testimony of his father.
- ◆ John 8: 21- 30 shows the confrontation between religious leaders and Jesus
- ◆ He shows how he was about to die as a result of their sins.
- ◆ He invites them to believe in him to avoid spiritual death.
- ◆ He however shows the kindness to the few who accepted his Messianic doctrine.
- ◆ He exposes their enmity to him as a true Messiah.
- ◆ He gives them assurance that he that sent him is with him (verse 29). Here, he was showing his divine relationship with God as a Messiah.
- ◆ In spite of their rejecting his words, John 8: 30 shows that many believed in him. This brings out the idea of the remnant i.e. even if many have rejected him, those who have remained faithful are to be saved by him.

MEN WHO ARE FREE (JOHN 8: 31- 47)

- ◆ Jesus demanded for faith from the Jews so as to be his true followers. To him, physical descent from Abraham was not enough. They were still under sin hence, slaves of the law.
- ◆ In verse 34, Jesus tells his mission that he was going to free them from slavery of sin.
- ◆ This section also shows how they failed to recognise Jesus.
- ◆ They wanted to kill him which shows that they could not measure even measure to Abraham's standards.
- ◆ Even if they claimed to be true sons of God, they were sons of the devil.
- ◆ He called upon them to believe in him and his truth.

JESUS AND ABRAHAM (JOHN 8: 48- 58)

- ◆ Jesus was insulted by the Jews, they called him a Samaritan.
- ◆ He clarified the relationship between him and the father. He noted that the promises which his father had made to Abraham had been fulfilled in him. By this, he meant that whoever believed in him would not die.
- ◆ Jesus was referring to eternal life which he gives. Nevertheless, the Jews did not understand his divine nature.
- ◆ Jesus claimed his pre-existence to Abraham (before Abraham was born).

- ◆ The name 'law' was used in the book of Exodus to refer to God. This means that Jesus was one with God in fact, he was God himself hence, his divine character can be revealed.
- ◆ To the Jews, this was impossible and therefore, blasphemy. They thought Jesus was seeking cheap popularity.
- ◆ The Jews thought he had a devil or he was mad.
- ◆ To Jesus, they had refused to accept the truth and had rejected his words.
- ◆ Having denied connection with the devil as per their charges against him, Jesus asserted that he was very sincere in his intentions.
- ◆ Later in verses 51 and 59, he gives the doctrine of immortality of believers i.e. of life after death.
- ◆ He gave them a rule that when persecuted in one city, they should flee to another.

THE SIXTH SIGN: JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN (JOHN 9: 1- 12)

- ◆ Healing here shows the new messianic era in Jesus Christ
- ◆ It was on Sabbath proving that he uses Sabbath to do good and holy things i.e. healing.
- ◆ In John 9: 2 the disciples asked Jesus to tell them whose sin made such a person to be born blind. This shows the Old Testament understanding of sin being linked with suffering.
- ◆ Again, it was caused by either the sufferer or his parents.
- ◆ Jesus' response refuted such a necessary connection.
- ◆ It emphasised Jesus' teaching on the issue of individual responsibility.
- ◆ Jesus' teaching is a fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecies in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 18: 20).
- ◆ According to Jesus' response, the man's suffering was intended by God so as to manifest his power through him.
- ◆ Jesus spat on the ground, used this mixture of saliva and soil and rubbed it in the man's eyes. This signified God's power reflected in Jesus.
- ◆ The man was told by Jesus to wash his eyes in a pool of siloam. This was an Old Testament word to mean 'sent' a title given to Jesus the Messiah (Isaiah 8: 6).
- ◆ Instead of being embraced, this miracle opened Jesus to persecution.
- ◆ By this healing, it signified that Jesus is a source of spiritual light.
- ◆ It meant that before the coming of Jesus, the Jews were blind but by his coming, they ought to have received light.
- ◆ It was an act inviting faith from them.
- ◆ It was a messianic act that 'the blind will see', (Isaiah 35: 5).

FURTHER CONTROVERSY WITH THE JEWS (JOHN 9: 13- 34)

- ◆ The neighbours of the man who was healed and had known him for so long took him to the local synagogue. To the Pharisees, this was a violation of the law because it was against the law to heal on Sabbath.
- ◆ The Pharisees confronted the healed beggar. They accused him of being a disciple of Jesus since for them they were proud to be disciples of Moses.

- ◆ The man declared his faith in Jesus Christ before the Pharisees. After the interrogation, the man was chased away from the synagogue since he was considered an outcast.
- ◆ The Jews, especially the Pharisees considered themselves more righteous than anybody else. They were arrogant and used to challenge any associates of Jesus. This is because they had failed to understand the true nature of Jesus i.e. they still had the Old Testament views about getting a political messiah.

SPIRITUAL APPLICATION OF THE SIGN (JOHN 9: 35- 41)

- ◆ After the expulsion of this man from the synagogue, Jesus asked the healed man whether he believed in the son of God.
- ◆ In this way, Jesus had declared his Messiahship.
- ◆ According to John 9: 37, the man believed in Jesus.
- ◆ This was Jesus' step to eradicate their spiritual blindness.
- ◆ By implication, Jesus was a Messiah. This is because he is the light of the world. All who come to him receive full vision since he is the source of light.

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD (JOHN 10: 1- 21)

- ◆ This teaching of Jesus about a good shepherd starts with a parable in verses 1- 6 and then a discourse on a good shepherd follows.
- ◆ There is a relationship of this teaching with that provided in the synoptic Gospels; e.g. Mark 6: 34, Luke 15: 4- 6, then letters such as 1 Peter 2: 25, 5: 3.
- ◆ The idea of sheep and shepherd are often used in the Old testament in view of the Jewish activity of sheep rearing.
- ◆ Shepherds used to build strong enclosures where sheep were put and protected from there against wild animals.
- ◆ In the book of Psalms 23: 1- 4 and Ezekiel, the terms are used too refer to God and the Israelites respectively.
- ◆ Again the term used to apply to Israel's good kings who would protect their people.
- ◆ Jeremiah 23: 1- 8 uses the term shepherd to refer to the good Israelites who would constitute a remnant.
- ◆ Jesus in this section uses a parable. He says that whoever does not enter by the door is a thief, whoever enters by the door is a shepherd. He calls his sheep by name and leads them out of the wilderness.
- ◆ The sheep know his voice.
- ◆ In John 10: 7 he says, "I am the gate of the sheep."
- ◆ "Those who came before were robbers".
- ◆ Jesus refers to himself as a good shepherd.

COMMENT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' TEACHING ON A GOOD SHEPHERD

1. Jesus is the fulfilment of the Old Testament scriptures especially those connected to the sheep and shepherds.
2. It indicates that he is the expected Messiah because he is a King, a descendant of David and all the believers are his flock.
3. Jesus came to liberate all those who are distressed. He is ready to die or sacrifice himself for the sake of the sheep (sinners).
4. Jesus committed his life, strength, care for man as a good shepherd.
5. Jesus knows the thoughts, desires, actions of his followers (sheep) as a good shepherd. Jesus' knowledge of his followers produces love.
6. The term robbers is used to refer to the Pharisees, sadduces who had failed to understand Jesus and were insisting on acts of Judaism and the law.
7. In this section, Jesus warns all his followers to be aware of false teachers and religious leaders.
8. The Pharisees had failed to find the right channel to the father due to their ignorance of Jesus' mission.
9. Jesus being the door, it implies that through him, mankind can attain the gift of salvation.
10. When Jesus uses the term pastures in John 10: 9, he shows that he as a good shepherd is a source of eternal life.
11. In this parable, good people who depend on God are compared to sheep.
12. Christ is the door for all sheep. He is the one who can lead all believers to the father.
13. As a good shepherd, he is a protector of the people's needs, he is a guardian and a custodian of people's desires.
14. Jesus Christ is the best of all shepherds. He was ready to give his life for the purchase of his flock. He came to give life in abundance.
15. There is no person better than Jesus. He cares, he loves, he is so faithful and tender in the discharge of his duties. He is a good shepherd unequalled in the whole world.
16. It is because of his good shepherdhood that his father loves him. He confirmed, "The father loves me because I am willing to give up my life", (John 10: 14- 15). Here, Jesus is confident that his father cannot desert him.
17. Jesus shepherds not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles. He wants to unite all people in spite of their differences from 10: 16.
18. Not only does he know all the interests of his followers, but as a good shepherd, he provides entrance for his animals, they come in and go out freely.
19. As a good shepherd protects and gathers his animals when they scatter, similarly, Jesus protects all believers from Satan.
20. As a good shepherd, Jesus is concerned with the lost sheep. Christ gathers Christians into one Church for which he is a head.
21. As a good shepherd, Jesus provides a way to the heavenly Kingdom.
22. Jesus cultivates confidence in his flock. They cannot abandon him to follow others.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION (JOHN 10: 22- 42)

THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS

- ◆ The feast of dedication was instituted to commemorate the restoration of temple services.
- ◆ This was around 165 B.C. during the period of the Maccabbes after desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes.
- ◆ When Jesus was walking in the temple- Solomon's Porch, he was intercepted by the Jews who told him to make clear pronouncements about his messianic claims.
- ◆ The Jews had declared him as a messiah but their lack of faith and vision had made it impossible for them to witness his true messianic work.
- ◆ Jesus promised several things to his people. They will have eternal life if they believe.
- ◆ That they would never die (verse 28).
- ◆ Considering this as blasphemy, they attempted to stone him.
- ◆ Jesus here referred to Psalms 82: 6. He shows that God spoke to rulers and judges of Israel who were charged with handling justice. These were blamed for calling themselves gods. Basing on this, he wonders why they objected his claims.
- ◆ He reminded them of how the Israelites became sons of God at Mt Sinai, therefore, by acknowledging his consecration by God, he was confessing his messiahship.

THE SEVENTH SIGN: THE RAISING OF LAZARUS (JOHN 11: 1- 57)

- ◆ Jesus was in Perea when he received a message that his friend Lazarus was Bethany.
- ◆ When he heard about this, he said that such a sickness was for God's glory and for the glory of the son of man.
- ◆ Two days after, Jesus and his disciples set off for Judae. His disciples were fearing that the Jews would try to stone Jesus.
- ◆ Jesus realised that Lazarus was dead.
- ◆ When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days.
- ◆ John 11: 17- 22 shows a conversation between Jesus, Mary and Martha.
- ◆ In spite of the fears expressed by many, Jesus asked them to lead him where they had laid the body.
- ◆ Jesus wept because he was a dear friend of Lazarus.
- ◆ Before raising Lazarus, he lifted up his eyes and prayed, "Father, you listen to me."
- ◆ All of a sudden, Lazarus woke up and moved away.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABOVE SIGN

1. Martha showed utmost faith and she believed that Jesus could do anything to prevent the death or raise her brother.
2. Death is a means through which a believer reaches God. It is part and parcel of life.
3. Christ himself is the resurrection and life.

4. Jesus is the son of God manifesting his love and compassion through all believers.
5. Jesus gives eternal life. The conversation between him and Martha and Mary points to this.
6. His divinity could be proved from the fact that after praying to his father, the life of Lazarus was restored.
7. Again Jesus' humanity can be witnessed. He as a human being became sorrowful for losing a dear friend and to prove this, he wept.
8. The incident was full of human love and concern for each other. Lazarus' sisters had love and respect for Jesus, in the same way as Jesus had love and attachment to Lazarus.
9. This act proved God's aid or help to all who are depressed, melancholic or in agony. He can heal them and normalise their conditions.
10. The three days which Lazarus spent in the tomb pointed to the three days which Jesus was to spend in the tomb after his death.
11. This episode also pointed to his own resurrection. It was to show that he was about to go through a similar experience.
12. Through death and resurrection, the glory of God can be seen. The resurrected bodies would be glorious.
13. This sign also shows that death does not break the bond of friendship between Jesus and a believer. Lazarus was dead but Jesus still regarded him as a friend.
14. Again the disciples showed lack of understanding when Jesus said, "He is asleep," they thought that he meant normal sleep. But frequently in the Old Testament, death is referred to as sleep.
15. Also God manifested his power through Jesus when he raised Lazarus.
16. This sign had an effect on faith, most people accepted and believed in Jesus.
17. It is the trust, confidence and faith of Martha that brought this wonderful act. Martha tells Jesus that if he had been there Lazarus would not have died.

JEWS PLAN THE DEATH OF JESUS (JOHN 11: 38- 44)

- ◆ This wonderful sign of raising Lazarus resulted into divisions between the Jews. Some however believed in Jesus while others were challenged and became malicious.
- ◆ The Pharisees and sadduces formed a coalition and summoned a council.
- ◆ They feared that they would be denied their influence by the Romans if Jesus continued with such popularity.
- ◆ It was agreed that Jesus be killed.
- ◆ Since Jesus was aware of their declared hostility, he retired to Ephraim, 12 miles north of Jerusalem.
- ◆ It was also approaching the Passover, so Jesus was going to be in Jerusalem to perform rites of purification.
- ◆ The Jewish authorities had planned to report Jesus as soon as he reached Jerusalem.

JESUS IS ANOINTED AT BETHANY (JOHN 12: 1- 8)

- ◆ The account is reported in the four Gospels.
- ◆ In John's Gospel, it took place six days before the Passover in Bethany.
- ◆ John shows that it was in the house of Lazarus.
- ◆ While they were seated down for supper (Jesus, Mary and Lazarus), Mary took a pound of precious ointment and poured it over Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair.
- ◆ This oil was often used for perfuming heads of distinguished visitors.
- ◆ The odour of the ointment filled the house.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS

1. Jesus' greatness can be realised. The oil was of great value.
2. Anointing the feet showed that Mary was not greater than Jesus to anoint Jesus on the head.
3. Symbolically this rite meant that Jesus as a true King of Israel was about to enter a royal city.
4. This act was a preparation of death and burial of Jesus.
5. The act also showed love by pouring the precious ointment in recognition of Jesus' suffering.
6. This forms an occasion when Jesus predicted his death.
7. It also reflected him as a Messiah.
8. This meal which Jesus had with his friends was a kind of farewell meal and visit.
9. In this incident, Judas Ischariot proved himself as an agent of Satan. He was a treasurer and he protested against Mary's act which he regarded as extravagance.
10. It shows that he was still attached to earthly setting. He pretended to have great love for the poor.
11. In this incident, Judas reflected hypocrisy, yet he was ever attached to money or material things.
12. By Jesus justifying Mary's action, he acknowledged her kindness, a strong impact on people's faith.
14. The event also shows the inferiority complex exhibited by the chief priests. As such, it is absurd that they planned to kill Jesus and
15. Generally, their acts showed injustices in their hearts. At least, they should have known that Lazarus was innocent.

GUIDING QUESTION:

Comment on the significance of anointing Jesus at Bethany in John's Gospel.

EXAMINE WHAT JESUS MEANT (SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS RESPONSE)

1. Jesus meant that he is the gateway to the father. Whoever believes in him reaches the father.
2. Those who believe and trust in him shall receive eternal life.
3. Jesus himself is life. All who accept him are allowed in the Kingdom of his father.
4. It also means that he intercedes on behalf of believers to his father.
5. He mediates all followers with God.
6. He was about to die so as to reconcile sinful man with God.
7. Jesus wanted to show that whoever understands him accepts the one who sent him.
8. In its significance, Jesus has a strong relationship with God. He is his son. He unites man with God.
9. Christ is the way. In him God and man meet and are brought together.
10. So long as the disciples (and all followers) continued following him, they would not lose their way. In short, he is the beginning, the middle and the end.
11. Jesus' words meant he is opposed to fallacy and deceit. He is the truth as truth is even opposed to falsehood and error.
12. Jesus meant that his father is the end. Jesus can be recognised as a means to his father. No one can come to his father without passing through him.
13. Phillip's desire to have a sign that would reveal the father is a manifestation of his failure to understand the identity of Jesus. This was a problem of weakness in faith.
14. Jesus meant in 14: 10 that all the words and works were not his but belonged to his father. So, God has chosen to reveal his identity to the world through his son, Jesus.
15. Earlier in 14: 2, Jesus had already informed them that there are many rooms in his father's Kingdom and that he was going before them to prepare for them. Here, Jesus was predicting his death, resurrection and then ascension into heaven to prepare a way for all believers.
16. Jesus' words bear a messianic connotation and in essence express an eschatological meaning. He uses the words, 'I am' to remind us of the liberation theology in the book of Exodus where God revealed his identity to Moses in form of "I am who I am." This means Jesus is a new Moses who has brought salvation to all believers. He would do this through his death and resurrection.
17. Jesus uttered these words to build confidence in his disciples as they were worried of his going to die.
18. According to these words, the father dwells in him. Whoever seeks the father in Christ, he will automatically be found. "I am in the father and the father is in me."
19. Since Jesus is the truth all that passes through him become true children of God.
20. All believers are called by Jesus not only to confide in him but also to have faith in him as a saviour. Through Jesus all who knock shall enter, those who ask through Jesus' name shall be given for 'he is the way, the truth and the life'.

