

MAN'S EVASION OF GOD

The word “evasion” may be used to mean the following:

- Trying to do without something intentionally.
- Dodging.
- Turning away.
- Trying to forget.
- Running away.
- To ignore.

Therefore, the phrase “Man’s evasion of God” can be interpreted to mean the following

- Inability of man to consider God and respond to his requirement in their daily activities or behavior.
- The conduct of man which reflects dodging, or doing without God in their lives.
- The sinful acts of man which are contrary to God’s expectations.
- Behaving contrary to the principles required to live a godly life.

MAN'S EVASION OF GOD IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

The following are the ways through which man today tends evade God.

1. Through practicing sexual immorality like homosexuality, bestiality and prostitution. These are sexual deviations which are against the divine intention of God for sex. Accordingly, sex is for pro – creation, mutual love and companionship. Besides, the body of every believer is the temple of God. Therefore, such acts defile God’s temple.
2. Man is getting involved in murder or killing each other. However, God blessed the human beings to multiply and fill the world. This meant that God had empowered to continue bringing and preserving but not to destroy.
3. Some people worship many gods. This is against the monotheistic faith of the believers and therefore, against the oneness of God.
4. Man evades God by practicing witchcraft, magic and sorcery. This tends to cause harms onto others resulting into death and disharmony among others. Besides, believing in such powers reflect distrust in God’s powers and man’s desire to act independent of him.
5. Some people are selfish and therefore they tend to ignore the needs of those who are unable to fend for themselves. However, Jesus encouraged every believer to share with others is rewarded in the heavenly kingdom. He demonstrated this by encouraging the rich fool to sell all hi wealth and give the proceeds to the poor in order to attain the heavenly treasure.
6. Some people are involved in theft. By stealing one another’s property, one breaks the commandment of God which forbids such an act. Therefore, stealing is an act of disobedience before.

7. Some people swear falsely in the name of God. They take an oath promising to fulfill their duties which unfortunately they fail to do so. This show disrespect to the name of God.
8. Some people evade God through discriminating each other. They basing on sex, tribe, religion and color among others. This is sinful because all human are equal before God.
9. Some people live a prayer less life. They tend to put barriers to their communication with God and forget that He exists.
10. Some people are unrepentant and fail to put themselves right with others and with God. They continue to be sinful. They forget Jesus' teaching that only the righteous would inherit the kingdom of God.
11. Some people drink alcohol excessively. However, wine is a mocker is it defiles the purity of one's body.
12. Some people believe and practice superstition. They are strongly carried out by the belief that something bad is bound to happen by tagging particular events on to situations. This is lack of trust in God's power and protection.
13. People evade God through revenging and avenging on their enemies for their wrongs. However, Jesus encouraged every believer to forgive their enemies seventy-seven times seven. Besides, He said that the merciful here on earth would experience the father's mercy in His heavenly kingdom.
14. Some people evade God by exploiting the needy including the disabled and poor. This is under looking at God's creation.
15. Some people evade God by participating in gambling. This is sinful before God who created human beings to be workers.
16. God is evaded through hating one another. This hatred has always resulted into conflict thus creating disharmony and instability. This is disrespecting Jesus' desire for every believer to extend love to another.
17. Other individuals worship religious officials, places and objects other than God. These are obstacles to people's communication to God.
18. People are turning away from God by being materially minded. Because of the material wealth, such people are not bothered about God. This is because they believe that they have everything a human being needs.
19. Others evade God by being too evident. Such people treat others harshly without mercy. This is against God's will for mankind where harmony is the life desired.
20. The cases of corruption, bribery and embezzlement are forms of evasion of God. These are people who are self-centered and do not care about the needs of others.
21. Struggling for power is very common in the society today. The leaders in particular tend to fight each other as they crave for positions of authority. They forget that authority is God given.
22. People evade God through putting emphasis on one religious denominations and criticizing the others instead of believing in God. For example, it is difficult for a Christian who is a Protestant to go and pray in the Catholic church and vice versa.

23. Some people tend to blame God for whatever problems they encounter. They hold God responsible for their suffering other than looking at their own mistakes and putting themselves right with God through repentance.

CAUSES OF (REASONS FOR) MAN'S EVASION OF GOD TODAY

1. Accumulation of wealth makes some people to turn away from God. Such people think that they have everything they need in life. For this reason, they cannot see the importance of believing in and having God in their lives especially when they begin to think that they made their wealth on their own.
2. The suffering of some religious people just like pagans in the form of diseases and poverty among others turns some people away from God. People think that God is always there to guard these people. Therefore, their suffering makes it appear that God is not there.
3. Frustration in life makes some people to evade God. In an event of persistent or continuous suffering with all avenues for improvement exploited, a person may be forced to think that God has abandoned him or her.
4. Conflicting, controversial and different teachings by different religious leaders can discourage some people from believing in God. This tends to confuse people.
5. The delay in the proclaimed second coming of Christ tends to discourage some from believing in God. Such people tend to become too impatient and get caught up with the thinking and the feeling that such a preaching is false and may never come.
6. Bad behavior of some religious leaders like involving in defilement, rape, corruption, stealing church funds and many others. This discourages people from following and believing in the gospel truth.
7. To some people, believing in God restricts them from enjoying the pleasures of life like drinking alcohol and fornication among others. Therefore, they tend to ignore God in their lives in order to enjoy such pleasures of the world.
8. The discrimination practiced by some church leaders leads to evasion of God. For example, some religious leaders tend to respect the rich more than the poor yet they teach that all people are equal before God.
9. Economic hardships including poverty tend to make some people to ignore God. Because of desperate situations, God seems far away from them. It is for this reason that such people tend to concentrate on the practical ways of solving the problems rather than spiritual.
10. Poor preaching methods by some religious leaders make some people to be less interested in God. Some of the leaders over attack the believers during their sermons. Others tend to quarrel and abuse the worshippers and are perceived to be rude and boring. This makes some people to avoid going to churches.

11. Some people evade God because of the influence of formal education. To such people, the knowledge acquired may become a barrier to their belief in the existence of God which they cannot prove.
12. Some people tend to associate Christianity with the coming of the white people to Africa. To such people, the Christian faith is foreign to them. This is why they refer to it as the “white man’s religion” imposed on the black Africans.
13. Some people evade God because of their past sinful life. They feel that they have committed a number of crimes to the point where they cannot be forgiven.
14. The absence or the rare occurrences of miracles today as opposed to what is preached in the bible makes people to doubt God. Some people in desperate situations like childlessness and constant illnesses may get the feeling that God is ignoring them. This makes it difficult for such people to believe in the gospel truth, as they cannot see the miracles they expect.
15. Some people evade God because of failing to obtain material benefits from the church like education, money or any other tangible assistance. For such schemers, religious activities prayer, praise and worship may become time consuming without any material growth.
16. Existence of African traditional religion makes it difficult for people to truly believe in Christianity, which is seen to be “foreign”.
17. Some people are forced to ignore God because of the influence from their peers especially if such friends are non-believers. To identify themselves with the group, they have to behave exactly like the members.
18. Evasion of God is as a result of the Christian teaching failing to solve the immediate problems of the people. Problems such as accidents, diseases, poverty and unemployment have continued to exist despite the commitment of the people in their faith. In this way, some people think God seems to care less about the fate about his people.
19. Some people evade God because they are impatient. Such people think that their prayers should be answered immediately. Therefore, in case of delay, they think that God has forgotten them.
20. The influence of science and modern technology makes some people to turn away from God. Among the benefits, science has enabled man to solve some of his immediate problems like diseases without reference to God. Above all, to such people, for anything said to exist it must be proved. Unfortunately, they have failed to prove the existence of God through their discoveries.
21. Some people believe more in the practice of magic and witchcraft which seems to solve their problems. This can explain why some people still respect the demands of the traditional gods to the extent of offering children as sacrifice in order to obtain riches.

22. Some people are forced to ignore God because of the influence from their peers. This is especially if such friends are less interested in religious activities. For them to fit and identify themselves with the group, they have to behave exactly like the members.

Revision Question:

Qn.1. How is the church contributing to man's evasion in God today?

- Ignoring the tangible needs of the believers especially of the poor.
- Over demanding material support from the believers in form of donations.
- Discriminating the believers basing on sex, possessions and age.
- Open rivalry or conflict among the religious leaders.
- Corruption of some church leaders or being entangled in dirty deals.
- Making empty promises to the believers.
- Poor or boring methods of preaching the good news of salvation.
- Partisan politics which tends to divide the believers.
- False prophets or telling lies.
- Over demanding time for only religious activities amidst pressing needs.

HOW THE CHURCH IS BRINGING MAN BACK TO GOD

1. Through modernization of the ways of praising and worshiping God. This is done by using modern musical instruments like guitars and pianos. This helps to attract more people particularly the youth to attend masses and the church services since the occasions become more enjoyable.
2. Through providing education services to the people they serve. This is being done through religious founded schools like St. Mary's college Kisubi and Our Lady Queen of Africa Rubaga Girls' Secondary school. In such schools, religious activities like prayers are compulsory. Besides, the church offers scholarship to committed children from the disadvantaged families.
3. Through providing recreational centres like Nsambya sharing hall. Such places are used for entertainment purposes among others.
4. Establishing and running media centres like Light House Television, Radio Maria. This is attractive to people of all ages.
5. By organizing and encouraging bible studies. This may be on the daily or weekly basis especially in the evening hours. It helps to bring the believers together and inspire them more.
6. By providing guidance and counseling services to the people. This has given a sense of direction to those who are spiritually lost because of the problems in life.
7. The church has always organized the youth camps. This has allowed interaction with highly profiled religious leaders like bishops and dignified preachers. During such occasions, the youth vigorously participate in fellowship, prayer, praise and worship.

8. The church is building more structures to accommodate the increasing number of believers. Such buildings like Rubaga and Kansanga Miracle centres are well decorated and furnished and therefore attractive. This enables the congregation to be more comfortable thus making them enjoy sermons.
9. The church sponsors extra and co-curricular activities like football, netball and music dance and drama among others. In the Catholic church, there is an annual competition in music, dance and drama between the schools within a diocese. This has always created unity among such schools among other benefits.
10. Organizing and encouraging fellowship among believers. This helps in creating unity and making believers strong and firm in their faith.
11. The church is involving more people particularly youth in its management and administration. Responsibilities like ushers, wardens and altar boys are shared among the people. This tends to make the people feel that they are part of the church.
12. The church gives support to its organization including Young Christian Society, scripture union and Mother's Union among others. This helps to bring themselves together as they actively participate in affairs of the church.
13. The church provides employment opportunities in the public. Such employment are given to teachers and doctors among others. This helps to improve on the standards of living and because of this, they tend to pay their loyalty to the church.
14. There are also charity organizations like Watoto Children founded by the church to help the disadvantaged like the poor and the orphans. Such organizations cater for the basic needs of the needy by providing food, shelter and education. This helps to attract more people to the church and makes them more committed as well.

MAN'S EVASION OF GOD AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Much as the people in African Traditional Society had a deep-rooted belief in the existence of the supreme God, there were times when they behaved contrary to their beliefs.

Some traditional Africans could turn to believe in divinities (lesser gods) for assistance. They could consult such lesser gods in extreme cases like death, severe drought and famine through praying to them and offering sacrifices.

1. Africans honored and respected religious rituals, shrines and religious leaders as being holy and at times more important than God.
2. Some Africans used to wear protective charms on their body parts like around waist and neck. This showed the people's lack of trust in God's protection.
3. The traditional Africans worshipped the ancestral spirits instead of God. They forgot that the ancestors were simply mediators between man and God.
4. The Africans believed in wars as opposed to peaceful means of solving conflicts. They could organize for raids and this made people suffer.
5. The traditional Africans practiced magic, sorcery and witchcraft. This involved manipulating the minds of the people to make them believe in something. This caused harm, conflict and disharmony. Some even lost their lives. This meant that they

- trusted their other powers instead of trusting God's mighty power to act in any given situation.
6. Some traditional Africans disrespected their own customs and the taboos of the society some of which carried religious meaning.
 7. The Africans held a deep belief in superstitions. Among the Acholi people, meeting a cat especially the black one as one was on a mission like hunting, was a bad omen and it was possible for one to abandon the mission. This undermined God as being the controller of world events.
 8. The Africans were involved in human sacrifices. This was done in respecting the demand of the ancestral spirits. This was murder and against their own belief in God as the creator.
 9. Some traditional Africans blamed God for uncertainties like death and famine. Such were misfortune believed to have been upon the people by the spiritual world.
 10. The culture of the revenging and avenging was common among the Africans. This made the people to live under fear and it also promoted a rough life like fighting.
 11. In some communities, the less fortunate like the women, strangers and disabled were discriminated and mistreated as if they were sub-human beings.
 12. Some traditional Africans trusted their own wisdom other than God. They believed that they were capable of doing anything on their own without God's blessing or approval.
 13. The traditional Africans evaded God through making blood pacts and later breaking it. They showed faith and trusted in the pact other than God's power.
 14. Some traditional Africans worshiped physical features such as mountains, big trees, hills and forests. Such places were respected for their "holiness". In Buganda, the "Nakayima tree" now in the current district of Mubende was treated with such respect. Even rocks with unique curving were adored.
 15. There used to be power struggle among the Africans. They could fight to the extent of killing each other. However, even the people they struggled to rule were victimized by their fights.

MAN'S EVASION OF GOD IN CHURCH HISTORY

The early Christians:

The body of believers who lived immediately after the ascension of Jesus Christ experienced problems in the administration of the church despite having key personalities including the apostles like Saint Paul and Peter. These problems made the believers to evade God in the following ways:

1. The evasion of God had begun much earlier when Jesus Christ was still alive. Many people became confused with the teaching and the belief of God being three in one person. Others found it difficult to believe that Christ was truly God evasion of God.
2. There was division among the believers. The believers started following personalities like Paul, Peter and Apollo while a section claimed that they followed only Jesus

- Christ. This was the reason St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians had to defend the church to say that they were all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and were therefore one.
3. There was also persecution of the believers. Saint Paul before his conversion was one of those who moved up and down torturing everyone who believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 4. Idol worship existed among the believers. In the city of Corinth, Christians used to make sacrifices to idols. This was against the monotheistic faith of the believers as Jesus Christ had emphasized.
 5. Some believers rejected the apostles of Jesus Christ. Saint Paul was rejected by the Galatians who accused him of being a persecutor before his conversion.
 6. Some of the early Christians were involved in mob justice. A case in point was Stephen who was stoned to death. This was murder which was against the commandment of God. (Acts 7:54).
 7. There was discrimination among the believers particularly between the rich and the poor. This was during the Lord's supper and agape meals. However, this was a fellowship gathering meant to bring the believers together. (1 Corinthians 5:1-77).
 8. Some of the early Christians involved in sexual immorality. Among the Corinthians, there used to be incest and prostitution. This defiled the bodies of the believers. (1 Corinthians 5:1ff and 6:1ff).
 9. Some believers were dishonest. For example, Ananias and Saphira hid some amount of money they had got from the sale of their property yet they were required to declare everything to the church (Acts 5:1-77).
 10. Some of the believers held the attitude of "Leave it all to God". Because of this, some of them abandoned working and sold off their property in order for them to concentrate on prayer leaving everything for God
 11. Some of the believers became liars. For example, Ananias and Saphira lied to Peter about the sale of their property.

The middle ages:

This was a period marked by a reformation (changes) in the church. However, because of the changes, many Christians found themselves evading God in the following ways:

1. The Christians were taken up by the songs of praises particularly the hymns composed by Bishop Ambrose. Every effort was directed towards singing well in the church and this made them to forget the Christian virtues.
2. Many Christians concentrated on building monuments. They built images of great personalities who had contributed significantly to the growth and development of the church in and around the cathedrals. Many of these monuments were greatly adored by the Christians.
3. Some Christians concentrated on decorating the church buildings with beautiful pictures including those of saints. Some of them thought they would be put right with God through such activities rather than repentance.

4. There also developed a wrong interpretation of the trinity. Some Christians came to believe that God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit were independent of each other.
5. Some of the Christians were taken up by wealth. They thought that they had everything they wanted in life and ignored God.
- 6.
7. The educated Christians developed a thinking that God was only for the poor and ignorant or illiterate people.
8. Some of the Christians put a lot of emphasis on religious practices like reciting rosary. They were very strict about such a practice and forgot all about following and living a true Christian life.
9. Some Christians worshipped and respected the remains of great Christians and holy personalities particularly that of the saints. Their clothes and the shoes among others were adored as being holy and were treated with a lot of respect.
10. There developed the pre-destination doctrine (teaching) among the Christians under the leadership of John Calvin of Switzerland. It was widely taught that God had determined the destiny of a person before his or her birth to either go to heaven or to hell and nothing human could be done to change the arrangement. This was so confusing and misleading that it made some of the believers to give up with their faith.
11. The Christians also developed the doctrine of the sales of indulgence. By this, the religious leaders particularly the priests encouraged the believers to give some gifts like money in order for their sins to be forgiven. This made any of the rich Christians to think that they could buy salvation and they therefore forgot about repenting their sins.
12. Some of the Christians honoured and almost worshipped the religious leaders among them including the pope, bishops and the priests.
13. The missionaries used threatening method when preaching in order to win people's faith. God was presented as being a harsh judge who could never forgive. This instead scared the believers.
14. A lot of emphasis was put on the correct ways of worshipping other than the worshipping of God itself. This made Christianity to appear to be restrictive to the hatred of many.

MAN'S EVASION OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When God created the human both male and female in His likeness (Genesis 1:26ff), He expected them to respond to Him with faith. In Genesis 2:1ff God even involved man in his work of creation when he was given the responsibility of naming other creatures and later put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and guard it.

However, the events that followed saw man fall apart with God and this marked the beginning of the human race disappointing, ignoring and acting independent of God.

1. The first human beings disobeyed the simple command God had given them by eating the forbidden fruit. By doing so, man rebelled against God and tried to equate themselves with God. They also expressed greediness and became unrepentant (Genesis 3:1-7).
2. In the story of Cain and Abel, man acted with selfishness and jealousy. This led later resulted into murder when Cain killed his own brother and denied being responsible for him. It was for this reason that God disapproved his actions by punishing him (Genesis 4:1ff).
3. The builders of the tower of Babel, tried to act independent of God but with a disastrous ending. Their plan to reach God in the sky through their building involved false wisdom, selfishness, pride, lack of faith and trust in God and their desire to equate themselves with him. This could be used to explain reason as why God punished them by mixing their language and destroying the building itself. (Genesis 11:1ff).
4. While in Egypt, the Israelites were oppressed and exploited through hard labour. The injustices against the Israelites displeased God as reflected in the call of Moses and the eventual liberation of the Israelites.
5. The Israelites evaded God by worshiping idols. At the foot of mount Sinai, they made a molten calf to represent Yahweh (Exodus 32:1-7). While in the promised land, they went on to worship the idols of foreign gods. This was against their monotheistic faith as established at the foot of mountain Sinai.
6. The Israelites practiced sexual immorality such as prostitution and incest. This was an evasion of God because it was against the covenant faith. A case in point was Hosea's wife who continued with her prostitution despite the husband's plea for her to stop it (Hosea 4:1-15).
7. The Israelites demanded to have an earthly king. This was a direct rejection of God's authority as their ruler and therefore against theocratic background (I Samuel 8:1-10).
8. The Israelites evaded God by struggling for power. Their struggle for power showed their disrespect to God's divine choice of the persons He wanted to rule His people. King Saul unsuccessfully tried to kill David after he realized that the Lord had rejected him and favoured David to become the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 19:1-4, and Kings 11:26-41).
9. The Israelites disobeyed the Lord's command of carrying out the act of Herem. While in the wilderness on their way to the promised land, God, through Moses commanded

- to destroy their enemies and their property. However, when king Saul and soldiers were told to do so, he spared king Agag and the fatty animals of Amalekites.
10. The Israelites evaded God by persecuting and despising the prophets. Prophet Elijah suffered greatly in the hands of king Ahab and his pagan wife Jezebel. Even Jeremiah was beaten up and chained upon the orders of priest Pashhur.
 11. The Israelites become unrepentant. They continued with their sinfulness despite warnings from the Lord's prophets. For example, king Solomon continued with his sinful ways even when the Lord appeared to him commanding him to stop it.
 12. The Israelites evaded God by practicing religious syncretism. They worshiped Yahweh besides other gods like Baal and Molech- the disgusting god of Ammon. This was against the covenant faith, which demanded the worship of only God.
 13. Some of them disrespected their parents. The two sons of Eli, Phinehas and Hophni disrespected him and continued with their misbehavior of sleeping with the women who served in the tent of the Lord's presence at Shiloh. This was against the Lord's commandment which required respect of parents. It was for this reason that the Lord rejected them as his priest.
 14. The Israelites got involved in murder. For example, king David plotted the death of Uriah – his faithful soldier and yet the law had forbidden killing.
 15. The Israelites evaded God by selling parts of the Canaan land to foreigners. King Solomon sold off twenty towns in the region of Galilee to king Hiram of Tyre but this land belonged to Yahweh.

Guiding Questions.

Qn.1. How did the people of Israel ignore God in their lives?

Qn.2. Show how the Israelites evaded God after settling in the promised land.

Qn.3. How did Adam and Eve evade God by eating the forbidden fruit?

- Disobedience of God's command.
- Greed.
- Tried to be equal to God.
- Rebelled against God.
- Became unpleasant.
- Hid from God.
- Betrayed God.
- They showed pride.
- Acted independently.
- Worshipped the snake.
- Lacked faith in God.
- Disrespected God.

Qn.4. How did man evade God by building the tower of Babel?

- Pride as they wanted to make a name for themselves through the building.
- They were idle and yet they are supposed to have been working.
- They wanted to be equal to God as they desired to be with Him in heaven.

- They abused God's given freedom.
- They misused God's creation particularly the soil they used for the building which was later destroyed.
- False unity by thinking it was only the building to write them.
- Dodged the responsibility of being on earth.
- Greediness.
- Acted independently as they decided to work on their own to search for God.
- Lacked faith in what God had done for them.
- Lacked trust in God's provision.

Qn.5. How did man evade God in the story of Cain and Abel?

- Murder as Cain killed Abel.
- Selfishness i.e. Cain gave the worst of his harvest to God.
- Jealousy.
- Irresponsibility – Cain denied being responsible for his own brother.
- Lying as Cain told God that he did not know the where about of his brother.
- Rebellion.
- Unrepentant.
- Disobedience.
- Rudeness.
- Disrespect of God. Cain responded arrogantly to God.

EVASION OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They referred to Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter and therefore remained opposed to his teaching. This was because Jesus Christ came as a spiritual Messiah at the time when the Jews expected a political messiah to set them from the rule of the Romans (Matthew 14:13).
2. The Jews turned the temple of God into a market instead of using it as a place of worship as referred to it. This was the reason Jesus overturned their tables and beat them up.
3. The Jews got involved in marital unfaithfulness. This was presented in the story of the woman caught in adultery whom Jesus forgave for the offense (John 8:1ff).
4. The Jews put a lot of emphasis on religious practices like fasting that it almost enslaved the people. When Jesus tried to correct their wrong attitude, the Pharisees regarded Him as a law breaker (Mark 2:18-22).
5. The Jews particularly the Pharisees were very strict on the observation of the Sabbath day. It had become such a burden to the Jews. It was this reason that Jesus had to tell them that the Sabbath was meant for man but not for the Sabbath. He meant that man had to enjoy freedom on such a day instead of being enslaved (Mark 2:23ff).

6. Some of the Jews rejected the teaching of Jesus Christ. They stubbornly remained opposed to the gospel truth as Jesus preached. Jesus explained this in the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-77).
7. The religious leaders particularly the Pharisees were very proud of who they were. They took themselves to be more religious than anybody else.
8. There was persecution of the believers among the Jews. St. Paul before his conversion was one of those who persecuted whoever believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
9. The Jews had the thinking that Jesus Christ was only for them. This made them to think that salvation was only for them. However, they failed to realise that Jesus had come as a universal savior. According to the gospel of Saint John, it was for the love that God had for mankind that He sent His begotten son to die in order for everyone to attain salvation (John 1:1ff).
10. There was religious hypocrisy particularly by the Pharisees. As much as they were the custodian of the law, they behaved contrary to the expectations.
11. There was discrimination among the believers. This was practiced even in the places of worship in respect of one's possession. The poor in particular were ignored and the rich favoured. The Jews also discriminated against the gentles or the non-Jews.
12. The Jews had the heart of revenge. They continued to serve God with their unforgiving hearts. Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the unforgiving servant. Accordingly, the servant beat up his fellow servant who owed him yet his master had just pardoned for the same. (Matthew 11:21-77).
13. God was evaded through selfishness. This was demonstrated in the story of the rich fool who failed to share part of his harvest with the needy. (Luke 2:12-21).

Guiding Questions:

- Qn.1. Why was Jesus against the official religion of His time?**
Qn.2. Why did Jesus condemn the religious leaders of His time?

JESUS' RESPONSE OR REACTION TO THE EVASION OF GOD

The coming of Jesus Christ is presented as God's continuous effect to bring man nearer to Him. By His coming, Jesus established the Kingdom of God on earth and in doing so, He expected every believer to respond to His call of salvation.

1. Jesus identified Himself as the way, the truth and the life for every believer. He urged every believer to look unto Him for their salvation. (John 14:16).
2. Jesus declared himself as the son of God sent to bring the good news of salvation to the entire world (John 5:19ff).
3. Jesus encouraged all the believers to repent their sins. He pointed out that through repentance, God would forgive every believer and as a result, they would be His children.
4. Jesus said that salvation was for everyone. For this reason, He expected everyone to respond positively to the good news He had come with (Luke 3:6).

5. Jesus called upon the believers to be open and His message as they look for the truth in life. He said such people would be happy in the heavenly kingdom. He illustrated this by giving the example of Zacchaeus who accepted his message and left his past behind (Luke 19:1ff).
6. Jesus encouraged forgiveness and reconciliation among the believers. He expected a believer to forgive seventy-seven times seven. He later demonstrated this in the story of the prodigal son. Accordingly, the father forgave him after he had wasted the share of his wealth. However, this was to the disappointment of his brother (Luke 15:11).
7. Jesus encouraged His followers to be merciful to each other. He said he who is merciful would experience his father's mercy in his heavenly kingdom. He considered this as one of the true sources of happiness to every believer (Matthew 5:7).
8. He advised the believers to be born again in order for them to attain the heavenly glory. This was in a conversation with Nicodemus when he talked about spiritual rebirth for one to attain salvation through the ritual of water baptism (John 3:1ff).
9. Jesus called upon the believers to put their trust in God as their father in order to get what they desired (Matthew 7:7-11).
10. Jesus called upon the believers to give assistance to those in need like the poor and the orphans. This was by giving examples of the rich man who He told to sell off his property and give the proceeds to the poor and follow. He showed hard it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:18ff).
11. Jesus presented God being with all the believers. For this reason, He urged the believers to look onto themselves instead of looking elsewhere.
12. Jesus referred to Himself to look as a good shepherd and that the believers were like lost sheep. Accordingly, he said that he knew his animals by name and would take care of them.
13. Jesus called upon the believers to love God with all their strength, soul and mind as they are looking for him.
14. Jesus encouraged believers to love their enemies and be good to them instead of having them hated.
15. Jesus encouraged the followers to tolerate human sufferings which are for the good of others. He showed this by tolerating his suffering so that man would be set free from the bondage of sin.
16. Christ attacked the Jews for being religiously proud because of their strict emphasis on religious customs, practices, places and the persons. He said this could not put any man right with God.
17. Jesus said that the person should pray honestly. He showed that the heavenly father to respond and give them their needs.
18. He condemned the legalistic attitude of the Pharisees who thought they were righteous by observing the law.
19. Jesus encouraged the followers to ask, seek and knock. He who does so would receive, find and have the door opened (Matthew 7:7).

Guiding Question:

Qn.1. Why did the Jews reject Jesus as a messiah or the savior?

Consider the following points which are already discussed under the sub – theme of success. In particular, look at the reasons why the Jews perceived Jesus as a failure.

- Jesus was born from a poor background.
- Jesus was baptized like any other sinner.
- Jesus was tempted by satan and therefore appeared human.
- He was materially poor.
- Jesus fasted for forty days and he was considered as a mad person.
- He associated with sinners or the outcast like the prostitute woman.
- Jesus' act of cleansing the temple made him to appear against his own people.
- Jesus remained single even his youthful years.
- Jesus was arrested as a criminal.
- Jesus was betrayed by his own apostles Judas Iscariot.
- Jesus was also denied three times by his own apostle Peter.
- Jesus came as spiritual messiah yet the Jews expected a political messiah.
- Jesus kept on emphasizing that he had come to fulfill His father's will.
- Jesus was disowned by his disciples and appeared to have been abandoned by his father who sent him (Mark 14:50 and 15:34).
- Jesus' own disciples failed to understand his teaching (Mark 14:13-20).