

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE

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UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, **Mwesige Samuel** registration number **M22B09/029** do hereby declare that this research work is my own work and has never been submitted in any Institution of learning for any award.

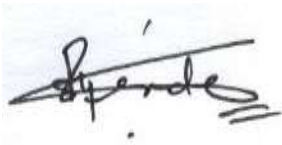
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APPROVAL

This research work by **Mwesige Samuel** registration number **M22B09/029** has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission to Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology in partial fulfillment for the award of a Bachelors of Divinity of Uganda Christian University.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Nyende', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Date: 13th August 2025

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“Let’s continue in doing good, in the due season you will reap if you do not give up” Galatian 6:9

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ABSTRACT

Jesus Christ the king of the Jews based his ministry in Galilee a city of gentles. Have you ever asked yourself why? This study “the significance of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee” discusses well this question. In my study I will focus on biblical understanding of Galilee and the significance of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and then application and conclusion.

The sources highlight the promises of Isaiah 9:1-7 (Israel’s mission, failure to obey God, Judgment and promise of restoration), Jesus the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1-7 (God’s kingdom restored in Jesus, as the promised King, warrior and priest which manifested through preaching, exorcism, healing, cleansing of the lepers, raising of the dead, restoring from the infirm, deaf, dumb and lame, providing food and wealth, peace and security on waters, social justice and he offered himself as a sacrifice and interceded for people), and finally Galilee beyond Isaiah 9:1-7 (Jesus the spiritual refugee, Galilee a city of marginalized and the arrest of John the Baptist).

All the three reasons above show that Jesus was the promised King who came to expand and restore God’s Kingdom to his people which was characterized by God’s dwelling and a blessing of abundant life. Noah’s offspring, Abraham’s offspring and Davidic kingship all failed to advance God’s dwelling and abundant life which had lost through Adam and Eve’s fall. This study shows how Jesus dealt with the sufferings, pain, sicknesses, and demons, lack of food and money which were seriously handled in Galilee

This study finally makes applications that; Jesus is the promised Messiah and King, preaching the gospel in diversity, preaching the contextualized gospel, empowering local leaders, preaching hope and restoration, and to encourage healing and deliverance ministry such that God’s people in the contemporary world and church should witness, advance and adhere to the God’s plan of creation which was restored through his son Jesus Christ.

THE INTRODUCTION

Jesus born in Bethlehem in Jerusalem was called a Galilean, a Lion and from the tribe of Judah based his ministry in Galilee, a descendant of David he surrounded himself with the Galileans the King of the Jews performed many of his miracles in the multicultural land of Galilee. Why is not called a man from Jerusalem or stationed his ministry in his ancestral home town of Jerusalem but in Galilee a town of gentiles? This study is aiming at exploring the biblical understanding of Galilee, the significance of Jesus' ministry in Galilee basing on the teaching of the gospel according to Mark, how the significance can be applied to today's Church and then conclusion.

Masterman in his article Galilee in the time of Christ said:

“From whatever aspect we approach the study of Galilee; conclusions have the most vital interest in so far as they cause us to picture this land when it became the home of him who is preeminently "The Man of Galilee." If anything can enable us to see what he saw, to be influenced as he must have been, or to reconstruct in our imagination the human life of him who is our example for all the ages, then our efforts are not in vain”¹

The Bible talks about Galilee 9 times in the Old Testament and 64 times in the New Testament, Judges 1:30-33 says that after Joshua's conquest the Israelites lived together with the Canaanites there,² Joshua 20:7 indicates that Kedesh in Galilee was among the six cities of refuge (more discussion is on page 22) and 1Kings 9:11 says it was a land gifted from Solomon to King Hiram for providing him with timber³. 2Kings 15:29 Galilee was among the cities conquered by Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, 1Chronicles 6:76 Galilee is listed as one of the cities allocated to the tribe of Naphtali, Isaiah 9:1-7 Galilee is mentioned as a region where the Messiah will bring light as Salvation, (this is the main focus of this study) and Zechariah 9:10 Galilee is mentioned as a region that will be blessed by God's salvation.

¹ Gurney E. W. Masterman, 'Galilee in the Time of Christ', Vol. xxxii, (Dec 1908) Pp 405

² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Galilee HISTORY, Geography & Religion of Israel', 2024 <<https://www.britannica.com> 2024>

³ William Smith. 'Smith's Bible Dictionary', 1863. <<https://www.biblestudytools.com>>

During Jesus' ministry Galilee was one of the three provinces of the Roman Empire that is; Judea, Samaria and Galilee Acts 9:31. Jesus and even his disciples were called the Galileans, not Jesus of Judea or Bethlehem where he was born because in Bethlehem he only lived there for little time and went to Egypt in exile (Matt 2:14). From exile, Jesus' real home, youth and ministry was in Nazareth of Galilee.⁴ Matthew 2:22-23 says:

“...but when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And went and lived in the city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled:” He shall be called a Nazarene.”

The opponents of Jesus denied him to be the Messiah or the Prophet they called him the man from Galilee⁵, Peter denied Jesus but his ascent identified him as a Galilean (Mark 14:70).

Galilee was multicultural and multiracial region because it was surrounded and inhabited by Phoenicians, Syrians, Arabs, Greeks, Romans, and others it was biologically and culturally mixed province⁶. This happened to fulfill the Old Testament prophesy of Isaiah 9:1:

“Galilee of the nations”

And Jesus' ministry in Galilee was in response to this prophesy and one thirds of Mark's account gives a typical Galilean ministry and preaching of the Messiah⁷.

⁴ Caleb Rosado, 'The significance of Galilee to the mission of the Church', 1994, (revised December 6, 1995) Pp 2 <<https://www.academia.edu>>

⁵ Meeks A, Wayne, 'Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel', Vol. LXXXV, (June 1966) Pp 159

⁶ Rosado. *The significance of Galilee* Pp. 3

⁷ The William Carey Taylor Letters - Mark's Gospel - Letter No. 13, <<https://sbhla.org>>

1. THE PROMISES IN ISAIAH 9:1-7

Jesus started his ministry in Galilee because of the Old Testament prophesy because Isaiah 9:1-7 says:

“¹But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish, in the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them has light shined. ³You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Median. ⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

This prophesy was a response of God that restoration will come to Israelites who had failed to meet the purposed mission of God which resulted into exile and judgment over them but because of God’s faithfulness and desire to fulfill his planned design and purpose of creation he also made promises of restoring his kingdom which was to be fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ as discusses in this section below;

End of gloom and distress vs. 1-2, the people of Israel who had been in spiritual darkness and under oppression of slavery and exile and in despair, will see a time of deliverance and restoration. The promise is that the gloom, suffering and distress of the past that had over showed them would come to an end and will experience great light which is a symbol of a new era of hope, peace and salvation. The imagery of

darkness symbolized death, captivity and exile whereas light is associated with life and deliverance or salvation⁸⁹

Joy and expansion of the nation vs. 3-4, YHWH promised a time where the nation will experience joy like; that of harvest or like the victory of warriors after the battle. The prophesy talks of shuttering of the burdens, defeat of enemies, and breaking of the yoke of oppression will bring freedom. The time of joy, freedom and kingdom expansion was coming where they will experience a time of prosperity and peace¹⁰.

In vs. 5 the promise of victory over oppression where the imagery of boots and garments of warriors stained with blood are used and that they will be burned meaning that the time of war will come to an end. This prophesies emphasizes the promise of putting to an end the time of wars and bloodshed and establishment of peace and righteousness¹¹.

The coming of the Messiah vs. 6-7 these verses bring out the central promise of the prophesy where by the child to be born will be a Ruler referred as a Wonderful counselor, and Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. His kingdom and reign will be characterized by justice, peace and everlasting rule. The promise is that the coming King will bring justice, righteousness, peace and will have unending perfect rule fulfilling God's promises to David¹². Many other Old Testament passages predicted the coming of the Messianic Davidic Kingdom for example 2Sam 7:8-17, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Micah 4:6-7 and many others which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Therefore Galilee became a place of sight of Jesus' ministry because of two main points thus; the Old Testament prophesy and Jesus' fulfillment.

⁸ Peter Nyende, *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling and Kingdom'*. 2023. Carlisle Cambria UK: Langham Publishers, Pp. 166

⁹ Peter Nyende, 'The gospels - Mark: Lecture's Notice', Topic 4, 2024, UCU Mukono: BTSDT, Pp. 1

¹⁰ Brevard S. Chalds, *'Isaiah: A Commentary'*. 2001. Louisville Kentucky, Westminster, John Knox Press. Pp 106

¹¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp. *'Isaiah 1-39. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary'*, 2000, New York: Doubleday, Pp. 233

¹² John N. Oswalt. *'The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah 1-39, the Messianic Prophecies'*. 1986. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pp. 232

Israel's mission, God wanted Israel to pay more attention to his voice and commandments because Israel was his possession and most treasured and His royal priests, and holy nation:

“...you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all people, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...” Exodus 19:4-5.

Priests were to be attendants in God's Temple as His servants (Ezra 2:43, 58 the temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, all the temple servants and sons of Solomon's servants were 392), to offer and preside over sacrifices in the Temple (Exodus 29:10-18) and to represent people before YHWH as symbolized in Aaron's priestly vestments (Exodus 28:29). With these two issues of being God's treasure and Kingdom priests, Israel was to represent God to others nations and through obedience and submitting to His laws they were to enjoy abundant life and much blessings, which would attract other nations also to obey and submit to YHWH¹³

Failure to obey God, Israel's failure can be categorized into two thus the Davidic Kingship and the Israelites. The Davidic Kings failed to obey God and to rule in justice they instead disobeyed mainly in worship. For example they either worshiped idols or embraced Israel's idolatry, built high places, pillars, alters, build houses for Baal, sacrificed children, consulted medium, introduced Baal's alter and image of Asherah in God's Temple. Idolatry worship did not affect kings only but also affected even the people of Israel who also followed the custom of idolatry practiced by the kings. As a result, the kings became worshipers of foreign gods rather than being priests of YHWH, failed in the role of being king-warriors, and also failed to extend God's kingdom abroad through subjugating defiant nations to turn to God's rule. They also failed to exercise justice to God's people for example King Ahab confiscated Naboth's vineyard (1Kings 21:5-18), Manasseh shed innocent blood (2Kings 21:16) thus failed to represent God with abundant life and blessing.

¹³ Nyende. *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling'*. Pg. 35-40

Judgment; Israel failed to obey and to live in accordance to the standards of their calling God punished them through curses which Moses forewarned (Deuteronomy 28:15-68), Samaria fell under captivity of Assyria (2Kings 17:6-8) and Judah was judged to be captured by Babylon (2Kings 23:26-27). Other judgments to Israelites were to fall by sword (Jeremiah 15:5-9), the kings were to be dethroned (Hosea 10:7), Israelites were to be servants of their enemies (Jeremiah 15:14), were to die of famine and pestilence though they had escaped sword (Jeremiah 21:9) the land was to become isolated and unproductive (Jeremiah 4:23-26) and finally the Temple would be destroyed (Jeremiah 7:12-14). Israel was judged because they worshipped other gods, and followed the customs of other nations and the customs introduced by their Kings¹⁴ in 733 BCE they were conquered by Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III. Galilee the land of Issachar or Zebulun fell first to the Assyrians first and Israelites were taken as captives.

Promise of restoration, since God is faithful to his word and covenant he promised restoration of his Kingdom and Davidic Kingdom which he swore to Abraham. Isaiah mentions prophesy of restoration which would happen to Galilee first because it is the town faced suffering first. The promise was that people of Israel were to experience the end of gloom and distress and great light out of darkness (Vs. 1-2), were to be freed from their oppressors and were to get joy and expansion of the Kingdom (Vs. 3-4), the promise of victory over oppression (Vs. 5) and finally they were to experience peace and receive justice by the Davidic King (6-7)¹⁵. Since God's promises come to pass, Galilee attracted Jesus for his ministry so that the promises of God made through Isaiah can be fulfilled.

2. ISAIAH 9:1-7 FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST.

Fulfillment in Christ: Galilee became a place of sight of Jesus' ministry because it is where he first proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and urged people to repent and believe in the good news preached. It was prophesied by God that Galilee

¹⁴ Nyende. *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling'*. Pp. 112

¹⁵ Nyende. *'The Restoration of God's dwelling'*. Pp. 166

will be the first to receive the Kingdom of God according to Isaiah's prophesy in 9:1-7 as it was the first to suffer from the Assyrian invasion¹⁶. This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ according to the account of Mark however, Matthew gives a detailed narrative about the Isaiah's prophesy which referred to the promised Davidic King¹⁷.

Fulfillment of the restoration of God's kingdom in Christ; at Galilee the fulfillment of God's kingdom was announced that had come (Mark 1:14-15), he also said that the cursing out of demons using the power of God shows that the kingdom of God is here (Luke 11:20). However, Jesus died when it had not fully restored because Paul says that there is a time when Jesus will hand over the kingdom to his father who is God (1Cor 15:23-29) and then will dwell with his people in his Kingdom (Rev 21:1-5).

Promised king; At Galilee Jesus showed himself as the promised Davidic King because it is where he called his disciples from (Mark 1:16), replied the messenger came from John the Baptist who were asking whether they should wait for the Messiah (Matt 11:2-4), during his crucifixion over his head they placed a written sign saying Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (Mark 15:26) and he further manifested through the following roles;

Preaching, Jesus preached the good news such that people can return back to God through repentance and believing in God and God's Kingdom would get restored to them because sin would be defeated. Mark records the phrase Kingdom of God 14 times which not only mean everything over which God exercises his sovereign authority but also means a particular worldwide kingdom over which Messiah Himself rules directly.¹⁸ One to become the descendant of Abraham was not only through circumcision only but through believing and repentance and this would make them obey God's commands and begin to enjoy good life, joy and peace which God had planned for them at the beginning before sin came into the world. Luke 13:1-3 Jesus

¹⁶ Robert Charles Sproul, *'Reformed study bible (NKJV)'*, 1995, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Pp 1037

¹⁷ Craig S. Keener. *'The IVP Bible Background Commentary'*, 2016, Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, Pp. 54

¹⁸ Thomas L. Constable, *'Notes on Mark' 2025*. Pp. 40

calls people to repentance through reminding them the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled in their sacrifice. The tone shows that he had compassion towards them¹⁹.

Exorcism, this issue of casting out demons and evil spirits by the power of God manifested the restoration of God's Kingdom because it was one way of defeating God's enemies who were not human enemies or nations during Jesus' ministry but physical enemies had turned into spiritual entities like Satan, demons and evil spirits. Mark 1:23-28 records Jesus' first act in public ministry as exorcism in Capernaum because Satan, demons and evil spirits were behind people's suffering, sickness and all maladies in human beings and finally caused disobedience against YHWH and leading people astray, inciting people against the promised King (John 8:42-44). Satan continued to be against God's purposes through; tempting God's people (Matt 6:13), sowing tale in field (Matt 13:39), snatching good news from people's hearts (Mark 4:15), was behind Judah Iscariot's betrayal (John 13:2), and had come to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10)²⁰

Jesus as warrior king of David pointed out that he had come to advance God's Kingdom through exorcism beginning with Galilee because most of his exorcism is carried out in this city. Matthew 12:28 says:

“...if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come to you”.

Mark 1:23-27 narrates the story of a man with evil spirits whom Jesus delivered, this act made people to tell others in Galilee about Jesus who has authority over evil spirits and has come to extend God's kingdom. The evil spirits themselves acknowledged the power of God Jesus had over them in Mark 1:24, 3:11, 5:7, Matt 8:29 and Luke 8:28 the demons shouted before Jesus:

“...what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have come to destroy us?” Satan confirmed his defeat in Luke 10:18 when Jesus sought of the devil falling down from heaven and this marked the plunder of God's Kingdom via exorcism which the disciples rejoiced of. Mark's other exorcism accounts include;

¹⁹ Rosado, *'The significance of Galilee'*, Pp. 3

²⁰ Nyende. *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling'*, Pp. 161-163

3:10-11 "...whenever the unclean spirit saw him, they fell down before him and cried out you are the son of God"

5:1-20 "a man with unclean spirits who lived in the tomb",

6:6-7 "...laid his hands on a few people and healed them, gave them authority over the unclean spirits"

7:25, 30 "she begged to cast out the demon on her daughter, she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone",

9:14-29 but Vs. 25 says: "he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it you mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again".

Satan as the prince of the world had many people under his power and control deceiving them and making them unreceptive to the good news of God's Kingdom this brought Jesus to deal with him through exorcism.

Healing manifested God's kingdom, Mark recorded Jesus' healing in Galilee with the intension of showing the kingdom of God for example the healing of Peter's mother in law (Mark 1:29-34) and all the sick people came to him. Satan oppressed people with sickness which caused pain, misery and suffering to God's people who confronts directly God's kingdom, for example Luke 13:16 brings out a woman with a curved spine whom Jesus healed on Sabbath. Jesus says

"...and ought not this woman a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Jesus exercised healing in Galilee in order that the promise of Galilee receiving God's kingdom can be fulfilled so that his people may receive peace, joy, and blessings through healing accorded to them for example Acts 10:36-38 says:

"As for the word that he sent to Israel preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went

about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him”

The healings referred to in Acts above include: the bed ridden servant of the centurion (Matt 8:5-13), the epileptic boy who had suffered greatly (Luke 9:42), the daughter of a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30), seven women with Mary Magdalene inclusive (Luke 8:1-2) and Luke (6:18, 7:2) also records those who were being troubles with unclean spirits were healed and delivered from Satan’s oppression as Matthew 4:24-25 puts it:

“...so his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pain, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”

Cleansing of the leper, God’s kingdom manifested through cleansing the leper at Galilee. Leprosy was like death according to Numbers 10:12-15, to have contact with a leper was like to have contact with a dead body. The exclusion of person with leprosy from public gatherings (Lev 13:45-46) made life very difficult because one was considered to have polluted even the clothes and garments like a dead person in other words this person was a living dead. Aaron’s cry to God for his sister Miriam for the leprosy explains the weight of leprosy being equivalent to death.

“Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb” (Numbers 12:12)

That is why when one was healed from leprosy had to be examined thoroughly by the priest; one would make public declaration which included various offerings (Lev 14:1-9). The man in Mark 1:40-45 who was cleansed, his healing was equated to resurrection because it was about giving life back. Therefore Jesus a warrior king defeated death through giving life back to a leper that is why is telling him to go to the priest to be examined according to Mark 1:44

“...but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them”

Raising of the dead, Mark 5:35-43 records an account of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter of twelve years, the raising of the only son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-16) and the raising of Lazarus a brother to Mary and Martha from dead (John 11:38-44) all these accounts manifest the expansion of God's kingdom where people are supposed to have life in wholeness but not struggling with death which was brought into the world during the fall. The coming of Jesus showed the coming of the God's kingdom into the world where Jesus defeated death and became Lord Giver of life because he said in John 10:10b

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”

This means that Jesus was more than Elijah or Elisha who had also raised children in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:17-23, 2 Kings 4:18-37)²¹.

Restoration from infirm, lame, dumb, and deaf also manifested the restoration of God's Kingdom in the world because like other sicknesses which shortened one's life and brought misery, suffer and pain even dumbness, lameness and others do so. Jesus dealt with them to bring God's kingdom to the people in Galilee (Mark 2:1-12) and yet he had come to clean away such sufferings and people get life, blessings, joy and peace.

Jesus extended the kingdom of God as Davidic King in Galilee through providing abundance food and wealth. On several occasions Jesus is seen providing food to hungry people for example Mark 6:36-44 brings out Jesus feeding the five thousand people who had come to listen to the good news, Mark 8:1-10 another crowd of four thousand people who listened him for three days without food were also fed, two instances of huge catch of fish to the disciples (Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:1-14), John again records Jesus' act of turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11).

²¹ Thomas. *Notes on Mark*, Pp. 125-132

Again Jesus paid tax for himself and for his disciples which he provided from the fish's mouth. Matthew 17:27 says:

“go to the sea (probably Galilee) and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find shekel. Take and give it to them for me and for yourself”.

These incidents show Jesus' power of advancing God's kingdom into world through providing food in abundance and blessings of wealth as acts of abundant life to the people of Galilee.

Peace and security on waters of the Sea of Galilee is another element which Jesus used to expand God's Kingdom as a promised Davidic King. In the ancient Near Eastern worldviews sea waters were powerfully dangerous and had unpredicted deadly force. But God imposed his kingship during pre creation and destroyed the chaotic creatures the sea dragon (Leviathan) and sea monster (Rahab)²². With this worldview, the sea was seen as force for chaos and a threat to life but Jesus the warrior King of David silences it down when his disciples were being threatened. Mark 4:39 says:

“And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea Peace be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm”

Jesus did not only calm the winds of the sea but he also defeated the chaotic and deadly water through walking on the sea of Galilee like one walking on the land (Mark 6:48-49). These two incidents bring out clearly the advancement of God's kingdom on the earth firstly in Galilee through bringing peace and security to God's people who were seeing waters as an enemy and a force of death²³

Judicial king; in this prophesy of Isaiah, the promised king was assigned roles of social justice through delivering the suffering, weak and lowly. In the exercise of healing and deliverance Jesus is seen extending God's kingdom in the world for example people begged him as son of David to have mercy upon them. Mark 10:46-47 Bartimaeus son of Timaeus a blind beggar shouted:

²² Nyende, *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling'*, Pp. 19

²³ Nyende, *'The Restoration of God's Dwelling'*, Pp. 170

“Jesus son of David have mercy on me”

The two blind men in the account of Matthew 9:27 also shouted:

“...have mercy on us, son of David”.

There are other people who were suffering pleaded for mercy from Jesus and committed themselves to a justice king to rescue them from their misery state among others include; the one possessed by demon (Matt 15:22) and an epileptic boy (Matt 17:15). The justice given to these people manifested Jesus as a judicial king who gives justice to people who are suffering from severe illnesses and sicknesses caused by Satan and his demons, and this deliverance advanced God’s kingdom to his people.

Priesthood; Jesus as a Davidic King he exercised the roles of a priest. The Old Testament brings out clearly David and his son Solomon performing the duties of the priests for example David offered sacrifices to YHWH (2 Samuel 6:13), he put on linen ephod a dress for priests (2 Samuel 6:14), pitched the tabernacle in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:17), offered a burnt offering and peace offering (2 Samuel 6:17), he blessed the people in the name of LORD of host (2 Samuel 6:18). Solomon David’s son also performed the duties of priests; he used to offer burnt offerings on the alter he built for the LORD three times a year (1Kings 9:22, 10:5). On the account of varied services in the temple, priests were called God’s servants the name which YHWH called David several times (2 Samuel 7:5, 8; 2Kings 11:32, Ps 89:3, 20), the people also recognized David as God’s servant (2 Samuel 7:26, 29; 1Kings 8:24-26) and Palm 110:4 brings it directly that Davidic king is a priest

“The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”²⁴

In the New Testament Jesus is also seen practicing priesthood as a promised Davidic King by mediating God’s people to God through giving God’s word, attending God’s house, offering sacrifices and interceding for people. In the gospel, Jesus taught the crowds which made him to be recognized as the one taught with authority not as scribes (Mark 1:21-22, Matt 7:28-29) meaning that in his teaching was teaching the

²⁴ Nyende, *‘The Restoration of God’s Dwelling’*, Pp. 93-94

word of God. Apostle John brings it clearly that Jesus was teaching his Father's word (John 3:34, 7:16-17, 8:28, 12:49, 17:8). Jesus as a priest he taught; the secrets of the kingdom (Mark 4:11), the crowds the law and the prophets (Matt 7:12). His royal priesthood teaching was to continue even after his death and ascension to heaven because he promised his disciples that is going to send the helper the Holy Spirit who will teach them what he would have taught and is going to remind them whatever had been taught to them (John 14:26). Jesus' teaching in Galilee helped crowds to experience the kingdom of God because those who had dawned knew and followed the will of God.

Jesus as a promised king executed the roles of royal priesthood as God's servant in his house because the book of Hebrews says that he is a minister in a spiritual house the heaven which is the true tent of God not made by man but by God himself (Hebrews 8:1-2, 9:11, 24). He offered sacrifice to God once and for all for the atonement of sins. That sacrifice was Jesus himself who shed his own blood so that people can obtain the eternal redemption.

3. GALILEE BEYOND ISAIAH 9:1-7

Jesus as the city of spiritual refuge: the idea of Kedesh in Galilee as a refuge city is another point why Galilee was a centre of Jesus' ministry. In the Old Testament, Kedesh was a city located in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali; it was one of the six cities of refuge designated in the Mosaic Law. The cities of refuge were established as safe refuge for individuals who had accidentally killed someone, providing them sanctuary from revenge until a fair trial could be held. The concept of refuge in the Old Testament was deeply tied to the themes of grace, justice, and mercy. Kedesh as a part of this system symbolized a physical place of grace where those innocents in need of protection could find it. Joshua 20:1-7 says:

“¹then the LORD said to Joshua, ²“say to the people of Israel Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, ³that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴he shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a

place, and he shall remain with them. ⁵And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unknowingly, and did not hate him in past. ⁶And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is the high priest at the time. Then the manslayer may return to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled” ⁷So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is Hebron) in the hill country of Judah”.

In the New Testament setting, Jesus the promised Davidic king is mirrored as the city of refuge because according to this text he fulfilled the role of priesthood whereby through his death he paid for all the sins of the world. Gordon said:

“...the High Priest died, the perpetrator of the crime could go free and had no fear”

And added on that;

“...the righteousness of the High Priest, his death could act like an atonement that caused those who had fled into a city of refuge to go free”.²⁵

As it was in the Mosaic cities of refuge, the promised Davidic king is the city of refuge where all the people who access him could find forgiveness, rest and abundant life (John 3:16), Jesus is the High priest through his death and shedding of his own blood eternal security and safety is assured (2Cor 5:17), Hebrew 6:18 speaks of those who have fled for refuge have strong encouragement and lay hold of the hopes set before us. Therefore Jesus’ ministry was in Galilee in order that this grace, justice, forgiveness and eternal life which characterized God’s kingdom can be advanced to his people.

²⁵ Gordon, ‘Jesus our city of Refuge, Safety from the avenger of blood’, Jan 2020 <jesusplusnothing.com> (accesses on 19th March 2025)

Galilee was a place of oppressed and marginalized: Historically Galilee was the headquarters of major revolutions against Roman government it faced severe oppression from the ruling government, for example many rebellious Galilean Jews were crucified and women and children taken as slaves²⁶. Mary's prophesy song in Luke 1:52-55 shows that Galilee was a place of low people no man would wish to marry a Galilean woman because they were taken as unclean animals and wives were seen as reptiles and terms like; "the peasant", "the amhaarez", "people of the land" and "the common people" were all referred to the Galileans.²⁷ They were people of debts and limited economy marginalized both politically and spiritually, leading to their negative reputation in Israelite history.²⁸ Because of this oppression and marginalization that is why it is recorded in Luke 13:1-30 where Jesus felt compassion to this group of people and it is where Jesus conducted much of his ministry.

Historical involvement in idolatry and rebellion against God: the messianic fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Jesus signals a spiritual transformation for the northern tribes, once marked by idolatry and sin, now receiving the light of the Messiah. This redemption through Jesus, starting in Galilee, is symbolic of the broader spiritual healing that Jesus brings to all people, beginning with the very regions that had been spiritually neglected²⁹. The region where Jesus conducted much of his ministry plays a pivotal role in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The northern tribes of Israel, including Naphtali (the region surrounding Kedesh), were often seen as spiritually distant due to their historical involvement in idolatry and rebellion against God, particularly after the division of the kingdom in 1 Kings 12:28-30 and 2 Kings 17:7-23.

The arrest of John the Baptist marked a pivotal moment in the ministry of Jesus, prompting him to move to Galilee to continue the work he had begun. John had come as the prophetic figure promised in the Old Testament, fulfilling the role of Elijah who would prepare the way for the Messiah (Malachi 4:5-6). His message of repentance

²⁶ Victor Counted & Fraser Watts, *'Place attachment in the Bible'*, 2017, Vol. XLV, No.3, Pp. 226

²⁷ Rosado, *'The significance of Galilee'*, Pp. 3

²⁸ Freedman, David Noel, *'The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary'*, 1992, New York: Doubleday, Pp. 3026

²⁹ Oswalt, *'The New International Commentary on the Old Testament'*, Pg 221

and baptism had been central in preparing the hearts of the people for the coming of Christ. With John's arrest, a clear shift occurred, as the fulfillment of God's plan now rested on Jesus' shoulders. Jesus' move to Galilee symbolized the commencement of his public ministry, where he would proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God, calling people to repentance and faith, just as John had paved the way for him to do so.

4. THE APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

Jesus is the promised messiah and king: The radical truth of Christianity, which sets it different from all other world faiths, is that God became a human being. Not just like any human being, but Jesus of Nazareth culturally situated and socially conditioned by time and place. There is no other Christ than Jesus. There is no other Jesus than the Jewish carpenter from Nazareth in Galilee. He was not just a human being but a promised Messiah; He was not just a Jew, but a Galilean Jew. And throughout His life Jesus and His disciples were ever identified as Galileans. While handling Jesus' ministry in Galilee there is a need to treat and apply this teaching that Jesus was a promised Messiah who came to fulfill what was prophesied on him in the Old Testament. He was the promised Davidic King came to extend the God's Kingdom to the ends of the world through healing, deliverance and exorcism, providing food and wealth, bringing peace and security, teaching preaching and mediating people to God as a high priest.

A call to preach the gospel to all people regardless of their differences: Just as Galilee was a multicultural and marginalized society, Jesus decided it to be the centre of his ministry. Our church especially West Buganda Diocese should intentionally reach out to the marginalized, the poor and overlooked communities like the elderly and orphans, in villages and slums. These should not be taken as last choice but as key people of God who also need redemption. For example prioritizing outreaches, church planting and discipleship to underserved and culturally diverse areas trusting that transformation can occur in periphery areas

Contextualized gospel ministry: Jesus contextualized his ministry such that every person understands his message clearly. He used familiar parables, local idioms and relatable imagery like farming, fishing, lost coin, and other things of the daily life that spoke directly to the hearts of his listeners regardless of their backgrounds. In a Diocese like West Buganda with a multicultural, languages and traditions (baganda, banyankore, banyarwanda, etc.) there is a need for the church to contextualize the gospel such that the message of Christ is fully expressed, received and understood. For example use of local language in worship and teaching the word, engage traditional beliefs in respect to the truth of the bible, and empowering indigenous worship forms.

Empowering local leaders: Jesus considered choosing his disciples from Galilee not Jerusalem the religious centre, these were fishermen, tax collectors who were ordinary men (Acts 4:13) whom he called, trained and empowered to become the foundation of the Church. These disciples knew very well the culture, language and needs of the community after being transformed and equipped they were able to minister effectively and authentically. This model is relevant in West Buganda Diocese today to empower local leaders who know their people, understand their struggles and can faithfully apply the gospel to their daily realities. This can be done through identifying and mentoring of potential leaders, establishing Bible schools, seminars and discipleship programs, raising role models who can inspire others for the ministry and encouraging local Church sustainability.

Proclaiming hope and restoration: the prophesy of Isaiah 9 was spoken to people surrounded by despair, oppression and the threat of destruction but it cast a vision beyond darkness, promising the coming of the Messiah a light to the nation which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ whose ministry began in Galilee. Today many of the Church's congregations find themselves in the similar situations battling with the shadow of trauma, poverty, injustices and corruption. The Church of West Buganda is called upon to be a light of hope and restoration through proclaiming a better future grounded in justice and peace of Christ. This can be achieved through preaching hope and restoration, engaging in social justice like standing against corruption and injustices,

promoting community development in away Jesus fed the hungry, uplifted the poor, and advocacy and policy influence like challenging unjust laws, shape policies and promoting good governance by raising leaders who can serve with integrity, humility and justice.

Healing and deliverance ministry: Jesus' Galilean ministry was characterized by acts of healing and deliverance which was intentional signs pointing to the in breaking of the Kingdom of God. In every act of restoring sight, raising the dead, casting out demons Jesus was proclaiming God's reign over sickness, sin and spiritual bondage. He was expressing His compassion and divine authority, drawing people to wholeness and new life. These themes remain strikingly relevant because illness is not only physical but also intertwined to spiritual and emotional dimensions for example Christians still face spiritual challenges like generational curses, witchcraft, and fear of evil forces. The church in West Buganda Diocese should employ holistic approach to ministry like training local leaders to holistic care, establish dedicated healing and deliverance ministries in order to mirror Christ's ministry in today's congregations such that the church can be a place where broken people can be restored and the oppressed can be set free.

In conclusion, the significance of Jesus' ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy that the promised Davidic King was to restore and expand God's Kingdom on the earth which manifested in forms of exorcism, healing, cleansing the leper, restoring the infirm, lame, deaf and dumb, calming the storm; provided peace and security, provided food as a blessing of abundant life, rising of the dead and in his teachings. God's Kingdom was extended when Jesus practiced the roles of a King, priest and judge to the people of Galilee. Other reasons include becoming the spiritual city of refuge, bridging the gap of John the Baptist who had been killed by Herod; it was his home town where they settled after the refugee in Egypt and he wanted to serve the marginalized community commonly occupied this area.

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