Would Jesus have torn down the Colston statue? Knowledge Organiser

Key Words

Racism: prejudice or discrimination against people because of their race

Prejudice: a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or experience.

Discrimination: acting on a prejudice to treat people unjustly.

Sermon on the Mount: a collection of sayings that emphasise Jesus' moral teaching.

Cleansing of the Temple: a biblical story that shows Jesus' anger.

Money Changers: people who were lending money for interest in the story the Cleansing of the Temple.

Who was Edward Colston, why did he have a statue?

- A member of the **Royal Africa Company** which enslaved 85,000 African people (19,000 died at sea).
- Used his wealth to invest in many other companies involved in slavery. He also funded Bristol schools and institutions, e.g. Colston's Boys School and the Alms Houses.
- In 1895 the Society of Merchant Venturers erected a statue in his honour, recognising his charitable work for the city, but not the slave trade that made his fortune.

Was Jesus a Political Liberator?

"On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts."

The story of Jesus 'Cleansing the Temple' shows his willingness to call out injustice when he saw it. He became angry and physically overturned the tables and threw out the money lenders, stopping them from using the temple for their trade.

Some Christians argue that this story shows Jesus would want them to act when they see injustice, do something about it to stop injustice, even if it seems to cause some chaos in the process. Jesus freed people from the conventions of their time to do things differently, this meant running up against the Jewish and Roman authorities of his time.

Was Jesus a Moral Educator?

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

An extract from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Some Christians believe that Jesus stands with the persecuted and those who suffer discrimination. Christians who follow this example will be rewarded in heaven. Other Christians interpret this message that they should not fight back against oppression but should stand against it peacefully because fighting is immoral.

The Black Lives Matter Movement

#BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in the USA in response to the acquittal (found not guilty) of Trayvon Martin's murderer.

Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy & build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state.

What does Mayor Marvin Rees think?

Previous calls to have the statue removed were unsuccessful, including a petition to which received over 15,000 signatures.

Marvin Rees, "… in the middle of austerity, with a housing crisis with horrific levels of inequality in Bristol. I've got to focus on doing stuff that matters, that makes a difference to people's lives here and now. **"Taking down a statue won't feed people, house people, tackle mental health, domestic violence or any of those issues.** So it wasn't at the top of my list of priorities. My priority has been about tackling poverty right here right now."

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol

"What does Jesus do? …He drives them out, not only that - it's premeditated - he goes away, makes a whip and comes back. So anger is not a problem. Outrage is not a problem. Driving injustice out of our systems is not a problem."