

Luke's Gospel: Chapter 19

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v 1 to 10)

“Zacchaeus... was a chief tax collector and was rich” (v 2) – Zacchaeus was not only a tax collector, but a *chief* tax collector, and the Jews hated men like him – particularly because of the practice known as ‘tax farming’, in which the collector made his profit on whatever extra taxes he could get away with charging his victims. When tax collectors came to John the Baptist, asking how they could get right with God, he told them to collect no more than they were authorized to do (Luke 3 v 12, 13).

- How did Jesus deal with Zacchaeus? Who took the initiative in his salvation? What can we learn from the way Zacchaeus expressed repentance and gratitude?
- How does this story illustrate the ‘who-what-where-when-why-how’ of salvation? For example, the ‘when’ is illustrated by the words “hurry” (v 5) and “today” (v 9)...

“He ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him” (v 4) – because Zacchaeus sought Jesus so intensely, he did not mind doing something beneath the dignity of a wealthy man. He climbed the tree like a little boy, and unknowingly fulfilled Jesus’ word that unless we become like children we will not see the kingdom of God (Matthew 18 v 2 to 4). “Hurry and come down” (v 5) – if Zacchaeus had not hurried the opportunity might have been lost; if he had not come down he would never have met Jesus. “I must stay at your house today” – Jesus did not want to preach to Zacchaeus and ‘convert’ him in a religious sense: Jesus wanted a real relationship, beginning with a meal and time spent together. “[He] received him joyfully” (v 6) – Zacchaeus was happy to receive Jesus: he received Jesus himself, rather than a creed or doctrine.

“I restore it fourfold” (v 8) – in receiving Jesus and spending just a little time with him, Zacchaeus knew he had to repent and make restitution. First he sought after Jesus; but in seeking Jesus he also came to seek repentance. “Since he also is a son of Abraham” (v 9) – since Zacchaeus was so hated by his fellow Jews, they may have said that he wasn’t a ‘real’ Jew. Jesus wanted everyone to know that Zacchaeus truly was a son of Abraham, both by genetics and by faith – because he really, joyfully received Jesus.

The parable of the ten minas (Luke 19 v 11 to 27)

“Because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (v 11) – Jesus told this parable to warn his disciples that he would depart and return again before the kingdom came in full glory, and to tell them how to conduct themselves in his absence. “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return” (v 12) – this parable is different from the parable of the ‘talents’ in Matthew 25 v 14 to 30. Here, ten servants were each given an equal amount of money – a ‘mina’, which was worth about three months’ wages.

- What does this parable teach us about (a) our present responsibilities as followers of Jesus, and (b) future judgment? What was the nobleman looking for – the ‘bottom line’, or something else?
- What did the third servant do and why? How did he rationalize his behaviour? Was his excuse a valid one? What was the nobleman’s charge against him? What happened to his mina, and how was he ‘rewarded’? What happened to the citizens who did not want the nobleman to rule over them?

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“I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man...” (v 22) – the nobleman did not reward the third servant. Instead, he rebuked him because his great power should have inspired the servant to greater diligence, rather than to disobedience and laziness. It would have been easy for this servant to have done *something* with his master’s resources (“Why then did you not put my money in the bank?”). Yet out of disobedience, he did nothing. This helps us to understand the nobleman’s plan: it was not to make money by his servants, but to *build their character*.

“But as for these enemies of mine” (v 27) – the servants all had to answer for their work in the master’s absence, but at least none of them were guilty of treason. Now the nobleman dealt with his enemies, the rebellious citizens who had said, “We do not want this man to reign over us” (v 14). They could try and deny the reign of the master as much as they pleased, but it would get them nowhere. He would rule over them, one way or another. “And slaughter them before me” – they met with certain, final judgment. This dramatic ending to the story shows that responding to the rule of Jesus is literally a ‘life-or-death’ decision.

The triumphal entry (Luke 19 v 28 to 44)

- On several previous occasions the crowd wanted to make Jesus king, but he slipped away saying ‘my hour has not yet come’ – but on this occasion Jesus deliberately staged the event! Why?
- When the two disciples were sent out by Jesus on this special errand (v 29 to 35), in what ways were they put to the test, and what would they have learned from this experience?
- What was Jesus’ purpose in entering Jerusalem in this manner (see Zechariah 9 v 9)? What does this teach us about the nature of his kingship?
- What did the crowds shout, and what do their words tell us about Jesus?

Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place four days before Passover (on 10th Nisan), the day when Passover lambs were inspected – here Jesus submits himself to examination. It was festival season in Jerusalem, and every able-bodied man was required by the Law to go to Jerusalem, so there may have been over a million visitors...

- Why did the Pharisees tell Jesus to rebuke his disciples (v 39)? How did Jesus reply (v 40), and why?
- What moved Jesus to weep over Jerusalem? How do these verses show that love does not exclude judgment? What specific judgments were pronounced upon Jerusalem (v 43 to 44), and why?

“Would that you, even you, had known *on this day* the things that make for peace!” This is the day mentioned in Psalm 118 v 24 (a Messianic psalm). Jesus mourns over the fact that the people of Jerusalem did not know the time of the Messiah’s coming, the particular day prophesied in Daniel 9 v 26. “But now they are hidden from your eyes...” (v 42).

Jesus held the people of Jerusalem accountable to recognize “*this day*” (v 42), prophesied by Gabriel to Daniel some 500 years before, referring to Daniel’s ‘70 weeks’ Prophecy (Daniel 9 v 24 to 27), which many believe Jesus fulfilled on the exact day of the triumphal entry. Daniel 9 v 24 sets out an overview of the scope of the prophecy. To whom is the prophecy addressed? Daniel 9 v 25 refers to the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2), and to the coming of the ‘anointed king’ (Hebrew: מָשִׁיחַ מְגִיד, *Mesiah negid*), Jesus Christ; Daniel 9 v 26a predicts that the Christ will be ‘cut off’ (Hebrew: קָרַת *karath*) or executed, but not for his own crimes. See ‘Mathematical Miracle’ under Cross References.

“The days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you” (v 43) – Jesus predicted five specific aspects of the Roman attack upon Jerusalem in AD 70: (i) the building of an embankment; (ii) the surrounding of the city, laying siege; (iii) the destruction of the city; (iv) the killing of the city’s inhabitants; and (v) the complete levelling of the city.

Jesus cleanses the temple (Luke 19 v 44 to 48)

- Why was Jesus so angry at what he found taking place at the temple?
- How would you define righteous anger? Why do we so seldom express it?