

## CHAPTER 19

---

### Overview of Luke 19

In chapter 19, Jesus and His disciples begin the final portion of their journey to Jerusalem. It will be Jesus' last ascent from Jericho up the steep, winding road into the hills of Judea. Before leaving Jericho, a large metropolis at that time, Jesus stops over at the house of a chief tax collector named Zaccheus. As a result of Zaccheus's response to Jesus, Jesus will pronounce him a true son of Abraham. While on the subject of money, Jesus will then give a parable about the "fruit that leads to repentance" and the wise use of the gifts God gives to His people. The latter part of the chapter focuses on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, celebrated today as Palm Sunday. Luke will clearly state that the crowds celebrating His arrival are expecting the Messiah to be a conquering king. As a result, Jesus will have another run-in with the Pharisees. Jesus will stop on the way and weep over the people of Jerusalem, and give them a disturbing prophecy concerning what awaits them in the not-so-far future. He will then enter the temple and drive out the moneychangers.

### What to look for in Luke 19

1. As you read each paragraph ask, "What is God teaching me about love?"
2. You will discover that Jesus meets a chief tax collector and, unlike the people who hate and reject him, Jesus' love for him will "bear fruits in keeping with repentance."
3. Look for Jesus' teaching on the responsible use of spiritual resources that will be given to the church after His ascension.
4. When Jesus begins His "triumphal" entry into Jerusalem, ask whether or not the people's celebration was love for Him and His mission, or love for themselves.
5. Ask why the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke His disciples for the use of palm branches, and what Jesus' response was.
6. On the outskirts of Jerusalem, Jesus will pause and weep over the city. What do you believe was the cause of Jesus' weeping, and what motivated Him to weep so strongly?
7. In the temple, Jesus will drive out the moneychangers. Why do you believe Jesus was so angry with them?

---

**1** He entered Jericho and was passing through.

**19:1** Jericho was no small town at this time in history. The old Jericho with the crumbled walls was history. Herod the Great had built up the city into a metropolis, complete with aqueducts, a fortress, a hippodrome and a winter palace. Jesus enters the thriving city of Jericho with Bartimaeus as part of the crowd. His life has changed and he is now following Jesus and glorying God with the rest of the crowd. We can assume by the next few verses that the crowd following Jesus is quite large, and word of mouth has verified His wonderful healings and teachings. The man He is about to encounter will be a textbook case for what John the Baptist called "fruits in keeping with repentance" (3:8) Unlike the rich young ruler, this encounter will show that it *is* possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (18:24-27).

2 And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich.

3 Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.

4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."

6 And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

7 When they saw it, they all *began* to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."

9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

**19:2-10** This is the true story about a man named Zaccheus. Zaccheus is no ordinary tax collector—he was the "chief" tax collector in charge of overseeing all the other tax collectors in the surrounding district. Jericho had become a center for tax assessment, especially for the East-West trade routes. Zaccheus's employment by the Romans as a chief tax collector has not only made him a rich man, but a pariah. Having become rich at the expense of other Jews made him all the more despised by the people. The name "Zaccheus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name that means "pure." Being a chief tax collector, small of stature, and having the name "pure," he may have been the brunt of many mean jokes.

If anything good can be said about Zaccheus before he encounters Jesus, he is shrewd and knows how to plan ahead. Anticipating that he would not be able to see Jesus because of the crush, he runs ahead and climbs a sycamore tree (a fig-mulberry tree which has a sweet but inferior fruit, not to be confused with the sycamine tree, which is the black mulberry tree). There is a wonderful picture of irony in Zaccheus climbing a sycamore tree. The sycamore wood was known for its durability and was used to make coffins. So here we have a man who is socially and spiritually dead perching himself in a tree used to make coffins! Also, it must be acknowledged that Zaccheus has hardened himself against the opinion of others, for it must have been a sight to see someone so prominent and notorious in the community to be literally hanging out on a limb.

Much to Zaccheus's surprise, Jesus stops at the very place where he has perched himself. Whether Jesus providentially knew Zaccheus's name, occupation and reputation, or simply asked, "Who's that man perched in the tree?" is unknown. Regardless, Jesus invites Himself to stay at Zaccheus's residence. (This is the only incidence in the gospels where Jesus invites Himself into another person's home.) Being a rich man, Zaccheus no doubt had a large house that would accommodate many people, and he probably used it as a center for social gatherings with other tax collectors and their friends.

**Verses 5 and 6** are a picture of salvation and the love of Christ offered to all people. Jesus offers to enter into Zaccheus's life (the act of love on God's part), and Zaccheus "received Him gladly." Jesus is fulfilling what He came to do: "To seek and to save that which was lost." How Zaccheus responds to Jesus' inviting Himself into his life will be the act of love on his part.

Most likely, Zaccheus had heard that Jesus was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. In Jericho, then, it was the tax collector with whom Jesus chose to lodge, not the home of a Pharisee or other prominent

citizen. It is the dead man in a coffin tree that Jesus chooses to stay with.

Of course, the crowd was not happy that Jesus chose to overnight with a much despised man, and began to grumble. Ironically, the crowd has quickly converted their finicky emotions from giving “praise to God” when Bartimaeus was healed, to grumbling when they didn’t appreciate Jesus’ choice of hosts. **Verse 7**, therefore, confirms that Zaccheus was not well liked by the community.

**Verse 8** is startling, to say the least. Without Jesus saying a word to Zaccheus other than inviting Himself into his home, without pointing out his sins or calling him to repentance, Zaccheus immediately responds with what John the Baptist called the “fruits in keeping with repentance” (3:8). When exactly Zaccheus entered “the kingdom of God” is not certain, but the sequence is unmistakable: he wanted to see Jesus, Jesus reached out to him, and he received Him gladly. He then proved his faith in Jesus by immediately dispossessing himself of half his wealth for the sake of the poor, and making amends to all whom he had cheated. Zaccheus’s generosity to those whom he had defrauded shows that he is going over and beyond what the law required, for only one-fifth of what had been gained by fraud was required to be returned (Lev. 6:5).

The reader must realize, too, that it was not Zaccheus’s giving away his wealth that saved him, but his faith in Jesus when he “received Him gladly.” Giving away his possessions was the proof of his faith, and showed that he was truly repentant of his sins. His faith was real and not just lip service.

Jesus therefore acknowledges that a rich man can indeed “enter the kingdom of God”: “Today salvation has come to this house” (**verse 9**). Jesus then explains that what has taken place in Zaccheus’s life is what it means to be a true “son of Abraham,” something that all Jews should have become by their knowledge of the Law and the Prophets, and something the Pharisees should have been teaching all along.

Jesus then summarizes His mission: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” The clear meaning here is that Zaccheus was a physical descendant of Abraham who had become spiritually lost. Now, by virtue of his faith in Jesus, he had become a spiritual son of Abraham as well as a physical one. The subject of finding the lost was the major theme in Luke chapter 15, and the parable of the lost son has come a reality.

It is a perfect example of God’s love for the lost, and how “receiving (Jesus) gladly” leads to life-changing love for others, especially the poor.

---

**11** While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable,

because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

**19:11** Still in or near Jericho, Jesus resumes preparing His disciples for what's waiting for them in Jerusalem. Luke comments that the purpose for Jesus telling this upcoming parable is "because He was near Jerusalem" and many of His followers assumed that "the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately."

There is a bit of irony here. Jesus' followers, including the apostles, assumed that the kingdom of God was about to arrive. Actually, they are not wrong about that. Within fifty days of His crucifixion (Pentecost), the kingdom of God *will indeed arrive...partially*. The problem with their assumption was *what* they expected the kingdom of God to be like. As has been stated previously, the Jews expected a political messiah to set up an earthly kingdom and overthrow the oppressive Roman Empire. That is, the Messiah would come as a conquering king. That will not be the case. The kingdom of God must arrive first in the hearts of men and women before it will arrive in glory on the earth. The Messiah, therefore, must first endure the cross to pay for the sins of all mankind. Once again, it's one Messiah, two comings. The Jews were expecting the second coming and ignoring the need for the first coming. It's the Messiah's first coming that changes hearts and brings salvation to mankind. It's the second coming that establishes the Messiah's rule upon the earth and brings earthly blessings and worldwide peace.

There is actually an important lesson here. Many Christians want the second-coming blessings without undergoing first-coming "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (3:3). The second-coming blessings of Christ cannot be enjoyed until one has, like Zaccheus, truly repented of their sins and begun living a life "in keeping with repentance" (3:8). We humans, being in the flesh, are constantly looking for shortcuts, or for any teaching available to avoid confession and repentance, and the suffering and shame that comes with them. Just as the crowd following Jesus was oblivious to the need for the cross, so, too, are Christians today who will listen to anyone who advocates a work-around for the shame of the cross and the need for repentance.

12 So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and *then* return.

13 "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business *with this* until I come *back*.'

14 "But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

**19:12-14** In this parable, the nobleman is, of course, Jesus. His departure "to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself" refers to His ascension into heaven, forty days after the crucifixion. The "nobleman" plans to return. But, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" In giving this parable, Jesus is directly addressing the expectation of the people acknowledged by Luke: "They supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately" (v. 11).

This parable, though quite similar to the one told by Jesus in Matthew 25, is not the same either in detail or in the lesson being taught. This parable was specifically directed toward those following Him in the district of Jericho, those who would understand immediately the context of the parable.

In the Roman order of political appointees, it was the custom for those chosen by Caesar to travel to Rome to officially receive their assigned region, or “kingdom.” Herod the Great had done this when he received authority over Judea. History shows that one of Herod’s sons, Archelaus, did the same when he was appointed to replace his father as tetrarch over Judea. Many Jews were unhappy about this appointment because Archelaus had a terrible reputation. Therefore, a delegation of Jews traveled to Rome to protest the appointment; they were ignored. However, as the Jews had warned, Archelaus turned out to be a very incompetent ruler and was eventually replaced. One of the things he did, however, was to build a palace in Jericho. After a series of other failed appointees, the man finally appointed by Caesar to be tetrarch over Judea was none other than Pontius Pilate.

Like the Roman political appointees who traveled to Rome to receive their kingdom, Jesus Himself will be ascending to heaven after the resurrection to receive His kingdom. He will be away for some time; however, the disciples understand none of this, for they, like the people, are expecting Jesus to establish His “political” kingdom once He reaches Jerusalem. So Jesus is preparing His disciples by teaching them clearly and in terms they could readily understand that He will be away for some time, and they, His servants, have important responsibilities. Those responsibilities cannot be fulfilled unless they have the necessary resources and tools to do the job, so He gives to each servant necessary resources to carry on the business. The fact that Jesus uses the word business means that He, the owner, has expectations from His employees, and that their “job” involves work that should bear fruit and produce results. Just to make the distinction from the parable in Matthew 25, each of the ten servants in this parable is given *one* mina. (A mina was a Greek unit of money equal to about three months salary, or one-sixtieth of a talent. This indicates that the slaves have a limited amount of time to produce results, just as Christians have a limited amount of time on earth to bear fruit for the kingdom of God.)

Now the “citizens” enter the picture. The citizens are not the servants; in fact, in this particular parable, the citizens represent the Jews. In the extended scenario, Jesus is the nobleman, the kingdom is the earth, the slaves represent the church, and the citizens represent the Jewish nation. Why? Because of the

15 “When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done.

16 “The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’

17 “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’

18 “The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’

19 “And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

20 “Another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief;

21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.’

22 “He said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow?’

23 ‘Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’

24 “Then he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’

25 “And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas *already*.’

26 “I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

27 “But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”

statement, “We do not want this man to reign over us.” Historically, this was a reference to Archelaus; more importantly, this is a reference to the Jews rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.

**Verses 15-19** jump ahead to the return of the nobleman and the accountability of His slaves; that is, the return of Christ...the second coming. The first servant has had fantastic results and turned his one mina into ten, a thousand-fold increase. Therefore, he is given a great reward—authority over ten cities; once again, a political situation the people would clearly understand according to the times. The reader should note that this is a substantial reward. Likewise, the second servant has turned his one mina into five minas. Again, he is praised by the nobleman and given a reward equal to the fruit he bore. The last servant, however, is a different story, as indicated in **verses 20-26**. The third servant did nothing with the resources the nobleman gave him. The implication here is that the servant was too busy taking care of his personal needs, wants, leisure and pleasures to take time to invest the resources that were given to him. He enjoyed having the mina, but chose to do nothing constructive with it. This is a clear example of enjoying the blessings God gives His children but choosing to do nothing with them.

The slave gives three feeble excuses: (1) “I was afraid of you...”; (2) “...you are an exacting man...”; (3) “...you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.” The first excuse is a case of self-deception. If his fear was out of reverence and respect for his master, he would have worked hard to invest the mina. However, his fear is based on a lack of faith; his master was willing to entrust him with His resources, but he doesn’t take the master seriously. The second excuse is supposed to justify the first. The trouble is, he didn’t know his master very well. The word “exacting” comes from the Greek word *austeros*, from which we get our English word “austere.” The problem here is that the slave saw his master as *only* strict and austere, and not someone who is fair and just, and who is only asking for what is reasonable. Allegorically, it is a clear case of seeing the justice and righteous side of God without seeing the loving and compassionate side of God, something the Pharisees had trouble with. Had he seen the loving side of the master—that He came to seek and to save that which was lost—he would have shared the master’s love with others.

The third and final excuse is actually an insult. One commentator suggests that this was a well-known proverb referring to someone who used others to make a profit, like a manipulator who uses others for their own purposes, or a venture capitalist who invests in others solely for the purpose of making a profit. Therefore, the nobleman makes the statement,

“By your own words I will judge you....” In other words, the slave’s own words betray an untrusting, ungrateful, presumptuous and selfish heart which ignores the instructions of the nobleman and invests only in himself. The fact that he kept the mina in a “handkerchief” is telling: the *soudarion* was supposed to be used to wipe the perspiration off one’s face from hard work! **Verse 23** shows the lack of logic on the part of the slave’s reasoning: even if he was preoccupied with his own earthly affairs, he could have at least put his mina into the hands of someone else to bear some fruit. The bottom line was a failure to take the nobleman’s instructions seriously.

It is an on-going problem with the church in America today.

As a result of the worthless slave’s actions, his resources are taken from him and given to another, one who has shown skill and faithfulness in carrying out the nobleman’s charge. Because he showed faithfulness in carrying out his master’s charge, he will be given even more to work with.

In **verse 27**, “these enemies of mine” refers back to “citizens” in verse 14 who “hated him.” Because the citizens represent the Jews, this verse is no doubt a prophecy awaiting, not only the Jews when Jerusalem is utterly destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, but those who reject Jesus Christ during the church age.

The lesson in this parable is a powerful one. Jesus is clearly teaching His disciples something that they will not recall until after the resurrection: that Jesus will be raised from the dead, will ascend into heaven, and will be “away” for an extended period of time before He returns and establishes His earthly kingdom. The disciples will learn from this parable that Jesus will send a “Helper,” the Holy Spirit bearing gifts, and the disciples are to use these gifts for the sake of the spiritual kingdom of God on earth. Those in the church who fail to use their gifts, who quench the Holy Spirit, who continue to walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit, and who fail to fulfill the Great Commission, will experience rather terrible consequences. Not only are they unworthy to be called servants, but they cannot be trusted with the resources God has given them, and what resources they have will be taken away and given to those who are more deserving.

In concluding this parable, it would be easy to relegate the meaning to how Christians should utilize their spiritual resources during the church age. And, in so doing, it would be easy to overlook the powerful message of love found in this parable. That is because the church is made up of *people*, and the church is to constantly be reaching out to *lost people*. Some Christians are more gifted than others for reaching

**28** After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

**29** When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples,

**30** saying, “Go into the village ahead of *you*; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it *here*.

**31** “If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ”

**32** So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.

**33** As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

**34** They said, “The Lord has need of it.”

**35** They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus *on it*.

**36** As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

out in love with the gospel of Jesus Christ; that is, some may have “ten” converts, others “five”—both get rewarded. But the one servant who invested nothing in doing the work of the Master not only received no reward, but the one resource was taken away. We Christians can find all sorts of ways to hang onto our blessings—our one mina—and share them with no one. When it comes to love, we can find all sorts of ways to avoid reaching out in love to others: we can love our pets more than we love people; we can love our toys and recreational vehicles more than we love people; we can love our careers, our hobbies, our addictions, our houses, our reputations more than we love people, especially those who are lost; and we can love the blessing of our affluence and wealth, and completely ignore the fact that God gave these blessings to us so that we might bless others less fortunate. The resource God has given us is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, the Spirit that enables us and directs our spirits to love one another, and love our neighbors as ourselves.

In parsing the parable, we ought not overlook the command to love that prompts it.

**19:28** The disciples now begin the long trek up toward Jerusalem, Jesus most likely leading the way. The gospel writers do not include anything Jesus might have taught on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus and His disciples were no doubt accompanied by large crowds and caravans on their way to celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As the road from Jericho to Jerusalem was notoriously known as a haven for robbers and thieves, traveling in large groups was the safest way to go.

**19:29-40** Jesus and His disciples have approached the outskirts of Jerusalem. Mt. Olivet (Mount of Olives) sits to the east of Jerusalem and overlooks the city. Between Olivet and the city of Jerusalem lies the Kidron Valley. The village of Bethany (meaning “house of affliction” or “house of dates”) was the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and rests on the eastern slope, Bethphage (meaning “house of unripe figs”) is believed to have sat on the western slope facing the city overlooking the Kidron Valley (exact site of Bethphage is unknown). The road from Jericho to Jerusalem ran through or near these two villages.

Upon arriving at the mount, Jesus sends two disciples on an errand to Bethphage. Whether the errand was prearranged is unknown, and makes little difference to the important events that follow. On the outskirts of Bethphage, the two disciples will find a donkey with its colt (cf. Matt. 21:1-2). This colt has never been ridden, indicating that it was suitable for a sacred (cf. Deut. 21:3) or for a royal purpose

37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,

38 shouting: “BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

40 But Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”

(victorious kings often entered cities on donkeys in triumphal celebration). Once the colt had been brought to Jesus, His disciples made a makeshift saddle by supplying their coats for padding. Jesus is lifted onto the colt by His disciples.

All of these events—the unriden colt, the coats, the lifting of Jesus onto the donkey—are acts that point to royalty. That is, Jesus is being presented as a king. In the context of Zechariah 9:9, however, he is also being presented as the fulfillment of a well-known prophecy concerning the royal nature of the Messiah: “Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, even a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The disciples and crowd are unaware that this is only the first coming of the Messiah, and His mission will be that of a suffering servant; the second coming, the triumphant conquering king, is yet to come.

As Jesus descends from the Mount of Olives, the crowds begin throwing their robes and coats along the road and, as the apostle John implies in his gospel, palm branches were being waved (12:13). This gesture was characteristic of the arrival of royalty, as the waving of palm branches followed by laying them on the road with their coats helped keep the dust down. One Jewish commentator mentions, however, that the use of palm leaves was not normal for the Feast of Passover; palm branches were not a part of Passover, and only hands were waved when reciting the Psalms of Ascent. By cutting, waving and using palm branches, the crowd was employing a custom used only during the Feast of Booths (aka Feast of Tabernacles), a feast anticipating the arrival of conquering king of the Jews, the Messiah. Therefore, the presence of palm leaves during Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem signified that the crowd expected Jesus to be the conquering king, not the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. On the descent down from the mount, Jesus passes Gethsemane where He will experience agony and arrest the night before the crucifixion.

Jesus now arrives at the base of the Mount of Olives, about to cross the Kidron Valley and ascend up to Jerusalem (**verses 37-40**). What is not often realized about the Kidron Valley is that there was a river of blood in it from all the sacrifices taking place in the temple. Daily, and especially during the feasts, thousands of animals were slaughtered during temple sacrifices. From the temple, the blood would run down the slopes of Zion and into the Kidron Valley. It is a fitting scene for the One who Himself is about to be sacrificed. The irony of the locations Jesus passes on His way to Jerusalem must not be overlooked by the reader, especially when one realizes that Jesus is well aware of what will take

place in the next week. Instead of the blood of lambs flowing, His blood will flow. Instead of peace and rest in the Garden of Gethsemane, there will be anguish and betrayal. And instead of the joyous shouts of a jubilant crowd, there will be complete rejection of Him because He failed to fulfill their expectations as a conquering king, and they will cry out, “Crucify Him!” Only His love for the lost compelled Him toward Jerusalem, and only His willingness to sacrifice Himself as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” drives Him toward the cross.

At the base of the mount, the crowd, perhaps at the urging of the disciples, keeps shouting, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” The crowd is quoting from Psalm 118, a well-known Messianic Psalm of Ascents, and the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. The crowd, in their enthusiasm to proclaim a new king over Israel, has skipped over the verse that says, “The stone which the builders rejected...” The phrase, “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest” is not found in the Old Testament, and found here only in Luke. Perhaps Luke included it here because it reminded him of the proclamation by the angels at Jesus’ birth (2:14).

As Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem, some Pharisees insist that He hush His followers. There were probably two reasons the Pharisees wanted the crowd hushed and dispersed. First, a near-riotous crowd announcing the arrival of a new king would have greatly caught the attention of the Roman authorities, thus potentially invoking a violent response. The second, however, is more likely—they are upset that Jesus’ disciples are clearly declaring Him the Messiah, by virtue of their praises from Psalm 118. The word “rebuke” could be translated “command” or “order.”

Jesus answers the Pharisees with a well-known proverb that speaks of the impossible happening: “...if these become silent, the stones will cry out.” The irony of Jesus’ response should not be lost on the reader: the stones of the building will cry out for the chief cornerstone, for it is around the chief cornerstone that everything else is measured.

**41** When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it,

**19:41-44** Luke uses the word *klaio* to speak of Jesus’ weeping over Jerusalem. It is the same word used most often to describe grieving and wailing for the dead. The cause of His grief and mourning is the knowledge of what is in store for His people as a result of their rejection of Him, a rejection born out of unfulfilled expectations.

The problem here is that the people wanted the Messiah, but only on their own terms. They wanted a king, not a servant. They wanted a conqueror, not a sufferer. They wanted someone who would make

42 saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.

43 “For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,

44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

their lives better from the world’s perspective, not someone who would restore their lives from God’s perspective. Because the jubilation of the crowd was based on wrong motives, they were unwilling, and therefore unable, to receive the Messiah in the manner God intended. God knew that their cheers would turn to jeers, their reception would turn to rejection, and their faithfulness would turn to faithlessness because their hearts were not right. Therefore, God hid the truth from their eyes, just as He hid the truth about Jesus’ suffering and sacrifice from the understanding of the disciples (18:34).

One must not be concerned that God often hides truth from His children. Just as parents do not always tell their children everything, the Father does not tell His children everything. He tells us only that which we need to know, and only that which will benefit us in the long run. God hides only what we cannot understand or accept at the moment, and only what we might reject if we knew the outcome. There is good news, however. Jesus states twice in Luke, “For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light” (8:17; 12:2). Just as Jesus’ destiny at the cross eventually was understood by the disciples, so, too, will those things hidden from God’s children come to light.

Jesus explains why He is mourning in **verses 42-44**—great tragedy and incalculable suffering await God’s people. Jesus is not describing the end times or His second coming. The ultimate rejection of the Messiah by the Jews will bring great judgment—the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of almost all of its residents by the Roman general Titus in AD 70. The walls of Jerusalem will be leveled, Herod’s temple will be torn down stone by stone, the city will be made uninhabitable by layer upon layer of salt, and over six hundred thousand people—men, women and children—will be slaughtered. The few survivors will be sent off to the Roman circus to be the victims of gladiators and beasts, a foreshadowing of what will happen to Christians. Unlike the return of the Jews in 70 years after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the Jews will not return to Jerusalem for almost 2000 years. The reason for this terrible outcome? The Jews failed to receive Jesus as Messiah on God’s terms.

There is an important lesson here for all Christians. Everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior must accept Him on God’s terms, not his own, and not on the terms of contemporary Christian culture. By accepting Jesus Christ, one also accepts a life of sacrifice and suffering. Period. This statement is not conventional wisdom in modern American evangelical circles, for it is much more pleasant to celebrate and enjoy God’s blessing for oneself. It is

much easier to quote only the first half of our spiritual identity, "...we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..." and completely ignore the second half, "...if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom. 8:16-17). There is no such thing as a true follower of Jesus Christ who doesn't sacrifice and suffer for the sake of the kingdom of God. Living a "Christian" life by avoiding suffering and sacrifice, or seeking a life filled with health, wealth and prosperity, is choosing a life not in "keeping with repentance." Those who believe that following Jesus will make their life more prosperous and blessed materially are essentially no different from those who waved palm branches during Passover. And there is judgment waiting those who choose to live life according to the wrong coming of the Messiah: "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord....For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep..." (1 Cor. 11:27, 29-30).

There is one final point that needs to be made about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. It wasn't just the fate that awaited the Jewish people in a few years to come, but by rejecting Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," those who rejected Him were still in their sins and will experience the eternal consequences for dying in their sins. Jesus weeps for all those who are lost, and so should the faithful Christian. To weep over those who are lost is to weep as Jesus wept, with great grieving and mourning.

**45** Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling,

**46** saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."

**19:45-46** Whether or not Jesus entered the temple compound on the same day as His entry into Jerusalem is not stated by Luke, but it would be appropriate if it were. What follows is Luke's account of Jesus driving out the moneychangers and merchants in the temple. This is not the first time Jesus has done this. The apostle John records Jesus having done this at the beginning of His ministry; Luke records only the incident just prior to Jesus' crucifixion.

The context for Jesus driving out the money-changers is this. All male Jews were required to make pilgrimage to the temple three times a year to offer sacrifices: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Many pilgrims came from long distances and were unable to bring their animals for sacrifice. Therefore, merchants set up tables and booths for selling animals appropriate for sacrifice. Therefore, pilgrims were at the mercy of the merchants...they had to pay

whatever was the going price. The other problem was that Roman coinage was not acceptable in the temple because it bore the image of Caesar. Therefore, Gentile coinage needed to be exchanged for Jewish currency. One can see immediately the problem. The moneychangers and merchants saw a superb opportunity for profit through price gouging during Jewish feasts, a commercial situation encouraged by the temple authorities as a way of filling the temple's (and authorities') pockets.

What is even more ironic—and pathetic—about this situation is that the moneychangers and merchants set up their tables and booths in the Court of the Gentiles. Not only were the moneychangers and merchants acting like greedy Gentiles oppressing and taking advantage of God's people, thus bringing “the world” into the house of worship, they were defiling that part of the temple that had been specifically set aside for Gentile proselytes to worship.

Jesus' response is one of great anger. Defiling the temple by turning the house of prayer into a den of thieves is the only incidence in which Jesus displays anger and wrath. It is a lesson that needs to be taken seriously by pastors and churches today.

In driving out the moneychangers and merchants, Jesus quotes from two Old Testament sources. The first is a quote from Isaiah 56:7: “My house will be called a house of prayer *for all the peoples*” (italics mine, as it refers to Gentiles). This emphasizes that the temple was to be not only a house of prayer for the Jews, but a gathering place of worship for the Gentiles as well. The second quote comes from Jeremiah 7:11: “Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight?”

The significance of Jesus' action against the merchants in the temple compound must not be lost on the reader of God's word. How many times in the Gospel of Luke has Jesus taught on the hazards of money, possessions and greed? How many times has Jesus warned His disciples about the pitfalls of money and wealth? How many parables have taught about the terrible consequences of allowing possessions, wealth and money to rule one's life and determine one's eternal destiny? The church, and the leaders of church, must take these teachings seriously, no matter what kind of rationalizations are used to justify size, beauty, extravagance, and relevance. The church that spends more money on itself than on “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” will be held accountable to God concerning “every form of greed.” The temple authorities probably came up with a multitude of reasons why bringing money into the institution was a good thing to do, just as church leaders today, particularly in

**47** And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

**48** and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

America, justify the enormous revenues collected “to make the church’s ministry more effective and relevant to the modern culture.” When it comes to the issue of money, one must be suspicious of all so-called “megachurches” and their leaders, as well as “mega-ministries” and their so-called prophets and healers. In the New Testament, God never used money to build His kingdom. It is the Holy Spirit living inside the true disciple of Jesus Christ—the suffering servant—who builds the kingdom.

**19:47-48** Luke now projects the reader into the week leading up the Feast of Passover. Instead of Galilee, where Jesus has done most of His ministry and teaching, He is now in the heart of the opposition, the country of the enemy. Luke immediately describes the hostility directed toward Jesus by those in authority. They are no doubt disturbed by Jesus’ actions against the merchants and moneychangers, and are looking for an opportunity to rid the temple of Jesus. Unfortunately, they can do little, as Jesus consistently gathers multitudes who sit at His feet, listening to every word, anticipating that, at any moment, He will declare Himself King of the Jews and set up His kingdom.

Who wouldn’t want to be a part of the action?

---

## Questions for Your Personal or Group Reflection

1. What has this chapter taught you about love, God's love for the lost and God's love for all people? How did Jesus' love for the lost compel Him to complete His journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, in spite of full knowledge of what awaited Him that week?
2. How did Zaccheus actively demonstrate "fruits in keeping with repentance"? Is there, or has there ever been an occasion in your past that would require you to bear fruits in keeping with repentance? Did it involve money? Did it involve responsibilities? Did it involve lying or cheating or stealing? Did it involve relationships of some kind? Ask yourself, "Did I simply confess and ask for forgiveness, or did I actually *do something* that showed I was truly repentant for my actions?"
3. Have you ever come across someone, or heard of someone, who you thought did not deserve forgiveness from God? Why do you think you held onto those feelings?
4. Meditate on Jesus' parable about the nobleman and his slaves. Do you think the nobleman was unjust to chastise the slave who guarded his mina? How do you relate to this parable concerning your own participation in the kingdom of God? Are you a "slave" who has invested his mina to make ten more, or a Christian who has invested his mina to make five more? Or has your tendency been to become the slave who kept his mina hidden? If you are not living up to your answer about this, what is your specific plan to change the outcome?
5. Review the circumstances behind Jesus' "triumphal" entry into the Jerusalem. When you think about Jesus' "entry" into your own life when you were saved, was it a cause for celebration or weeping, or both? Why? How does that play out in your current prayer life? Ask yourself these questions: "Do I celebrate Jesus more than I mourn and weep for the lost?" "Do I grieve over those whom I love when I consider the consequences for not receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior?" "How balanced am I in regard to celebrating versus weeping?"
6. When you look around the evangelical culture today, do you see more celebration, or do you see more brokenness and mourning for the lost? Identify three emotions you think Jesus would have experienced between verses 35 and 48. Are these emotions a part of your Christian experience when it comes to the church or other Christians?
7. When you look around the evangelical community today, do you see any commercialism that you believe is contrary to the kingdom of God? If so, what do you plan on doing about it? Do you know of any so-called Christian leaders who are padding their pockets and living luxurious lifestyles at the expense of other Christians? Do you know of any churches that spend more money on overhead than they do giving to "the poor, the lame, the crippled and the blind?" After you have concluded your answer, ask how you plan to redistribute your tithe and offerings.

**The Discipler's Commentary**  
Fill-in Outline for the Disciple  
Luke 19

19:1-10 – Jesus' encounter with \_\_\_\_\_

Zaccheus was a chief tax collector, wealthy and \_\_\_\_\_

Zaccheus takes actions consistent with fruits in keeping with \_\_\_\_\_

Zaccheus becomes a true son of \_\_\_\_\_

19:11-27 – The parable of the nobleman, his servants, and their \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: the people's belief the kingdom of God was going to appear \_\_\_\_\_

The parable clearly describes Jesus' expectations of His \_\_\_\_\_

For rejecting Christ, there are \_\_\_\_\_

19:28-40 – Jesus' "triumphal" entry into \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was prophesied by Zechariah \_\_\_\_\_

The people use palm branches (Gospel of John) consistent with a \_\_\_\_\_

The Pharisees tell Jesus to rebuke His disciples; they are declaring a \_\_\_\_\_

19:41-44 – Jesus weeps over \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus weeps because He knows the consequences His people will face for \_\_\_\_\_

All of what Jesus warns them about takes place in \_\_\_\_\_

The temple will be destroyed, never to be raised again until \_\_\_\_\_

19:45-48 – Jesus drives out the merchants and moneychangers in the \_\_\_\_\_

The merchants and moneychangers set up their tables in the \_\_\_\_\_

Two reasons Jesus is angry: they have abused a place designated for \_\_\_\_\_

they have turned God's holiness into \_\_\_\_\_

## The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 19

19:1-10 – Jesus' encounter with Zaccheus

- *The discipler will need to explain somewhat the metropolis that Jericho became in Jesus' day. Chances are, the disciple may still have old Jericho in mind and envision the town that Joshua captured with the walls falling down. Explain also how Jericho was an important East-West trade route, and that it was an opportune place for the Romans to collect taxes. Then introduce Zaccheus.*

Zaccheus was a chief tax collector, wealthy and not popular

- *Explain why Zaccheus would have been so unpopular.*

Zaccheus takes actions consistent with fruits in keeping with repentance

- *When confronted by Jesus, Zaccheus changed his whole life around. Explain how he did that according to the commentary. Make sure the disciple can tie together Zaccheus's response to Jesus with "fruits in keeping with repentance," and how that relates back to John the Baptist.*

Zaccheus becomes a true son of Abraham

- *Explain why Jesus called Zaccheus a "son of Abraham" and what significance that had to Jesus' statement that "salvation has come to this house."*

19:11-27 – The parable of the nobleman, his servants, and their resources

- *See if the disciple can determine why Jesus told the parable of the nobleman who "went to a distant country to receive a kingdom." (The answer is in verse 11 where the people expected the kingdom of God to appear suddenly.)*

Purpose: the people's belief the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately

- *Ensure that the disciple understands what kind of kingdom the people were expecting to appear "immediately." Emphasize once again the concept of one Messiah, two comings. Make sure the disciple clearly understands the contrast of the two, and why Jesus first has to die on the cross on His first coming. (This is paramount to understanding the core of New Testament teaching—the death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.)*

The parable clearly describes Jesus' expectations of His church

- *Have the disciple make application of the parable to Jesus' expectations of His church and His followers today. Ensure that the disciple begins thinking in terms of how he is planning on using his "mina." The discipler may need to help the disciple discover what his or her mina is.*

For rejecting Christ, there are severe consequences

- *It is important that the disciple understand that there are consequences for failing to take the "nobleman's" instructions seriously.*

19:28-40 – Jesus' "triumphal" entry into Jerusalem (on Palm Sunday)

- *The discipler will want to present some sort of a timeline as to the Jewish festivals. There are many resources on the Internet for annual Jewish festivals. (This can also be found at [www.walkwiththeword.org](http://www.walkwiththeword.org).) Particularly point out the significance of Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed. Show where the Feast of Tabernacles is and its prophetic significance. For a greater impact, present these festivals in light of the Exodus (Exod. 12). This may help the disciple pull together the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and His blood being shed on the cross as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).*

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was prophesied by Zechariah 500 years earlier

- *Have the disciple find Zechariah's prophecy and see how it foretells Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and the significance of "mounted on a donkey."*

The people use palm branches (Gospel of John) consistent with a conquering king

- *This detail is not found in Luke, so have the disciple find it in the Gospel of John (12:13). Clarify for the disciple the significance of the people's reaction and how the palm branches demonstrated their wrong idea of why Jesus was entering into Jerusalem.*

The Pharisees tell Jesus to rebuke His disciples; they are declaring a king of the Jews

- *The discipler may need to explain the two reasons the Pharisees were so upset that the crowd was declaring Jesus the king of the Jews. Point out the irony here. Jesus really is the king of the Jews, but not in the way the Jewish crowds were anticipating or even hoping for.*

19:41-44 – Jesus weeps over His people

- *Describe for the disciple the type of weeping Jesus experienced. It wasn't just a shed tear, but great grieving. See if the disciple can determine why Jesus wept so severely before proceeding to the next fill-in.*

Jesus weeps because He knows the consequences His people will face for rejecting Him

- *Make sure the disciple understands that Jesus is not weeping for His people just because of what awaits them in the future, but more importantly, by rejecting Him as Messiah and the Son of God, they remain in their sins and will experience eternal consequences.*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she has ever wept over anyone who is rejecting Jesus. (Has the discipler done so?)*

All of what Jesus warns them about takes place in AD 70

- *Some historical background may be useful here.*

The temple will be destroyed, never to be raised again until the end times

- *The discipler must be careful not to get distracted by going into too much detail about end times events. It should be sufficient—depending on how much eschatological information the disciple already has—to inform the disciple that the temple will be rebuilt in the end times. We know that by the fact that the Antichrist will offer a sacrifice on its altar.*

19:45-48 – Jesus drives out the merchants and moneychangers in the temple

- *The discipler should present some background for the presence of the moneychangers and where in the temple compound they were operating. Show the disciple on a map, which can easily be downloaded from the Internet, or may be found at the back of many study Bibles.*
- *Describe how easily the moneychangers could take advantage of the common Jewish worshipper.*
- *Point out that the overturning of the tables of the moneychangers is the only time that Jesus expresses anger. Ask why.*
- *Ask the disciple how Jesus referred to the temple, and what God intended its main purpose to be. Have the disciple compare that to today's evangelical "worship service." Ask him or her what is missing?*

The merchants and moneychangers set up their tables in the Court of the Gentiles

- *The disciple may wonder why Gentiles were in the temple courtyard. It may need to be explained that there were many Gentiles who were proselytes. That is, these were Gentiles who had converted to Judaism and were allowed to offer sacrifices in the temple. Their access however was restricted to the Court of the Gentiles.*

Two reasons Jesus is angry: they have abused a place designated for Gentile worship

- *See above.*

they have turned God's holiness into commercialism

- *Ask the disciple how commercialism in the temple is so abhorrent to God. How does the issue of commercialism compare with Jesus' other teachings on money, possessions and greed?*

*Ask the disciple if he or she can recognize any commercialism in the Christian church today.*