

In light of today being Palm Sunday, which kicks off Holy Week, meet me in the gospel according to Luke, ch. 19 [825]. If you are unfamiliar with the Gospels, they are theological biographies of Jesus. Who he is and what he came to do. At this point, Jesus has ministered, taught, worked miracles and now in ch. 19 Jesus is turning a corner. He is headed to Jerusalem. There, he will confront the Temple, be betrayed, die on a Roman cross, then rise from the dead. His earthly journey is almost over. Everything is about to change. The world will never be the same. **Luke 19:11-48** [ ]/ 3 movements: the minas, the entry, and Jerusalem.

**I. The Parable of the Ten Minas<sup>1</sup>** (11-27) – Now, this is right before he enters Jerusalem. And his people thought he was going to launch his Kingdom all at once. They thought he'd be a militaristic Messiah. They hoped he'd destroy the Romans and finally set the nation free. They are confused about the nature of this Jewish King and the nature of his Kingdom. **17:20-21**. In Matthew, Jesus teaches about the nature of the Kingdom: it doesn't come all at once through violence, but is more like a small seed that slowly but surely grows or a little leaven that eventually takes over the whole lump.

Then Jesus tells a story. When Jesus goes into "once upon a time" mode, you'd better have your steel toe boots on. A nobleman leaves in order to become king and then return. In the meantime, he leaves ten minas each to ten of his servants and tells them to get to work on his behalf.

But the subjects hate the nobleman. They don't want him as their king. They reject his rule. They prefer autonomy, their own rule and their own way. Sound familiar? Well, the man becomes King and returns to check in on his business. The first made ten more, the second five more. The nobleman is pleased with them, but then another just brought him the one mina. There were no banks so he just hid it in a handkerchief for he was afraid of the severity of the nobleman.

Now, we can draw true moral principles here. The minas represent our whole selves and we *are* to steward our short lives well for the purposes of God. We are to be faithful and fruitful for the King. We are to maximize our mist. If you are faithful with little, you will be faithful with much. The reward of faithful service is an increase of responsibilities. Men especially, hear this: authority flows to those who take responsibility. And authority flees from those who evade responsibility. Young people: wake up, make your bed, brush your teeth, read the Bible. That's all true. Use it or lose it. But this parable is placed in this important context in Luke for a deeper reason than just those moral principles.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. Jesus is God in the flesh. The OT is full of promises of God returning to purify his people. This parable is about God returning to his people, in the person of Jesus, to see how they are doing with their age-old commission. What was that commission? They were to be a KoP, they were to be a light to the nations (Lk 8:18). They were to be obedient. They were to keep the law and model to the nations what true humanity was supposed to look like. They were to draw them into the worship of the one true God.

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<sup>1</sup> A mina was 100 drachmas, so about 100 days wages. [Or 3 months?]

But they were not a light to the nations but became like the nations. OC Israel failed in their vocation. They failed to honor the nobleman. That word for handkerchief in v.20 is *soudarion*, which usually means a burial cloth used to cover the face of a corpse (John 11:44, 20:7). They had hidden their light and become a dead religion. Verse 27 is dire. Those who will not submit to God have become his enemies and their judgment is sure. They will be slaughtered. Which leads to the next movement:

**II. The Triumphal Entry (28-40) 28** And when he had said these things. In other words, “This parable has significance for what I am about to do.” He is finally arriving in Jerusalem. Back in Luke 9:51, he had set his face toward Jerusalem (13:22 18:31). Jesus saw his journey to Jerusalem as the symbol and embodiment of YHWH’s return to Zion, as the OT prophets promised.<sup>2</sup> The Gospels are about the story of Israel finding its completion in the story of Jesus.

He heads to the Mount of Olives. This is steeped with biblical and eschatological significance. Zech 14:1-4a: “Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east.”<sup>3</sup> God has come and has set his feet on the Mount of Olives. Make ready.

**29-36** Jesus sends a couple disciples to get a colt. Jesus had already walked 100 miles from Galilee. He did not need a ride for this last mile downhill. Plus Jewish tradition said one should enter Jerusalem for Passover on foot. This is deliberate action. This is not just that Jesus is humble, this is not that Jesus is tired. This is Jesus’ “coming out as King” moment.

Jesus knows exactly what he is doing. He is making a claim. This is what D.A. Carson calls a symbolic self-disclosure. This was planned. Jesus set this up. The owners of the colt would not have just given up their animal to a couple rando strangers. The disciples are to tell the owners “The Lord needs them” which are likely code words: it is time. Every move is filled with intention. This is the God-man on a mission. This is what one NT scholar calls “public street theatre.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus knows he is fulfilling Scripture with his every move.

We don’t think much of donkeys or colts today but they were royal animals in ancient Israel. Horses go to war while the king sits on a donkey in peace. 2 Sam 16:2: “The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride on.” When David hands the reigns over to Solomon, he has him ride on his mule. Jesus is saying there is a new Solomon in town, the true Son of David, the King of Israel (1 Kin 1:28-53, cf. Jud 10:4, 12:14, 1 Sam 9:1-5, 2 Sam 18:9).

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<sup>2</sup> JVG, 639.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew actually loves the book of Zechariah. We don’t have time to dip into all them, but just to give you an idea: Zech 13:7 in 26:31, Zech 11:12-13 in 27:9-10; Zech 14:21 in 21:12, Zech 12:10 in 24:30; Zech 11:12-13 in 26:15, allusions in 25:31 and 26:28. The King fulfills.

<sup>4</sup> David Garland.

This is the equivalent to rolling out a red carpet. This is a coronation ride. This is to fulfill Zech 9:9-10 (Matthew 21:5 says this explicitly; Luke expects us to know our OT). Zechariah is about the return of God so that a cleansed Jerusalem will become the center of worship for all nations through a Davidic King: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." Jesus doesn't have to teach or say anything. His actions are full of symbolic meaning (cf. Gen 49:10-11)

This Jewish construction worker is headed to the holy city where he will die, be raised, then enthroned as the forever King for everyone. The peoples, the nations will obey the King who rides on a colt and who will be crowned with thorns. / Here is the point. Jesus is not quietly slipping into Jerusalem. Jesus is well aware that the decisive confrontation is about to take place in the great city and he wants all to know his claim.

**37-40** His disciples are celebrating. Not Jerusalem, but his disciples. They are praising and they quote Ps 118 (2 Kin 9:13; Lk 2:14). Ps 118 was a collection of Psalms that were sung at Passover, along with Psalm 113-118, called the Hallel psalms. Hallel means praise. Ps 118 was the climactic passage of the Hallel psalms: packed with eschatological hope. It is a royal coronation Psalm celebrating the victory of the king over his enemies. And of course, Jesus enters during Passover week so Ps 118 would have been on their minds. His disciples know who he is and what he is doing. The Davidic King is entering the city to bring the Kingdom of God and his first stop is the temple.

The Jewish leadership don't like this at all and tell Jesus to silence them. Jesus says even if I did, the very rocks would cry out (Hab 2:11). You can't stop this praise. Isa 55:12 says the mountains shall break forth into singing, and the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Ps 19:1 the heavens declare the glory of God. 114:4 the hills will skip like lambs. 150:6 let everything that has breath praise the Lord. The Lord will receive the glory due his name so you might as well get on board.

**III. Jesus and Jerusalem (41-48) 41-44** Like Jeremiah, Jesus the prophet weeps over Jerusalem. He had offered peace, *shalom*. Jeru-salem means "foundation of peace." But she squandered her calling and rejected the Prince of peace. There will be no national victory. Like the servants in the parable, tragically, they will be slaughtered by their enemies. Of course, he is talking about when the Lord destroys the temple through the Roman army in AD 70. They will not have peace but war. **13:34-35, 21:6, 20-24, 31-32, 23:28-31**. The temple will be destroyed. The OC order made obsolete by obliteration. Just as the prophets prophesied: Micah 3:12 "Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets." Jer 6:8 had warned previously (Bab): "Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I turn from you in disgust, lest I make you a desolation, an uninhabited land" (Isa 29:3 Jer 6, 52:4-5, Amos 5:18).

This is shocking. The Jerusalem temple was the political, economic, religious and cultural heart of Judaism. One historian writes, "It is almost impossible to make too much of the Temple in first-century

Jewish Palestine.”<sup>5</sup> It was where God’s presence was found, where sacrifice was offered, where forgiveness was granted, where politics were practiced. The temple dominated the city of Jerusalem. The structure occupied 25% of the city. One historian wrote, “It was not so much a city with a temple in it; more like a temple with a small city round it.”<sup>6</sup> To mess with the temple was to mess with the nation’s identity and pride.<sup>7</sup> Jesus is going for the jugular because they would not repent. One author compares what Jesus is doing here to him riding into a DC today, going up the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, burning a flag on the steps, then flipping the souvenir booths on the Mall.<sup>8</sup> One commentary on these verses is titled correctly: Jesus v.s. Jerusalem.

**45-47** Jesus enters the temple, likely the outer courts of the Gentiles. [Jesus is doing the priestly duty of inspection. Lev 14:43-45: “If the disease breaks out again in the house, after he has taken out the stones and scraped the house and plastered it, then the priest shall go and look. And if the disease has spread in the house, it is a persistent leprous disease in the house; it is unclean. And he shall break down the house, its stones and timber and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry them out of the city to an unclean place.” With the cleansing, Jesus acts out the destruction of the leprous house.]

Jesus is not just mad about them using the temple for profit.<sup>9</sup> That is there and there are wicked people who use the ministry to pad their own pockets. But there is a deeper layer here, prophesied by Malachi. Mal 3:1-2: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.” The messenger came and warned them. Now God himself through the Son is coming to clean the temple.

Jesus says, “It is written: my house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers.” It is written. The Son of God looked to the Word of God. On the surface level, this just looks like Jesus is saying the temple should consist of prayer, not greed. That is true, but again, there is actually something much deeper going on. Jesus is *actually quoting two* OT passages and putting them together here: Isa 56:7 Jer 7:11. One positive one negative. Isa about end time restoration and Jer about judgment.

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<sup>5</sup> Sanders, 1993, 262.

<sup>6</sup> NTPG, 225.

<sup>7</sup> RTF, 782.

<sup>8</sup> Leithart, 148-49.

The money changers and sellers themselves were actually not primarily what got Jesus hot. They were actually helpful and necessary. Just think about it. This was the time of Passover so the temple would be descended upon by thousands of travelers. Passover was the most popular Jewish festivals. Normally, Jerusalem had a population of around 30,000 but at Passover it grew to 180,000.<sup>9</sup> 6x its normal size. And the temple tax had to be in their own Tyrian coinage (Deut 14:22-27). Other currency was rejected. So people needed to change their money to fulfill their Jewish obligation. They had no choice so money-changers were needed. Money changers and sellers needed to make a living and people needed pure animals to sacrifice like the Law commanded. Bringing a dove or sheep from places like Galilee may not have made it. Or may have become blemished on the journey. Would have certainly been inconvenient. So to obtain an unblemished animal, many would need to buy one and they would need the special temple coins in order to do so. And notice that Jesus kicked out the sellers *and* the buyers: “all who sold and bought in the temple.”

Remember, we should treat OT quotations like hyperlinks. When NT authors quote OT authors, they often have the larger context in mind. So here, Jesus quotes Isa 56:7 but he has the whole chapter, indeed the whole section of Isa 40-66 in mind. Isa 56 is about the restoration of the people of God, the return from exile, and the enthronement of God as King. In other words, it is about the Gospel! **56:3-8**. So, Jesus quotes Isaiah 56 to communicate that he is God returning to his people to judge his enemies, restore his people, include the nations (foreigners), and establish his Kingdom.

What about Jer 7? Jer 7 is a sermon denouncing the temple. Israel was trusting in the temple while not actually living for God: **7:1-15**. Jeremiah is rebuking Israel because they thought they could live sinful lives *out* of the temple but find comfort in the temple of God. The Lord through Jeremiah said amend your ways, turn to the Lord, care for one another, dethrone your idols.

[Today, this would apply to your Sunday only Christians. Those who only think about Jesus and only live for the Lord one hour a week. Jeremiah would call that false religion. Don't trust in these deceptive words: this is the church of the Lord, the church of the Lord, the church of the Lord. No, Jesus isn't interested in one hour of your week, he is interested in every moment of every day. All of life for Christ. Are you living for Him? Is your whole life about him? Whether you even eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.]

Saints, note what King Jesus is doing here. He quotes Jer 7 to show that the temple is doomed because of Israel's sin (Matt 16:14). Just like before at Shiloh when God used the Philistines to destroy the tabernacle, God would destroy it again, this time through the Romans. Shiloh will happen again. Jesus in effect says I am turning over tables but the Romans will tear down the walls. They were trusting in a building but not living for the Lord.

And by combining Isa 56 and Jer 7, Jesus is telling us that the end of the temple is not the end of the story. The Kingdom is here and foreigners would be included in the people of God, all nations. The OC would end, Jesus would establish the NC in his blood, and the gospel would go from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth. What a Savior.

Palm Sunday is about God returning to judge and purify the people of God through the Son of God. But in God's economy, judgment is never the final word. If we repent. That word just means change your purpose. If we amend our ways, the Lord's favor will shine on us. We turn from sin and self and turn to Christ and his Kingdom. G.

For those of us who have expressed fidelity to King Jesus, repentance is all of life. We must keep reorienting our purpose around our Lord. And God is calling us to be faithful stewards of the calling and commission God has given us. We are not here for us! We are for him, and a key part is to be a light, a city set on a hill. Don't put the lamp under a basket. Stay salty **14:34-35**.

**Benediction: Heb 13:20-21**

