

# The Gospel of Luke

## Lesson 34

In the previous lesson, we noted the similarities and differences between the rich ruler and Zacchaeus the tax collector. Each was wealthy, had heard about Jesus, and had understood what Jesus said to him. Their inward posture, however, could not have been more different—the rich religious leader was self-righteous while the unscrupulous tax collector was humble and curious. While the rich ruler resisted Jesus' instructions, the tax collector admitted his offenses, repented for them, and promised to make restitution. The religious ruler departed in sadness, but the corrupt businessman remained with Jesus in great joy.

Commenting on these two varied responses to Jesus, R.C. Sproul writes in his book A Walk with God—Luke: “The idea here as elsewhere in the New Testament is that with Christ there is no neutrality. When a person encounters Christ, he is either for him or against him. He either trips over him, or is established by him....”

In the parable of the ten minas, we saw another example of varied responses to the rule of Jesus. We learned that the wise response is to use our personal talents, gifts, abilities and material possessions to please God and advance His kingdom here on earth. Those who refuse to use their gifts wisely must take the consequences, which are profoundly grim. The decision set before every person is a matter of life or death—to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord or to reject Him and bear the awful consequence.

As you begin your study, ask God's Spirit to enable you to see your need of Jesus and to invest your talents wisely.

## The Triumphal Entry

In this section of his gospel, Luke records Jesus' approach and entry into Jerusalem. Prior to this, Jesus has not sought public recognition as Messiah, but now He allows and encourages it. Declaring Himself the promised One of God, the Messiah, is a monumental event in history!

In ages past, God revealed Himself through creation, as the apostle Paul confirms: "...since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Then God expanded the revelation of Himself through the writings of the Old Testament prophets, who wrote not by their own design but "...as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). And finally, as Jesus entered Jerusalem, God revealed Himself through His beloved only Son. One New Testament writer wraps it up like this: "In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Hebrews 1:1-3a).

The celebratory entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the events to follow are crucial to our proper understanding of God, His plan for people, and the history of the world.

Before beginning to study, ask God to provide insight and understanding so that you may grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus—Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man.

1. Read John 11:38-57 for background. (Jesus has raised Lazarus from the dead and then continues His journey up to Jerusalem for Passover.)

- A. Describe the political and religious climate of the city.
- B. What is the attitude of the chief priests, Pharisees and Sanhedrin toward Jesus as He approaches the city?
- C. What is the attitude of the people?
- D. Read John 11:49-50.
- (1) How does Caiaphas, the high priest that year, answer the fears of the Sanhedrin, who worry that if they allow Jesus to go on like this, everyone will believe Him and they (the rulers) will lose their place and their nation?
  
  - (2) How might this answer have a double meaning, one from the perspective of wicked men and the other from God's point of view?

E. From John 11:51-52, what is John's comment on the remarks of Caiaphas?

F. From John 11:54, how does Jesus temporarily respond to this threat upon His life? Why do you think He takes this course of action?

2. The apostle Peter informs our understanding of prophecy: "...no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation, for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Read Zechariah 9:9-10.

A. What is the time frame of Zechariah's prophecy? (Look in your Bible's introduction to the book of Zechariah or to another resource.)

B. What does the name "Zechariah" mean? (Use the same resources as A above.)

C. According to Zechariah:

(1) By what means would Israel's king come?

(2) From a Bible resource (footnote, commentary, etc.), what was the symbolic meaning to the people of someone, especially a king, riding on a donkey?

3. Read Luke 19:28-38 and Matthew 21:1-11.

A. How is Zechariah's prophecy fulfilled in Jesus?

B. Read Luke 2:8-14. How does Luke 19:37-38 echo the praise of the heavenly host in Luke 2?

C. Despite knowing that the authorities were plotting to arrest and kill Him, Jesus continues his journey into Jerusalem. What virtuous characteristics do you observe in Him?

4. Read Luke 19:39-40.

A. As the people continue to praise Jesus, some of the Pharisees in the crowd become angry. What do they say to Jesus?

B. What does the Pharisees' response reveal about

(1) their character

(2) their regard for Jesus

(3) their regard for God and His Word

(4) their accountability to be faithful shepherds of God's people

5. Reread Luke 19:40.

A. What is Jesus' response to the Pharisees?

B. What do you think of Jesus' response? Is it appropriate, unusual, perplexing? Please explain.

C. Read Joshua 24:21-27; Habakkuk 2:11; and John 1:1-3, 10-11.

(1) How do these passages enhance your understanding of Jesus' answer to the Pharisees?

(2) How do they anticipate the events recorded in Luke 19:41-44?

6. Read Luke 19:41-44; Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:14-15; John 1:10-11; and Romans 10:19-21.

A. From Luke 19:41, why is Jesus so heartbroken over Jerusalem?

B. Read Isaiah 26:3 and John 14:27. Who gives us peace? How?

- C. Jeremiah 6:6-8 and Ezekiel 4:1-3 are Old Testament prophecies of the Jews' exile to Babylon and the fall of Jerusalem. These events occurred in 586 BC during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. What does Jesus say about the future of Jerusalem?
- D. Read John 1:10, 10:29-30, 11:25-26; and Hebrews 1:3. Considering what Jesus knew about Himself, what He knew the prophets had written about Him, and His knowledge of current and future events, what might have been some of His thoughts and emotions during His journey into Jerusalem?
- E. From your knowledge or research, what happened to Jerusalem? When did it happen?

7. Read Luke 19:45-48.

- A. What does Jesus do as He enters the temple area? Why?
- B. Who was responsible for turning God's house of prayer into a den of robbers and thieves?

- C. Read Luke 2:41-52. How do Jesus' actions as a boy and a man contrast with those of the religious leaders of his day?
- D. While Jesus taught in the temple, what were the religious leaders trying to do to Him? Why were they unsuccessful?
- E. Reflect upon the sweep of history, taking into consideration what God has done and what people have done. Think specifically upon Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His expected future return (Revelation 19:11-16). What conclusions do you draw about God, the Son of God, and people?
- F. What personal applications have you made from this lesson?