

Commentary on Luke chapter 19, by Chuck Smith 10.16.22

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October memory verse Matthew 1:21

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

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Remember, we are now in the final 30 days of Jesus earthly ministry

Now Jesus has entered into Jericho ([Luk 19:1](#)).

And as He is passing through the city,

Behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans ([Luk 19:2](#)),

The city of Jericho was an oasis. It was a resort town; it was the Palm Springs, except even more lush. The winters can get quite cold in Jerusalem. They get even an occasional snow. But down in Jericho in the wintertime the weather is just really perfect. The days are usually clear. You get less than two inches of rain during the year. And yet, because it is about 1100 feet below sea level, there are all kinds of springs and little streams down there in Jericho because of your depth. And there's just these artesian wells or springs and all of this fresh water. And with the warm temperatures which are usually in the wintertime into the eighties during the daytime, it just makes for lush growing and a year-round growing season. And there's just great citrus and all types of fruits that are grown there in the area around Jericho. So it became a retreat for the wealthy people. They would all have their winter houses down in Jericho. And Jericho was filled with publicans, that is the tax collectors, because they were the wealthy people, and Pharisees.

And so, "Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaeus and he was the chief of the publicans, the tax collectors,"

and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was ([Luk 19:2-3](#));

Now, the blind man, when they said, "It's Jesus of Nazareth," he knew who He was. This man didn't know who He was, but he was curious. There was a

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tremendous crowd of people moving along. "Who in the world are they thronging after? Who is He?"

and he could not see, because he was so small ([Luk 19:3](#)).

A short little fellow, could not see over the crowd, and he dared not to venture into the crowd because people knew who he was and they hated him. He was public enemy number one, he was the chief of the tax collectors. And to go in and try and work his way through the crowd to see Jesus, he had been beaten to death. He would have been elbowed, gouged, pinched, and they would have really gotten him if he dared get into the crowd. He knew better than getting into a crowd of people.

So he saw that Jesus was going down the street.

He ran ahead of him, climbed up into a sycamore tree; and waited for Jesus to pass under ([Luk 19:4](#)).

Just so he could see this Man. He didn't know who He was, but he just wanted to see Him. And to his amazement,

As Jesus came to the tree, he looked up, and he saw him, and he said, Come down, Zacchaeus, hurry up; because today I must abide at your house ([Luk 19:5](#)).

It's interesting that even though Zacchaeus did not know Jesus, Jesus knew Zacchaeus and called him by his name. John tells us that "Jesus did not need that any man should testify Him of man, because He knew man and He knew what was in man." He knew what was in the heart of this man. Now, there are many ways that Jesus could have gone to Jerusalem without going through Jericho. I think that He went through Jericho just because He knew there was this man there whose heart was yearning for God. I think He made a detour in order that He might meet Zacchaeus.

And so Zacchaeus made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully ([Luk 19:6](#)).

Probably because he knew that it would upset the Pharisees. Now at this point the door is closed on us. We are not taken into the feast. We are not brought into the conversation. But here, Jesus abiding at the house of Zacchaeus, began to talk to him, no doubt, about the kingdom of God. No doubt about life and the real values of life, probed his heart, his soul. Outside, where we must stand with the

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crowd, we hear only the murmuring of the Pharisees against Jesus for going into the house of a sinner. For they

murmured against him, saying, He had gone to be the guest of a man who was a sinner ([Luk 19:7](#)).

Outside there was that mulling around of the crowd as they waited for Jesus to come back out. They probably heard an occasional roar of laughter come from within the house. You say, "Oh, you believe that Jesus laughed?" You bet I do! I think that He had a keen sense of humor. I do not picture Him as always very sober. I think it was a very tragic period of the church when somberness became equated with spirituality and it was a sign of unspirituality to smile. So the ministers took on such a...well, they wore the black suits. And they took on that quality of tone in their voice and that very somber, serious, sober, "Go-o-od mo-r-n-ing." And you think, "Oh, what a spiritual man!" So sober, so serious. I think of Jesus as a regular fellow. I can see Him just laughing with the disciples, slapping them on the shoulder...and just a man's man. But yet, there were those periods of silence where they didn't hear the laughter outside, those times when Jesus was probing, talking, dealing with Zacchaeus.

Now the doors are opening again and Zacchaeus is standing there before the Lord. He was a short little fellow, probably looking up at Him.

Lord, a half of my riches I'm going to give to the poor; and if I've taken anything from a man falsely, I'm going to restore to him fourfold. And Jesus answering him, said, Today salvation has come to this house, inasmuch as he is become a son of Abraham ([Luk 19:8-9](#)).

Now, there are two ways to look at that. The translation in our King James is: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." And there could be a fine bit of satire and humor in that. Anytime you hear a Jew say, "I'm going to give away half of my riches," you know that salvation has come to his house. You know, one of these type of Jews that Zacchaeus was. But the other is probably the correct. "...inasmuch as he has become..." And either translation can be accepted. "...a son of Abraham." Paul tells us that it wasn't the physical descendants of Abraham that would inherit the kingdom of heaven, but the spiritual descendants. For Abraham was not the father of the physical seed, but of the spiritual seed of those who would believe as their father Abraham; who believed God, became the father of the spiritual seed, those who would believe and trust in God. And so we are children of Abraham through faith, Paul teaches us. So Jesus could be using that spiritual application now through the faith that is in this man. He is become, indeed, a son

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of Abraham; that is, a spiritual descendant. There were Jews who said to Jesus, "We are of our father Abraham." Jesus said, "If you were of your father Abraham, then you would have known Me, because Abraham testified of Me and he saw Me." And they said, "You're not fifty years old. When did Abraham see You?" And He said, "Before Abraham was, I Am." Then Jesus said, "But you're of the father, the devil, not the sons of Abraham." "We have Abraham for our father." And He said, "Don't say that. Don't you realize that God can raise up rocks as children of Abraham, if He wanted?" It's the spiritual seed, those who believe. Abraham was the father, so we have become children of Abraham through our faith, and heirs, then, of the promises of God that were given to Abraham. They are ours because we are the spiritual sons of Abraham, the man who believed God. And we are his first sons. Now, you can't carry that too far, as some people tragically do, and say, "Well, the church is Israel." No, the church is not Israel. And God is yet going to deal with the nation of Israel, as He has promised.

But Jesus then said to the crowd, those who were murmuring,

For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost ([Luk 19:10](#)).

Find fault! You were murmuring because I was a guest of a sinner. But that's who I came to seek. That's who I came to save.

And as they heard these things, he added a parable, because they were near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear ([Luk 19:11](#)).

Now they had heard Zacchaeus saying, "All that I have, half of it I'm going to give to the poor." Now Jesus accepted that, didn't He? He said to the rich young ruler, "Sell everything that you have and give to the poor." But now with Zacchaeus saying, "A half that I have I give to the poor. And I restore fourfold anything that I have taken dishonestly." Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house." So you see, it isn't a demand that I have to sell everything to follow Jesus, it's just that I can't let that be my god. "No man can serve two masters; you cannot serve God and mammon." Now Jesus, because they were getting near to Jerusalem, and because...notice...they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He had just told them, "I'm going to despised, I'm going to be rejected, I'm going to be slain, I'm going to be spit upon," and the whole thing, and yet, they still thought the kingdom was going to immediately appear. And so He spoke a parable unto them to the intent that they would see that there will be a delay of time before the kingdom will be established.

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And so there was a certain nobleman who went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return ([Luk 19:12](#)).

Now, it is interesting that Jericho was the city where Archilles had built his palace. And Archilles was the Roman procurator over that area. And Archilles, prior to this, had gone to Rome in order that he might be elevated to the title of king. Because he felt that procurator just wasn't a big enough title for him, and he was wanting the title of king. And that could only be bestowed by the Roman senate. And so Archilles had gone to Rome to receive the title of king, that he might come back and dwell in his palace and reign there in the area of Jericho. And when he went to Rome, he left his duties in the hands of some of his subordinates with whom he left the funds that they might run the affairs of state. With Archilles, however, there were other emissaries who went to Rome and spoke in the senate against him; and rather than receiving the title of king, the Roman senate took away his position even as the procurator of that area. So Archilles had sort of a bad experience, much as did Herod later, who went to Rome with the same desires and was actually banished to Spain...not Herod the Great, but one of his sons, Antipas.

So, it could be that Jesus, in giving this parable, is touching on something that historically had not happened too long ago, and something that they had all known about in Archilles' leaving Jericho to go to Rome to get the title king.

"But there was a certain nobleman went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."

And he called his ten servants, and delivered to them ten pounds, and he said unto them, Occupy till I come ([Luk 19:13](#)).

Now, this is the word of Jesus to the waiting church, "Occupy till I come." We are not to sit back and say, "Well, the Lord is coming; there's no sense of finishing my education. Well, the Lord is coming; there's no sense of not entering into this business venture...or, let's just wait, because the Lord is coming." We are not to plan our lives, "Well, let's go out and charge everything, because the Lord's coming, and we won't have to pay for it." We are not to plan our lives predicated upon the Lord's coming in a particular span of time. But we are to occupy until He comes. Yet, anticipating Him to come at any moment, never getting so involved that I'm not ready to drop things in a moment's notice. Because that I may have to do. I am to use the time that I have wisely in my serving the Lord. I am to occupy until He comes, but never to just sit down and say, "Okay, Lord, we're just going to wait now here until you come. Oh, praise the Lord." And just have a

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glory hallelujah meeting as we're waiting for the Lord to just come and rapture us. Never! We're to occupy, we're to keep busy until He comes.

And so he delivered the ten pounds, and said, "Now occupy till I come."

But his citizens hated him [as did those of Archilles], and they sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us ([Luk 19:14](#)).

And that's exactly what they had sent to the Roman senate concerning Archilles, "We will not have him reign over us."

And so it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom [which Archilles did not do], then he commanded these servants to be called to him, whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, and he said, Lord, your pound has gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou has been faithful in a very little, you will now have authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, your pound has gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is your pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because I know that you're an austere man: you take that which you did not lay down, you reap that which you did not sow. And he said unto him, Out of your own mouth will I judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, taking up that which I did not lay down, and reaping that which I did not sow: Therefore you should have given the money to the bank, that at my coming I might have required at least my own with interest? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, But, Lord, he has ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that which he has shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not have that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me ([Luk 19:15-27](#)).

Those people that say, "We'll not have Christ to rule over us," they'll be brought before judgment and destroyed. However, those servants to whom He has entrusted His goods will be judged according to what they did, their stewardship of those goods with which they were entrusted. Now, it is interesting here that their reward is in their place of rulership in the kingdom. When the Lord comes to establish His kingdom upon the earth, the Bible teaches that we will reign with Him over the earth. To the church of Thyatira, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My kingdom. And they shall rule over the earth with a rod of iron" ([Revelation 2:26-27](#)). Actually, in the book of Revelation, the first chapter, "Unto

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Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, who has redeemed us, and we shall reign as a kingdom of priests with Him upon the earth." And then in Revelation, the fifth chapter, "Thou art worthy to take the scroll and unloose the seals thereof, for Thou has redeemed us by Thy blood out of every nation, kindred, tribe, tongue and people and hath made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign with Thee upon the earth." So the church reigning with the Lord upon the earth. Now, reigning over five cities, reigning over ten cities, reigning over two cities...according to our faithfulness with what God has entrusted us now, as I am a steward of God's things. I don't know what it's going to take to get Hawaii, but I'm working towards it.

Now when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem ([Luk 19:28](#)).

You see, He's on His way, He's moving towards Jerusalem, and this parable was on their way up. Because they felt the kingdom was going to come immediately. "No, it's going to be like a king who went away to a far country to receive the kingdom, and then he returns later on and requires of his servants that which they did with his goods. And those who sent the message and say, 'Hey, we don't want him to reign over us,' they are to be cut off."

Now they are arriving near Jerusalem. "When He had thus spoken, He went before ascending up to Jerusalem." From Jericho to Jerusalem you're going from 1200 feet below sea level, you're ascending up to about 2700 above sea level, so it's a good climb.

And it came to pass, when he was come near to Bethpage and to Bethany ([Luk 19:29](#)),

These are the little villages that are on the wilderness side of the Mount of Olives, away from Jerusalem.

and the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Saying, Go into the village opposite you, at the which when you enter you're going to find a colt that is tied, whereon a man has never sat: loose him, and bring him. And if any man asks you, Why are you loosing him? you shall just say unto him, Because the Lord needs him. And so they that were sent went their way, and they found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners said unto them, Why are you untying the colt? And they said, The Lord needs him. And so they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in

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the way. And when he was come near, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives ([Luk 19:29-37](#)),

That is, He's come over the Mount of Olives and started now to descend on the other side.

the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all of the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the king that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, you better rebuke your disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was become near, he beheld the city, and he wept over it, saying, If thou hast known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes ([Luk 19:37-42](#)).

The triumphant entry of Jesus, riding on a colt, takes us back to the prophecy of Zechariah, chapter 9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughters of Jerusalem: shout for joy! For thy king cometh unto thee. But He is lowly; He is sitting on a colt, the foal of an ass." And so, here He comes riding, the King. Notice, on a colt that had never been broken, showing again His mastery over nature. No man had ever sat on this little colt. Yet, He sat on it.

As He is riding in, the disciples began to cry out [Psalm 118](#), which is a Messianic Psalm. If you look at the [Psalm 118](#), you find that the prophecy concerning Jesus there in verse 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. But, here is a reference: "The stone which was set of not by the builders, the same has become the chief cornerstone." And Jesus, of course, is that stone. The builders of that whole Judaic religious system set Him aside. But yet, as Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The chief cornerstone upon which the kingdom of God is to be built is the stone that was set aside by the religious leaders and of the Judaic religious system. So, it's definitely a prophecy of Jesus Christ. Peter makes reference to it and the best commentary you can get on the Old Testament is the New Testament, you know that.

Now, going on. "This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" ([Psalm 118:24](#)). What day? The day that God establishes the King, and then the cry, "Hosanna! I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord" ([Psalm 118:25-26](#)). This is the Psalm

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that the disciples were crying, "Hosanna, hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Because the Pharisees knew that that was a Messianic Psalm, they began to rebuke the disciples, or began to tell Jesus, "You better rebuke them." And Jesus said, "Look, I'll tell you something; if they would hold their peace, these stones would immediately begin to cry out." "This is the day that the Lord has made." So Jesus, as He looked at Jerusalem, He was coming down the Mount of Olives, looking to cross the Kidron Valley, straight across on the same level, Mount Moriah, the temple mount on the opposite side the city of Jerusalem; He began to weep. And He said, "If you had only known, even thou, at least in this thy day," the day that the Lord had made, the day when they should be rejoicing and be glad in it. "At least in this thy day, if you only knew the things that belong to your peace. If you only knew that God was establishing peace with man. If you only knew what God would do for you if you'd just surrender your lives to Him...but they are hid from your eyes." And He is weeping first at their blindness, but then at the result of that blindness, the tragedy that would befall them.

For the days shall come upon you, your enemies will cast a trench about you, they will compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side ([Luk 19:43](#)),

As Jesus is describing now the siege by the Roman legion under Titus, who in less than forty years would destroy Jerusalem and kill over one million people in the process. And so Jesus saw the devastation and the desolation, and He said,

They shall lay thee even with the ground ([Luk 19:44](#)),

This glorious beautiful temple that Herod had built is going to be leveled, not one stone will be left standing upon the other. These tremendous monuments in Jerusalem all to be leveled. And Jesus, looking at this magnificent city, weeping because it's going to be destroyed,

and the children within thee will be destroyed; they will not leave in thee one stone upon another; because you did not know the time of your visitation ([Luk 19:44](#)).

Because you were blinded to the work of God.

This is the day that the Lord has made. This is the day that God had planned, the redemption of Israel. This is the day for the unveiling of the Messiah to the people. Prior to this day, Jesus would not allow any public acclamation of Himself as Messiah. He would reveal it to individuals on an individual basis, but often He'd say, "Don't tell anybody. Go your way. Tell no man." But this day He is

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encouraging the people's demonstration. He's getting that little colt in order that He might fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah. "This is the day that the Lord has made," the day in history when the Messiah would come.

It is, to me, very significant that this day took place 173,880 days after the commandment by Artaxerxes in March 14, 445 B.C. to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Which, according to Daniel the prophet, that from the time the commandment goes forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem under the coming of the Messiah, the prince will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, or 483 years, or 173,880 days in the Babylonian calendar. And exactly to the day, April 6, 32 A.D., "this is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad." But they didn't rejoice. Instead, they rejected Him. And knowing that He was to be despised and rejected, knowing that He was to be crucified, He wept as He looked at the city, because of the blindness and the resulted devastation that would result from the blindness.

And then he went into the temple, and he began to cast them out that sold, and those that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but you've made it a den of thieves ([Luk 19:45-46](#)).

"My house shall be called a house of prayer," He said, "but you've made it a den of thieves." I thank the Lord that I'm not as other men. You see, it's hard to be in the right. No, it's sad and it's tragic, the things that have been done in the name of Jesus Christ. The things that are BEING done in the name of Jesus Christ, the whole fund-raising gimmickry within the church, the schemes and the professionalism that has been brought in, it's tragic; it's sad.

Jesus taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, but they could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him ([Luk 19:47-48](#)).

So Jesus was receiving the ear of the people at this point. They were attentive to hear Him. However, the leaders had conspired and determined at this point that He must be destroyed. And so, we see now that movement towards the plotting, the subterfuge that will lead to the betrayal and the arrest and the crucifixion.