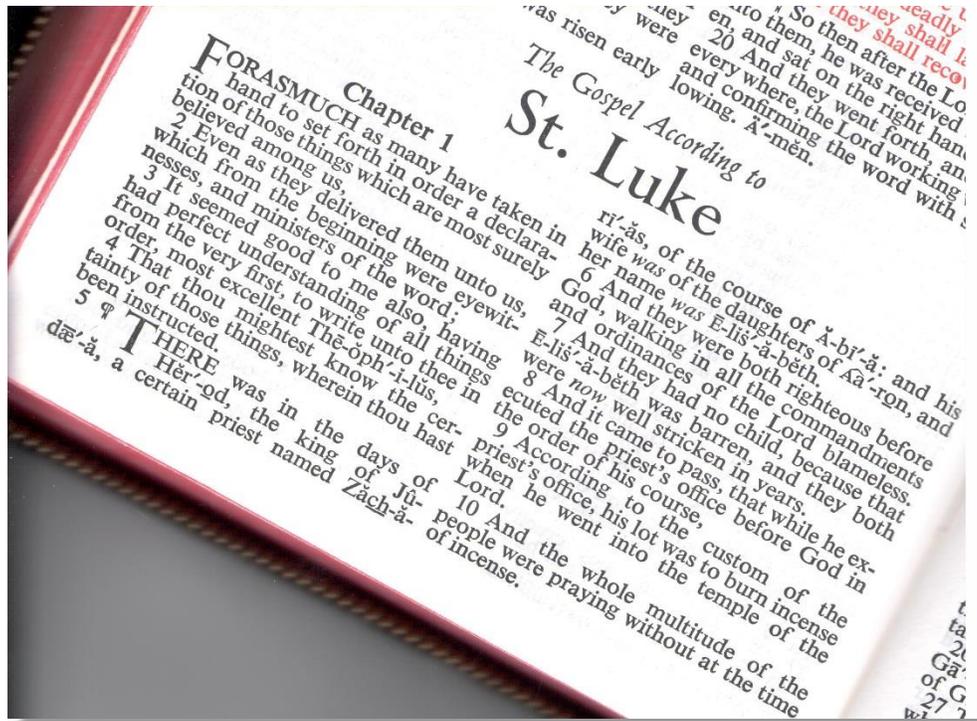


LUKE

JESUS ARRIVES AND CLEANS UP



F. Michael Slay
A DEEP Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 19:28-20:18 – Jesus arrives and cleans up

Jesus makes His triumphal entry and proceeds to shake things up, clearing the temple moneychangers and making prophetic connections people understand but don't necessarily like. This causes the conflict with the religious leaders to heat up fast.

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We are a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.

Luke 19:28-20:18 – Jesus arrives and cleans up
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1 Luke 19:28-40 (ESV)

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

I almost feel sorry for the Pharisees here; the stress on them must have been unbearable. They know Zechariah 9 and Psalm 118.

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. – Zechariah 9:9

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! – Psalm 118:26a

Now they’re watching these prophecies unfold right before their eyes. So they tell Jesus to order His followers to stop acting like He’s the Messiah.

Of course Jesus does the exact opposite.

“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Talking rocks would have given the Pharisees a heart attack.

The Pharisees didn’t see this coming, but the disciples don’t see what’s coming next either.

In a way they’re both making the same mistake; they can’t adjust their expectations in light of the evidence. They expect a certain kind of Messiah, and Jesus doesn’t fit.

But from that point on, their reactions diverge. The Pharisees conclude that Jesus isn’t the Messiah. The disciples (and the crowds) conclude that Jesus will start fitting their expectations any minute now.

Neither group will deal well with what happens next.

2 Luke 19:41-44 (ESV)

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Notice that He's not crying over the cluelessness that will get Him crucified. He's crying over what will come later.

Most of the people of Jerusalem will never recognize who Jesus is. Great suffering could be avoided, if only they *had known on this day the things that make for peace*.

The "things that make for peace" are the things of the gospel. Instead, most Jews will continue to look to throwing off Rome as their salvation. Christ is right there among them and they can't see it.

"And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

In 70AD the Jews rebel against Rome and the rebellion is brutally crushed. The prophesy in this passage is specifically fulfilled when Roman soldiers build siege ramps to take Jerusalem and then level the place. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, records the horrors.

Indeed, though they had so great an army lying round about them, they bore a siege of five months, till some of Herod's chosen men ventured to get upon the wall, and fell into the city, ... and upon the pouring in of the army, there was slaughter of vast multitudes everywhere, ... so they were cut to pieces, ... nor was there any mercy showed either to infants, or to the aged, or to the weaker sex, ... they slew people of all ages, like madmen. – "The Wars of the Jews" Book 1, 18:2

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/war-of-the-jews/book-1/chapter-18.html>

I'd cry too.

The horror that befalls the Jews is their fault; they started the war. That's no comfort to Jesus.

People mess up their lives. That applies to all of us; we're all sinful.

But, by contemporary standards, some folks have done this more than others. That doesn't matter to Jesus, and it shouldn't matter to us. The challenge of every Christian is to learn to love the way God loves.

Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you God's way of loving.

3 Luke 19:45-48 (ESV)

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

Jesus clearing the temple is one of the few things reported in all four gospels. Luke’s version is the briefest. Since the introduction to Luke mentions that there were many other accounts of Jesus’ life, maybe he felt another long explanation would be redundant – so he just alludes to it.

The activity going on in the temple was incredibly wrong and offensive. The outer court (the court of the gentiles) had been turned into a marketplace where money changers and animal inspectors were cheating everyone who came to the temple to offer a sacrifice.

And the people must have known that they were being cheated. So, it was a pretty convincing argument against the legitimacy of the whole religion.

It had the effect of shaking the faith of the faithful while, at the same time, desecrating the temple and mocking God. It was really quite brilliant – if you’re the devil.

So Jesus throws the tantrum heard round the world and sends their money and their tables flying. The *chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people* had approved this circus, and don’t take kindly to having their “arrangement” mocked and disrupted.

So now merely trapping Jesus in an argument, or to figuring out a way to silence Him, isn’t going to be enough.

He must be destroyed.

People in power never take well to folks who make them look bad. Christians around the world live under dictatorial rule. They make their rulers look bad, and so they suffer for their faith in ways we can’t even stomach.

Christians should make a point of praying regularly for the persecuted church. If you know any Christians who live under oppression, concentrate your prayers on them.

Be specific.

4 Luke 20:1-8 (ESV)

One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up and said to him, “Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.” He answered them, “I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” So they answered that they did not know where it came from. And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Jesus has just chased the moneychangers out of the temple. *The chief priests and the scribes with the elders* aren't just questioning Jesus about his teaching, they're upset about all *these things* – especially clearing the temple. They want to know about His right to do that. Jesus answers with this famous piece of apologetic judo.

But there are actually two judo moves in Jesus' reply. He traps them, and He changes the subject. Notice their exact words. “*Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.*”

They're not even thinking about authority from God! They want to see a court order or something like that. They think that if no one gave Him official permission to do this, they can get Him on disturbing the peace, destruction of property, and other crimes. When Jesus asks them about John the Baptist, He takes the conversation out of the legal realm and into the spiritual.

Luke reports that *they discussed it with one another*. That must have been painful. Many people were involved, and they were trying to resolve an unresolvable problem. John had declared that Jesus is the Christ, and they aren't going to agree to that. So they had to reach a consensus *that they did not know*.

Embarrassing answers like that don't come easy.

That main goal of apologetics is to get people to think. Jesus achieved that in spades. They now know what they're up against, and undoubtedly many of them are starting to have second thoughts.

We often get this wrong when witnessing to nonbelievers; we think our job is to convert.

But that's the Holy Spirit's job. Our goal should be to prepare the soil. Often, this means not promoting Christianity, but just shaking things up.

This is actually more of a listening skill than a speaking one. The best way to prepare the soil is to learn as much as possible about what someone believes. Don't challenge them – at least not at first. Often, if you let someone get into details about their belief system, they'll point out the shaky bits.

If your relationship hasn't gotten to the point where they feel comfortable doing that, then you're not in a position to witness to them.

When you respect them, they'll respect you. Then they'll listen and ponder what you say.

5 Luke 20:9-18 (ESV)

And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written:

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?”

“Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

It seems odd that they would argue with a parable. “Surely not!” they say.

But this crowd is mostly people who have been following and listening to Jesus. They know who He is and so they recognize that this parable is really about God and Israel. Horrified at the implications, they shout out their objection.

Jesus’ response, quoting Psalm 118:22, is particularly hard hitting. The crowds had just quoted Psalm 118:25-26a during Jesus’ triumphal entry when they shouted “Hosanna” (in Matthew 21:9 and John 12:13).

Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

“Hosanna” is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word for, “save us.” Everyone gets this. So Jesus adds another detail.

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

What sets this parable apart from all the others is that one of the characters is clearly meant to be Jesus.

So this parable isn’t just abstract teaching. What’s happening in the parable isn’t a moral lesson; it’s a prophesy. That’s what gets everyone so upset.

Then Jesus turns up the heat even more – quoting well known prophetic verses that describe terrible consequences. This will send the scribes and the Pharisees into fits.

It almost looks like Jesus is trying to get himself crucified.

Exactly.

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. As we grow in Christ, we occasionally learn that something we thought we understood is a bit more intricate than we thought. So, we have to adjust and grow. What was your biggest shift? How hard was it to adjust your point of view?

2. We all know people who've made a mess of things. Is helping them less rewarding?

3. Who do you know (or know of) that's being persecuted? What should you pray for?

4. What do your nonbelieving friends believe?

5. Some of the parables and other lessons in the Bible say things we don't want to hear or believe. What do you do with a Bible passage that makes you want to say, "No way!"?

Items for prayer: