

## Luke 13 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

#### VIII. The Judean Ministry 9:51-24:53

##### *J. The Teaching of Jesus 12:1-19:27*

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#### 9. “Repent or perish” 13:1-5

Since we covered these vs. in depth on Sunday, we’ll just review them briefly tonight.

**1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**

The Galileans were far more antagonistic toward the Romans than the people of Judea.

There were bands of rebels that hid out in the hills of Galilee that would occasionally attack Roman garrisons.

At any perceived injustice on the part of Rome, the Galileans would raise a ruckus & throw a protest that often turned violent.

One time, when a group of Galileans had come to Jerusalem to make sacrifices at the temple, they found out about the Roman governor Pilate’s taking funds out of the temple treasury to fund a building project.

There wasn’t enough fresh water in Jerusalem so Pilate decided to build a new aqueduct from the Pools of Solomon to the City.

Since this project would benefit the Jews, he thought they ought to pay for it & dipped into the temple treasury.

This ticked off the Jews so they staged a protest.

Pilate had his troops disguise themselves & sent them into the crowds with clubs under their robes.

At a word from their commander, they began beating the people around them, taking special aim at the Galileans, since they were the real agitators of this protest.

When it was over, dozens lay dead.

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Pilate’s plan backfired when because of this, the Jewish Sanhedrin sent a delegation to Rome to protest.

Rome agreed that Pilate had messed up & sent word back to him that any further trouble would mean his ouster.

It was this warning & his desire to make nice with the Sanhedrin that moved him to condemn Jesus even though he knew Jesus was innocent.

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Now, it was the belief of that time that what a person experienced in the course of life was the direct result of either the reward of God for being righteous, or the wrath of God for being wicked.

Some of the people of Judea mentioned the incident of the massacre to Jesus & asked His comment on it.

What they were insinuating was that the Galileans who'd died were wicked.

And by implication, so were **ALL** Galileans.

Tell me – was Jesus a Judean or a Galilean?

There's a very good chance they raised this issue as a slam on Jesus' character for being a backward Galilean.

**2 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

Jesus told them their assumptions about *why* these people died was all wet.

They'd *not died* because of God's wrath & judgment on their sin.

They died because we live in a fallen world where both moral evil & natural disaster take place.

Such tragedies as these ought to remind us that life is brief, & that the choices we make in this life determine our eternal destiny.

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#### 10. Parable of the barren fig tree 13:6-9

**6 He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ 8 But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let**

**it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' ”**

This carries on the same warning of vs. 1-5; that soon we will stand before God to give an answer for what we've done with the life He gave us.

Actually, Jesus spoke this to the *entire nation* of Israel.

As soon as He mentioned the fig tree, they would have thought of

the prophets who'd *likened Israel* to the fig tree of the Lord. <sup>[1]</sup>

*This* fig tree bore no fruit for 3 years – it was sterile.

The owner of the vineyard told his steward who tended the trees & vines to cut it down.

There were many places in Israel where fertile soil was a premium. Vines or trees that didn't produce wasted valuable space.

So they were cut down & replaced with productive plants.

The steward asked that another season of growth be given to this unproductive fig.

Maybe it just needed a little more attention.

If that attention & another season didn't see any fruit, *then* he'd cut it down.

Though Jesus didn't say so, the assumption is that the owner relented. The lesson to the people was clear.

For 3 years Jesus had come to Israel looking for the fruit of repentance and faith in Him as her Messiah. But they had not received Him.

And now the time was about over. It would be only a short time & the end would come, *unless* they repented & turned to Him.

Though the hour was late, there was still time to turn.

#### **11. Another Sabbath healing 13:10-17**

**<sup>10</sup> Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.**

As Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, His eyes came to rest on a woman who'd been dealing with a painful condition for 18 long years.

She was bent over in a chronic position that kept her from being

able to stand straight.

Luke attributed her condition to a “spirit of infirmity” meaning there was some *spiritual root* to her ailment.

While it would be wrong to think that *all* physical problems were caused by a spiritual problem, it would be equally wrong to think that they *never* have a spiritual origin.

[Example of bitterness – inspired by the demonic – its effect on health.

**Ephesians 4:26-27 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, <sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil.]**

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**<sup>12</sup> But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, “**Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.**” <sup>13</sup> And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. <sup>14</sup> But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”**

This guy didn’t rebuke Jesus directly – he went after the people instead.

From his reaction we can assume this woman wasn’t a local. She was one of many who’d come, hoping for a touch from the Lord.

But the ruler of the synagogue was outraged that they would dishonor the Sabbath by seeking out Jesus to heal them!

As far as he could see, healing was *work*, & work was prohibited on the Sabbath.

But in this he was wrong – healing for Jesus was no work, it was a delight.

**<sup>15</sup> The Lord then answered him and said, “**Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it?**”**

While work was indeed prohibited on the Sabbath, God never intended the Sabbath to be a day that imperiled life or diminished the joy of living.

On the contrary, the Sabbath was meant to be a thing of

celebration & joy; a respite from the curse of fruitless labor that would allow them to rest & enjoy life.

Why, even the most ardent Pharisee would untie his animal & water it on the Sabbath, even though, strictly speaking, such was work.

If basic humanitarianism recognizes the need to animals for water, how much more ought it affirm the need of human beings for deliverance from cruel bondage to needless pain?

**16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, [a Jew, YOUR SISTER!!!] whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”** **17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.**

Jesus' answer silenced the ruler of the synagogue & his fellow critics, shaming them with the hardness of their hearts.

And while the critics were blushing in embarrassment, the common people rejoiced as they saw God's real intent for the Sabbath lived out before them in the teaching and power of Jesus.

## **12. Two Kingdom parables 13:18-21**

Jesus now gives 2 parables about the Kingdom that would probably be lost on us if we weren't careful.

They speak of the Kingdom in an almost monstrous way.

There is something dark & insidious going on in these stories Jesus tells.

### **a. parable of the mustard vs. 18-19**

**18 Then He said, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”**

If you've ever seen a mustard plant, you know it isn't a tree, it's a *shrub* at best.

You couldn't even really call it a *bush*.

Its branches aren't strong enough to support the weight of any but the smallest of birds.

Yet **THIS** mustard seed becomes a huge tree in which the birds make their home.

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There are a couple rules for interpreting parables we need to keep in mind.

First– a parable was meant to teach *one* lesson.

They were delivered at a point to amplify a lesson Jesus was giving.

Parables aren't meant to teach a half dozen different things, with each part of the parable meaning something different.

They teach one truth with each part only serving to illustrate it.

Second – Idioms or images almost always mean the same thing from parable to parable.

So when in the parable of the sower the birds are workers of the devil, they carry the same image here in v.19 – they are agents of evil.

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Just after the incident of vs. 10-17, when Jesus had a run in with a leader of a synagogue & his fellow critics, He tells this story of the Kingdom of God *turning into* something unnatural & monstrous. It becomes the home of the agents of evil.

He adds another parable to it . . .

**b. parable of the leaven vs. 20-21**

**20 And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."**

This was an image that would send a shiver up the Jewish spine & cause their hair to stand on end.

3 measures of meal spoke of the grain or fellowship offering.

Yet here a woman puts some *leaven* in it.

One of the strongest symbols in scripture is leaven as a picture of sin.

So here we have the holy fellowship offering being polluted by the corrupting influence of sin.

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Yet again, Jesus says this is a picture of the *Kingdom of God*.

What's going on here?
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It's this – The religion of Israel had grown to be something *very different* from what God intended it to be.

It had become a massive formal edifice that instead of providing a

way for people to *fellowship* with God, had thrown up massive barriers to keep people *away* from Him.

[Tabernacle → Temple (David's desire, Solomon's, Zerubbabel, Herod)]

[Law → Talmud; rules, rules rules!!!]

By Jesus' day – leadership mostly corrupt, worship fake.

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But what Jesus says here doesn't apply just to the Judaism of that time.

It applies to the Visible Church of today.

The history of the church is the story of something that began as a small, sincere group of born again, spirit-filled people, but became a huge monstrosity, corrupt to its core.

In both parables, the common tie is *the work of human beings*.

A *man* planted the mustard seed – a *woman* mixed the leaven into the dough.

Jesus' point is that the *earthly* or *human* form of the Kingdom of God will always become something other than what God intends, and what God intends by the Kingdom cannot be confused with the earthly manifestation of it, whether we're talking about Judaism *or* Christianity.

There is no denomination, movement, or church that isn't in some way faulty because as long as human beings are involved, it's going to be less than perfect.

This fact alone ought to make us extremely careful about holding an unqualified loyalty to our group.

Calvary Chapel is just a label – it means next to nothing.

And long before any of us claims a loyalty to CC, or evangelicalism, or Protestantism, or even the term *Christianity*, we must cleave to Jesus Christ.

### 13. Be cautious of your assumptions 13:22-30

**22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.**

This question was asked of Jesus because the rabbis were locked in a heated debate over the question of whether many or few would be

saved.

Jesus refused to be drawn into the debate.

As before, His answer was to deal with the only thing that really matters, “Make sure you’re one of the saved!”

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In several other places we’re told *not to strive* in our service *to* the Lord.

The garments of the priests were to be made of linen because perspiration doesn’t adhere to it.

The linen spoke of service of God that was based on God’s enabling rather than man’s effort.

So in the NT we were told that the servant of the Lord must not strive or trust in the power of his own flesh & strength.

No – our service rendered to the Lord must be something that’s motivated *by* love, not *for* love.

It’s okay to be tired *IN* service of God, but never tired *OF* it.

There’s only one time the Lord calls us to strive; making sure we’re really saved.

We must strive because salvation is very narrow; it’s only as wide as the Cross.

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We must forever put away the idea that salvation is obtained by good people who are sincere.

NO! Salvation is a gift God gives only to those who believe in the Son.

And Jesus says that we must make *very sure* our trust is indeed invested *in Him alone*.

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Then He goes on to speak about the danger of assuming they’re safe just because they have a godly heritage.

**25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ 26 then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ 27 But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom**



**of God, and yourselves thrust out. <sup>29</sup> They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup> And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”**

The rabbis taught that being a Jew, a physical descendant of Abraham through Isaac & Jacob, guaranteed them a place at the heavenly feast.

Jesus makes it clear, that just as God shut Noah in the ark then judgment fell, so the time would come when the offer of the gift of salvation would pass & the door to eternal life would close.

After that, all earthly privileges, like being a Jew, would mean nothing!

On the contrary, there would be despised Gentiles from the 4 compass points of the Earth enjoying what they'd assumed was theirs as the physical descendants of Abraham.

Listen – husbands, wives, children – won't get into heaven on the shirt tails of others.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian anymore than going to a donut shop makes you a cop.

WHAT ARE YOU TRUSTING IN FOR ETERNAL LIFE?
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#### **14. Jesus' courageous determination 13:31-33**

**<sup>31</sup> On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”**

The Pharisees said this, not because they cared about Jesus – but just because they were trying to get rid of Him.

Since Herod's territory was the region of Galilee, this may mean that at this point Jesus has moved back into the northern territory for a brief time.

Jesus didn't dispute what they said. Rather, He affirms it so it appears that Herod has decided to take action against Him now that He's resurfaced in Galilee.

But Jesus had no intention of running away.

He had a mission to perform & nothing would dissuade Him.

**<sup>32</sup> And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and**

### **the third day I shall be perfected.'**

Jesus called Herod a fox, which had a very different meaning than it does for us today.

This was no compliment – it was an insult, but an imminently accurate one for Herod was a cruel but weak ruler.

Rulers are supposed to *serve* the people they rule by *leading* them. Herod had no interest in serving anyone but himself and used the power of his office to do one thing, add to his physical pleasures.

Anyone who offended him, regardless of the cause, was made to feel his wrath.

Jesus' popularity with the common people had grown too great & Herod was now looking at how he could deal with Jesus.

But the Lord made it clear – His schedule was set & neither Herod nor anyone else was going to alter His plans.

In 3 days He would arrive at the end of His journey – Jerusalem.

In v. 32, that word “perfected” simply means completed.

Jesus meant that His traveling would be complete once He reached Jerusalem.

In the meantime, over the next 2 days, He would keep doing what He'd been doing for the last 3 years – teaching & healing.

### **33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem, the heart & center of Israel & Judaism was also the place where most of the prophets had been executed by the national leaders.

Jesus places Himself squarely in the same tradition as those men of God who ran afoul of the authorities & so were put to death.

This mention of Jerusalem moves Jesus to give a heart-wrenching lament over the on-going waywardness of the City . . .

#### **15. He laments over Jerusalem 13:34-35**

**34 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!**

This is nothing less than a revelation of the passionate heart of God to

be reconciled to His people.

When there's danger near, a hen will spread her wings and call her chicks to gather under their shelter.

But sometimes the chicks will not listen & run off to their doom.

The hen cannot go running off after the errant chicks because it would expose those who did come to her for protection.

Instead, the hen has to watch as the foolish little chick runs headlong to its destruction.

God had spread wide His loving arms of protection to all who would come.

He'd sent the message of salvation through the prophets & now by His own Son, but still there were many who refused to listen.

There could be no doubt, the storm of destruction was coming.

**35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'* ”**

The time of Israel's salvation was coming rapidly to a close.

With the shutting of the door & His return to heaven, the nation's destruction was at hand, as indeed it was in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD at the hands of Titus & the armies of Rome.

What Jesus says here in v. 35 is crucial – Israel, as a national entity, will not see Jesus again until they say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh!”

As the prophets tell us – in the last days, during the Tribulation, when the Jews realize the antichrist is an imposter & NOT their Messiah, they will then reject him & he will turn in fury against them.

The carnage will be massive as he attacks Israel, but a large remnant will flee to a place in the Eastern wilderness that God will have prepared as a refuge.

There He will protect them until the antichrist masses his forces for a last attack.

While in the refuge, the remnant will experience a revival that will see them come to faith in Christ enmasse.

Just as the last attack on their refuge is launched, they will cry out to God in spirit and truth, “Blessed is He who comes in the

name of the Lord!”  
And then, Jesus will return to deliver them and squash the  
antichrist & his armies.

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Knowing all this will take place in the not too distant future, it's  
important to pay close attention to the global positioning of  
nations and leaders as they take a stand regarding Israel.

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[\[1\]](#) Hosea 9:10 2: 12 Jer. 8:12 5:17 Isa 36:16 Joel 1:17,12 Micah 4:4 Zech 3:10