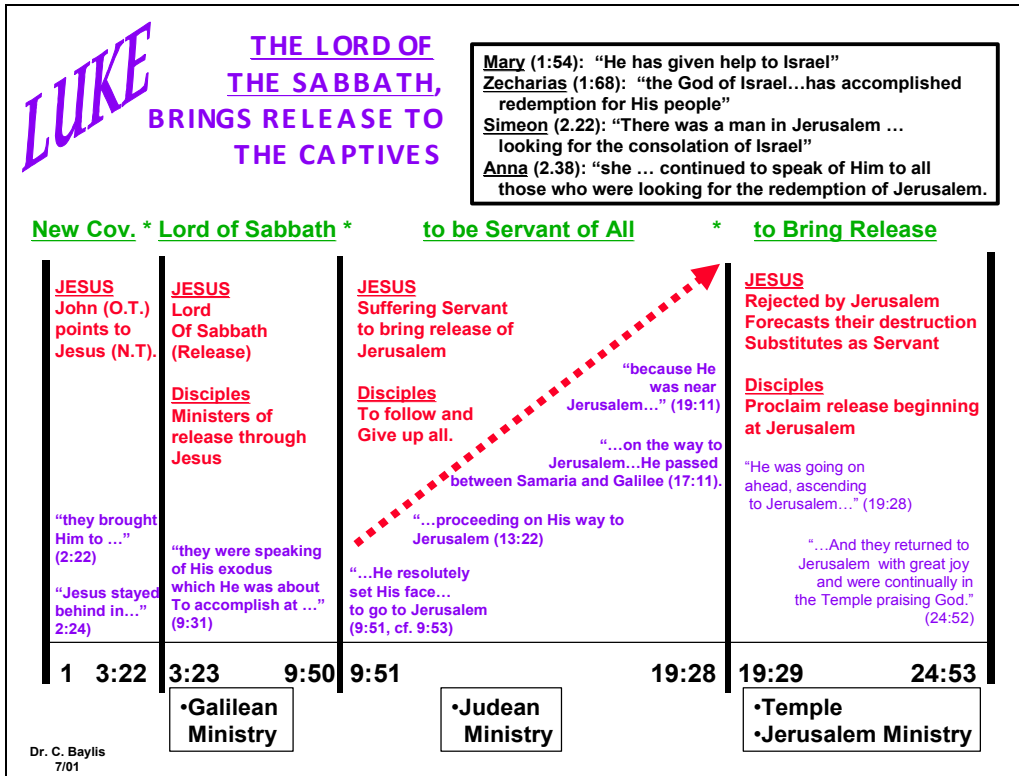
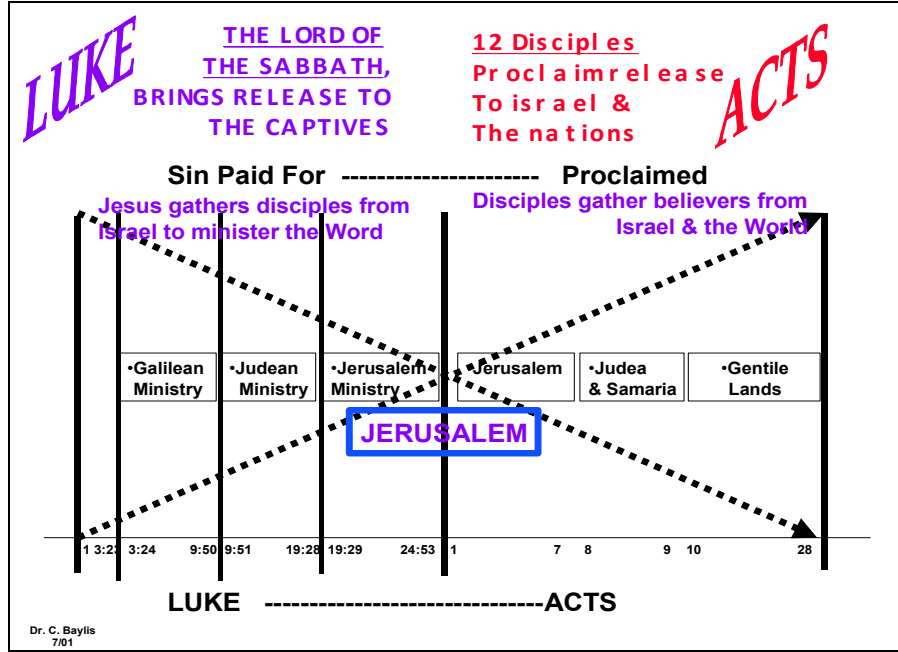
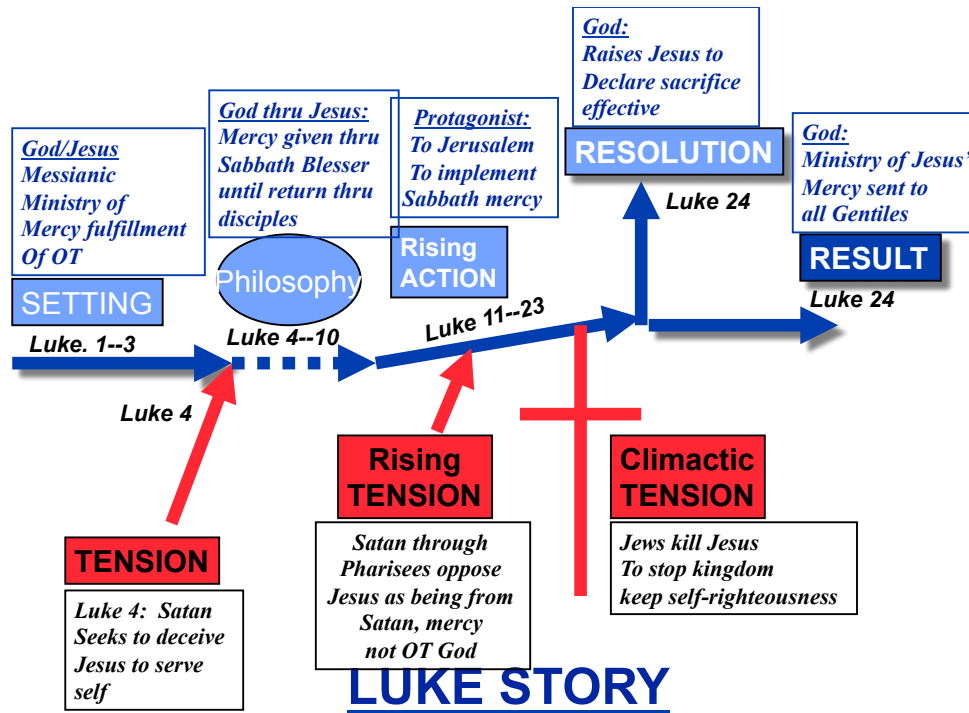


Luke 13:22—19:27





Baylis  
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## The O.T. Great Sabbath Blesser Arrives

- B. Israel demonstrates their true heart by their true actions of self-righteousness and lack of mercy. (13:22-17:10).
1. The leaders of Israel reject the Kingdom (God's love) and the King based on their self-righteousness (self-love) identified in their love of possessions instead of love of people (13:22-14:35).

Jesus now gives several illustrations and a narrative to show that the privileged religious Jews are going to be absent when Abraham is feasting in the Kingdom. They were invited but they were too self-righteous to come.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Their self-righteousness is seen in that they value their own status more than an invitation to the kingdom. The Pharisees had their own righteousness (status), and did not understand God's holy righteousness. Had they done that they would have seen themselves as depraved, in need of the righteousness of God. Thus their lives are related to the priority of materials rather than the invitation to the kingdom, valued by the King. It is very interesting that the Pharisees, while thinking they were desirous of God's kingdom, were actually desirous of a kingdom which was invented by their own imaginations, a kingdom that justified them in their own self-righteous prosperity. This was not the kingdom of God. Thus when the kingdom was offered by Jesus, they did not recognize it, and thus did not desire it. The interesting thing here is that those who are

a. In response to the question of who will be delivered<sup>2</sup>, Jesus responds that it is only those who respond to Him as the minister of God's mercy (13:22-35).

1) A questioner asks regarding the number of people who will be saved (13:22-23).

*22 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem. 23 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"<sup>3</sup> (13:22-23a).*

2) The way to God's deliverance is not the way determined by the masses through human reasoning (13:23b-24)

The Pharisees would seek to enter the Kingdom, but would not be able, since their perception of the Kingdom, and the related perception of the requirements to enter the Kingdom were different than the Doorkeeper's.

*And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

3) Those who respond with the masses to the natural reasoning will be ignorant of their error until the judgment which will reveal their rejection and their fate for rejecting Jesus (13:25-30).

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rejected by God have no idea that they are missing anything desirable, since they have no desire for God in the first place. God only rejects those who do not desire Him.

<sup>2</sup> The real question here in the sense of "delivered" is the question of entering the kingdom. The Kingdom was where the Gentiles would lose their rule to Israel once again. So while there is individual salvation included, probably the greater emphasis is on the deliverance from Gentile rule. Thus, Jesus as the Doorkeeper, is the One who will determine their entrance. But it will be based on repentance, not on good works.

<sup>3</sup> One must ask the question as to what the word "saved" (i.e., delivered) means. Since the Lord was headed for Jerusalem, and the impression was that it was there He would become king, the questioner is asking who will be delivered into the kingdom with Him.

Notice that the Jews here (cf. v. 26) are rejected based on their source (where they are from). In other words, the Jews will argue quickly that they are from Jerusalem, where He is from (a common genealogy), yet He will reply that the common genealogy has not brought them into relationship with Him (“know”, cf. Jeremiah 31:34), the fullness of the Old Testament.

- a) Those who have erred in their choice through human reasoning will not realize their errant reasoning until the judgment (13:25).

*25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. '*

- b) The belief of those who are rejected from the kingdom at the judgment is that their physical association with Abraham (Judaism and the Abrahamic Promise) was what insured their place in the kingdom (13:26).

The claim that these are making is that they have returned (from exile) and are in the City of Jerusalem, thus they are the spiritual ones who have come back, and are unlike those still in exile (see Deuteronomy 30:6).

*26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets';*

- c) The response of the Judge is that their genealogy is not what placed them in the kingdom but their response to the Abrahamic Promise (13:27)

*27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'*<sup>4</sup>

- d) The result of the judgment is immeasurable grief at missing the promised Jewish Kingdom while those exiled Jews under judgment<sup>5</sup> are welcomed (13:28).

The reference to “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is a reference to great regret. This is, of course, a reference to Jews who realize they have missed the long awaited kingdom. Further their agony is increased as they see those of a later generation of Jews, who have been under judgment, returned to enjoy the kingdom, while they, themselves, whom they had thought to be righteous since they were in the land, would be left out.<sup>6</sup> Here in verse 29 Luke quotes Jesus as using ‘Dinner’ as a representation of the Kingdom.

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 6:8 reflects the prayer of the righteous that those who hate him (and thus God) will be judged for their oppression of him. Here, Jesus at the judgment is noting that they are His enemies having oppressed Him instead of supported Him.

<sup>5</sup> While it might seem that the reference to the four directions would be a reference to the Gentiles, there is no O.T. reference that would give the reader that indication. Gen. 28:14 (the Abrahamic Covenant) refers to the four directions as Israel’s spreading their influence, and Psalm 107:3 talks about Israel’s return from the four directions when God regathers the repentant (cf. Deut. 30:1-6). On the other hand Matt. 8:8-15 seems to refer to Gentiles as eating at the table with Abraham to the exclusion of Israel (“sons of the kingdom”) although that passage refers only to “east and west”. It appears possible that the passage would mean that those to whom Israel was to minister as they went to the four directions (Gen. 28:14) would appear in the kingdom before this generation. Or it might be that the generation of the exile would return while the time of Jesus generation would be cast out. It should be noted here however, that only Psalm 107:3 has the exact same language as Jesus uses. Thus it should be concluded that Jesus is referring to those exiled would return while those in Jerusalem would be cast out.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus is referring to Deut. 29:29—30:6 where following the judgmental exile of Israel in Deut. 29, they return in faith to God in Deut. 30. Jesus is pointing out that the generation that will enter the kingdom is not this generation (who thought they were the ones since they had returned), but is a future generation who will ‘repent’.

*28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. 29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.*

- e) The conclusion is that the generation of Jews there, who considered themselves primary in God's sight would be left out of the kingdom, while those who were outcast (appeared under judgment) and would return would be in the kingdom (13:30).

*30 "And behold, some are last<sup>7</sup> who will be first and some are first who will be last."*

- 4) Jesus points out, as the Anointed One of God, that He (the Narrow Door) will be rejected by the Jews He came to save and they will not realize it until they see Jesus as their Judge in the eschaton (13:31-35).
  - a) Jesus pronounces that His purpose is to prophesy mercy to Israel until they reject Him and the Gentiles will not be able to overcome Him until then (13:31-33).

*31 Just at that time some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, "Go away and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."<sup>8</sup> 32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day*

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<sup>7</sup> This use of first and last bolsters the argument that the directions (North, South, etc.) indicate a later Jewish remnant, since that later remnant would return to Christ, while this group was present with Him during His earthly ministry and rejected Him. Verse 26 also confirms this, since the precise application of this would be to the generation of Jews present when the Lord was. Note that Jesus did teach in the Jewish streets.

<sup>8</sup> This is referring to the prophecy of Daniel 9:26 where the "the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing", referring to the overcoming of the Messiah by the Gentiles.

*I reach My goal.' <sup>9</sup>33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.*

- b) Jesus outlines His message of God's love for Israel, their rejection of Jesus until they return to Him and He returns to them (13:34-35).

*34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings,<sup>10</sup> and you would not have it! 35 "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and 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!'"<sup>11</sup>*

- b. **[Rules for Dinner]:** Jesus gives illustrations about the character of the Jewish nation that rejects the kingdom (14).

- 1) **[Healing at Dinner: God's desire for the Kingdom is to aid the helpless]:** The Pharisees err when they interpret the Law (God's desires) as caring about material things or their relatives above the needy people.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A reference to the resurrection which would validate Him as the One who overcame the Gentiles through resurrection.

<sup>10</sup> A reference to Psalm 91:4 where one who is under oppression of the enemy (Gentiles?) would find protection under the wings of YHWH.

<sup>11</sup> A reference to Psalm 118:26 where the Psalmist is rejoicing over the deliverance provided by the "Stone, which the builders rejected".

<sup>12</sup> Note here that one of the great complaints of the Pharisees was that Jesus ate with sinners. In fact that was true, for Jesus here eats with the Pharisees. Later on it will be shown in the story of the Lost Son that the Father left the house to seek the Elder Son (the Pharisee) and bring him to the dinner celebration, just as He had for the Lost Son (the outcast and sinner).

Israel had made the mistake of perceiving that they were somehow related to God genealogically (family through blood), and did not see that they were related to God by His vow to care for a helpless nation (Deut. 10:14-22). Thus, the Pharisee had no naturally inherited righteousness above anyone, but had simply the privilege of God's vow to Israel since they were helpless. The problem was that this generation of Israelites felt they were linked to God by blood (through Abraham) not through obedience. Thus they do not care for a hopeless man, but care for something of materialism that is of worth to them.<sup>13</sup>

*14:1 And it came about when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely. 2 And there, in front of Him was a certain man suffering from dropsy. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, " Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not? " 4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him, and healed him, and sent him away. 5 And He said to them, "Which one of you shall have a son<sup>14</sup> or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6 And they could make no reply to this.*

- 2) **[Seating Order at Dinner is determined by the Host's evaluation not the invited's self-perception]:** Jesus tells them a parable demonstrating the character of Israel, as they desire to enter the kingdom; their character was one of self-pride and elevation as opposed to the humble who see themselves as undeserving. (They must humble themselves before a merciful God and receive mercy).

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<sup>13</sup> This is probably an allusion to Deuteronomy 22:1-4, where it is a neighbor's donkey. Here it is their donkey which Jesus stresses is about their own care and comfort about material things, but they do not care of the neighbor, whose donkey they were supposed to help for his benefit. Here it is not the donkey but the man and they still don't care.

<sup>14</sup> The earlier manuscripts here have "donkey". However, if it is 'son' then it would go with the context of their valuing their genealogy above the poor.



The wedding feast is the kingdom (Ps. 45, Isa 62) and the Jews had been invited by the Abrahamic Covenant through Jesus' provision. Yet they had tried to assume a great place in the Kingdom through their works and self-evaluation and would be rejected. Jesus states that they need to be humble before God and allow Him to graciously elevate them into the Kingdom where they do not deserve position, but through the gift of God.<sup>15</sup>

*7 And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table; saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast<sup>16</sup>, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. 10 "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. 11 "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 25:6-7 is the Old Testament reference for this story. The point in Proverbs is that when approaching those greater and more powerful than yourself, one must be sure that they do not evaluate themselves greater than they are in the view of the king for they will be lowered down. One should be sure he evaluates himself on the same basis as the king. In this case, humility of oneself is desirable, and then let the king raise them up. Pride insures that one will be lowered and be embarrassed, since it is the king who determines status and humility is the only criteria acceptable before Him.

<sup>16</sup> Israel was invited to the kingdom in the Abrahamic Covenant.

<sup>17</sup> The point is here that it is the invitee who determines the honor not the invited. If one esteems himself, then he will be humbled. If he humbles himself then he will be esteemed. This is the basis on which the invitee discerns. Thus the Pharisee who exalted himself could count on being humbled (out of the kingdom), while the one who humbled himself could count on being exalted. It must be the invitee who exalts.

- 3) **[Dinner Invitations: The basis of God's invitation is toward those who cannot return His invitation]**: Jesus points out the nature of the love of God is demonstrated in mercy toward those who cannot repay (one-way love based on His Character). (They must act as God has acted toward them)

The point of reward here is to point out that God rewards what He approves of (imitates Him). Thus, what He has done toward Israel (hopeless) should be done on His behalf.

*12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. 13 "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."<sup>18</sup>*

- 4) **[Dinner Invitations: Those who value themselves do not perceive the true kingdom as desirable and reject the invitation]**: Jesus responds to explain that only those who value the gift of the kingdom (mercy from God) above their own personal value (self-righteousness) will enter the kingdom.

Jesus is referring to Deuteronomy 20:5-8 and the reasons given by the invitees are why one could not go into battle as it was a privilege to fight for YHWH. These reasons were for the perpetuity of the nation (i.e. it was considered a curse to die in battle and another man would marry one's wife). Yet these men turn the blessings of God into self-elevating possessions and thus deny God who supplies these possessions.

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<sup>18</sup> This point is similar to the point in the Sermon on the Mount. The addressed person here is imitating the love of God with no reward, thus it is only God who will reward Him for representing Him. He cannot expect any reward in this age since the very nature of his efforts have been to help those who cannot repay.

The Pharisees had valued oxen, houses and wives above the Kingdom in Jesus and thus rejected God based on their self-elevation on materials.

Thus, only those who were hopeless<sup>19</sup> and held that nothing could be valued above God (the humble) would be those who entered into the Kingdom.

*15 And when one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 But (now)<sup>20</sup> He said to him, "A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave<sup>21</sup> to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' 19 "And another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' 20 "And another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' 21 "And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22 "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' 23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the*

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<sup>19</sup> It is interesting here to note that the 'poor' in Luke are not necessarily always the poor in materials, but those who are humble before God in relationship to anything else.

<sup>20</sup> The Greek word here is "de" a mild adversative, or even a mild conjunction. Jesus does not appear to be contradicting the man and thus using "but", but appears to be explaining who would be in the kingdom.

<sup>21</sup> The "slave" (*doulos*) here is probably John the Baptist. The reason appears to be that a slave indicated a position. See also Luke 20:9-16. The evidence here appears to be the sending of John the Baptist to point to Jesus, as the invitation to the kingdom goes out.

*hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'*<sup>22</sup>

- 5) Jesus points out to those desiring to enter the Kingdom (follow Him) that they must reject any hope in deliverance through physical things.
  - a) Genealogy and self-effort are useless in God's sight.

The 'multitudes' here are those who are following Him due to His great exhibition of power to perform healings and thus perceive Him having the ability to overcome the Gentiles by force and justify themselves. The real point of His miracles was to show that He could offer them real forgiveness if they would repent (the real way to overcome the Gentiles per Deut. 30:1-6). Thus Jesus now will point out to them that their perception of righteousness through self-value must be discarded for Him. Something they were unable to perceive, as the Pharisees.

The commonality in all these things is physical relationship, mostly through blood (but wife is through vow). Ultimately he must hate his own life as valuable. The Pharisees claimed that their bloodline to Abraham was the thing that endeared them to God.

*25 Now great multitudes<sup>23</sup> were going along with Him; and He turned and said to*

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<sup>22</sup> It is clear here that Jesus is speaking of a positional relationship as the dinner is the kingdom, and those who were invited will not enter the kingdom.

<sup>23</sup> Note here that Jesus is not addressing the disciples (saved) but the multitudes who were following Him. They appear (in Luke) to be following Him because of the potential that He had to be King and to rule from Jerusalem. It would also appear in context that He is speaking, not of commitment of one's life, but of valuing one's life for entry into the kingdom, and thus when the real offer comes, one is not interested as in the previous story regarding the dinner.

*them,<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother<sup>24</sup> and wife<sup>25</sup> and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life<sup>26</sup>, he cannot be My disciple.<sup>27</sup>*

- b) Jesus states that if one does not recognize the hopelessness of his works before God and seek mercy from God in Jesus then He will fail in the final judgment.
  - (1) One must consider himself as worthless (unrighteous) and follow Jesus as the provider into the judgment.

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<sup>24</sup> "Father and mother" may be an illusion to the marriage of Gen. 2:24.

<sup>25</sup> Note that the "wife" was used in the parable preceding, and that the man had valued his wife over the entry into the kingdom. See Deuteronomy 13:6-11 where a wife is to be stoned should she lead her husband away from YHWH to other gods.

<sup>26</sup> The last of this sequence "his own life" will be explained in the following stories.

<sup>27</sup> The term "disciple" (singular) occurs only four times in Luke and three are in this context (14:26,27,43). The other is in 6:40 where a "pupil (disciple) is not above his master, but everyone after he has been fully trained will be like his master". This appears to be the defining verse for the term. That is, that a disciple is simply one who comes to be taught, and submit to the master's teaching. This would be entry level all the way through sanctification. That is, one who comes to Jesus for salvation would be considered a disciple if he accepted His proposals. From the definition it would appear that the hating is the progress of sanctification. The difficulty is that there appears to be two steps to sanctification. However, if one sees that the one coming is coming to be a disciple of Jesus, but does not hate his self-validation through relationships to others in light of the relationship to Jesus then he does not realize who Jesus is (the means of the mercy of God). Thus in light of the preceding story about the dinner, Jesus is saying that if they do not hate their possessions (self-elevation) then they do not value the kingdom invitation (the appearance of Jesus as the means of mercy). They do not understand who He is. A disciple must perceive his teacher and the teacher's instruction to be a disciple. He is saying this one does not perceive His teaching nor His character, and thus cannot follow (doesn't understand Who he is following).

*27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross<sup>28</sup> and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

- (2) In a parallel to the "Tower of Babel" one should immediately recognize their inability to "reach God" (have His standard of righteousness) prior to seeking a life of "self-righteousness" which will result in God mocking them.

While this has a literary connection to the "Tower of Babel" in Genesis 11 it appears to allude to

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<sup>28</sup> The "taking up one's cross" occurs in somewhat synonymous verbs in 9:23, 14:27, 23:26. In 9:23 it is coupled with 'denying oneself' and then 'following Jesus'. In 14:27 it stands only with 'following Jesus'. In 23:26 it is the story of how another carried the cross of Jesus. In 9:23 it would appear that it does not mean 'the denying of oneself', but a 'lifting up' of one's cross (almost as a banner), and must do this daily. In 9:24 it would seem to be the explanation of dying for Jesus sake ('loses his life for my sake'), that is considering one's life worthless and thus dedicated to the promotion of Jesus.). Thus it would appear from 9:23 that once one's life has been considered worthless he is to then execute (consider his life as worthless, humbled) with respect to Christ.

The picture here seems to be one carrying his own cross as a public display of his worthlessness and with the following phrase "follow Me" seems then to be having no justification of His own, follows Jesus (into the Kingdom), that is Jesus is going to the kingdom and the way there is to follow Him. The words "follow Him" are not the literal. It is literally, "come behind Me". Thus the one who has no value is coming behind Jesus to follow Him to the Kingdom. The same words are used in Luke 9:23. In 9:23 the carrying of the cross is likened to losing one's life for His sake and thus saving it.

Now in the present passage it would be parallelism that the considering of one's goods and oneself needed to be considered worthless. Thus the carrying of one's own cross is the continual evaluation of oneself that he is deserving of humility (his own) or deserving of failure. The following parables illustrate that principle. The builder evaluates his own position (value) prior to building. The king evaluates his own position in respect to the other king, and then seeks peace. Thus the potential believer here would consider his own value (soldiers) worthless and would seek peace with God (through Jesus).

(For further study note the possible allusion to Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice or Paul's use of the cross as and identification of the believer to consider himself worthless.)

Psalm 2 where “He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.” In the Tower story it is due to their self-works that they are destroyed in the judgment. In Psalm 2 it is because they have opposed the King’s rule for YHWH. Psalm 2 is more prominent in the next story.

*28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build<sup>29</sup> a tower,<sup>30</sup> does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'*

- (3) Referencing Psalm 2, the Lord warns the Pharisees of their inability to endure in the judgment based on their opposition to YHWH in their rejection of the revelation of His Son, yet there is peace found in subjection to the Son and the request for mercy.

In Psalm 2:2, the kings of the earth oppose YHWH and His Christ. Here

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<sup>29</sup> The words here for “build” and “tower” are the same as the LXX of Genesis 11:4-5 (“The Tower of Babel”) linking the two stories literarily to some extent. The people of Babel were trying to reach God on their own merits through physical means. In Genesis 12—14, God will introduce Abraham and his nation. It will be through the Seed of the Woman in Abraham and Melchizedek as the coming Priest as the means by which man will reach God. This is fulfilled only in Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> This is an illusion to the ‘Tower of Babel’ (Genesis 11) where they could not complete it. It was human reasoning, and human works that made them think they could ascend to God, yet God destroyed it, and it never reached it’s goal. Thus the reader looks back at Babel and ridicules them. In the story of the ‘Tower of Babel’ there is mockery. God mocks them when He says, “Let Us . . . go down”. He then mocks them when He names the city “Babel” a similarity to “*balal*’ (the lip) mocking the confusion of their languages.

also these are up against YHWH and are unable to wage a war and win. Thus YHWH and His Christ will destroy them like smashing pottery. Their hope is to “Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish in the way.” The Psalm finishes with a blessing on those who have taken refuge in the Son.

*31 "Or what king<sup>31</sup>, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand<sup>32</sup> men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?<sup>33</sup> 32 "Or else, while the*

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<sup>31</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary sees this king as the potential disciple who must be able to give up (sacrifice) a potential victory for the cause of Christ. However, amongst other possibilities, Matthew Henry's Commentary (Luke 13:31) makes mention of this view, and agrees with the view here.

This parable is another way applicable, and may be taken as designed to teach us to begin *speedily* to be religious, rather than to begin *cautiously*; and may mean the same with Mt. 5:25, *Agree with thine adversary quickly*. Note, *First*, Those that persist in sin make war against God, the most unnatural, unjustifiable war; they rebel against their lawful sovereign, whose government is perfectly just and good. *Secondly*, The proudest and most daring sinner is no equal match for God; the disproportion of strength is much greater than that here supposed between *ten thousand* and *twenty thousand*. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?* No, surely; *who knows the power of his anger?* In consideration of this, it is our interest to make peace with him. We need not send to *desire conditions of peace*; they are offered to us, and are unexceptionable, and highly to our advantage. Let us acquaint ourselves with them, and be at peace; do this in time, *while the other is yet a great way off*; for delays in such a case are highly dangerous, and make after-applications difficult.

<sup>32</sup> In the Joshua story of the Gibeonites, they realize that they are outnumbered and are going to die. Thus they do seek terms of peace with Joshua (even though they use deception), and are preserved.

<sup>33</sup> The first king here is the potential disciple. He has 10,000 men, which is parallel to valuing or assessing himself. In one interpretation the second king would be Satan and his followers, which would be the persecution one is heading for should they become a disciple. In this interpretation, the potential disciple would be discouraged from continuing on should he decide he does not have the mettle in the future



*other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks<sup>34</sup> terms of peace.<sup>35</sup> 33 "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*

- c) Israel was to be the representative of God, but in valuing their works as righteousness (their character) they had failed to represent

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persecution, and thus should not become a disciple. However, should he decide the value of discipleship he would then be willing to die or give up everything for Christ. The difficulty here is that one is assessing one's own abilities (like Peter) to die for Christ (or give up everything), which is not easy to understand. The second view, and that espoused here, is that the second king is God. Thus, the Pharisee is pictured here as the first king and God is opposed to Him. The Pharisee must first assess his own value and abilities to be victorious (over God, since they do not have the same values), and if he does not he should ask for mercy (i.e., join His forces). Actually Jesus used a very similar example in the example of the strong man (Jesus) destroying and distributing the man's goods (11:21-23). This second view fits the context where one is the Pharisee, the antagonist, and the other is the righteous God, through Christ, the ultimate victor and the One who offers peace.

<sup>34</sup> This is the same word, actually translated "beg" which is used in 14:18-19 by the Pharisees who ask (beg) to be excused. It is used by the rich man when he begs Abraham to send Lazarus back in 16:27.

<sup>35</sup> "Peace" is typically used of the relationship with God and is rarely (if ever) used of a compromising with Satan or his forces (cf. Rev. 6:4). However, this is in a story and may not carry the same theological emphasis as direct rhetoric. Thus, the seeking of terms of peace is recommended here by one who evaluates his situation and finds himself short at the outset. Note that the seeking of peace here is the recommended action if one finds himself short. Thus the believer who is considering being a disciple should (if he finds himself too weak) seek terms of peace with Satan's forces. That of course, would not be recommended. However that view says that they would seek terms of peace when they get into the fight (persecution), yet that is not what is happening in the story. They are seeking terms of peace before the conflict based on their appropriate evaluation. The only time "peace" is used in this type of situation in the Old Testament is the story of the Gibeonites who sought peace with Joshua in Joshua 9. The summary of this is that the one who is reading the story is recommended to seek terms of peace before losing. If the interpreter sees this one as failing before Satan's forces, then the seeking of terms of peace at the outset would not conform to the failure later. Thus the alternatives are to seek terms of peace or lose later in battle. This confirms the interpretation taken here that it is the Pharisee (antagonist) who is self-righteous and needs to recognize this (as the context throughout chapter 13—14) and seek the mercy of God in Christ.

Him correctly and thus their character was useless as representing God in the world.

*34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35 "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out."<sup>36</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

2. The Pharisees despise the mercy of God revealed in the O.T. as coming in Jesus for their self-elevation preferring their physical possession, and thus Jesus warns the disciples not to incorporate personal righteousness into their lives and message (15:1--17:10).

This section shows the attitude which the Pharisees have toward mercy to men in the lost sheep, coin and son. The Pharisees valued material things, (sheep, coins), rejoiced over them, but did not value lost sinners, as God did. The unjust judge shows how the attitude of the disciples should be, i.e., use money, which was valued in the unjust Pharisaical order, to support the new. The Rich man and Lazarus explains the problem of the Pharisees. They felt they were obeying the law and were righteous, but they were not. Abraham then testified clearly, "They have the Law and the Prophets" which is a major theme in Luke. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, since it looked for Him to forgive sin. Then he prophesies, though someone returns from the dead neither will they be persuaded. The Jews then fully reject the resurrection of Jesus so they are not persuaded by One going back from the dead (Book of Acts).

- a. Jesus tells the Pharisees a trilogy to show them their hearts are different than the heart of God as revealed in Covenant as God's heart is expressed toward the outcast brother.

These stories are told by Jesus, all three are introduced in a single setting, thus indicating the three are together. The introduction demonstrates that the Scribes and Pharisees have a problem with Jesus' actions towards His association with those, who due to their failure to live according to the covenant, are outcasts from the religious system. Thus

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<sup>36</sup> Deut. 29:23 referred to Israel as a land of salt like Sodom and Gomorrah due to their being cursed for disobedience. Leviticus 2:13 made the command that all grain offerings be salted as a seasoning. Here would be referring to Israel who had lost their seasoning as ministers to the world of the Word of God.

Jesus tells the stories to explain to them why He is pursuing the outcasts, while they are not. It will demonstrate that the Pharisees heart is for possessions (self-elevation) while God's heart is for the hopeless (merciful elevation from God).

- 1) The Setting and tension: The Pharisees do not understand how Jesus represents God when He eats with those who are apart from the righteousness of God (15:1-2).

The action of the tax-gatherers and sinners (both outside the covenant) in coming to Jesus demonstrates their rejection of their standing (not needing anything from God) to approach Jesus and His message of mercy. Yet the action of the Pharisees is to accuse Jesus of lowering Himself to the unclean. Thus He cannot be God's Messiah since God would not be merciful.

*15:1 Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, " This man receives sinners and eats with them. "<sup>37</sup>*

- 2) **Story #1:** As a Pharisee's heart is with the loss of a sheep, so also is God's heart with the loss of a sinner.

The introduction shows that Jesus told them these parables as an explanation addressed to the Pharisees ("what man among you . . . ?") to explain their concerns. He will compare the Pharisees (note that the sheep owner here is the Pharisee who values sheep as possessions) who get excited over a material repossession while God gets excited over the repossession of a sinner. Thus the sinners who were coming to Jesus were causing God (heaven) to rejoice in contrast to the Pharisees who were grumbling.

*3 And He told them this parable, saying, 4 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in*

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<sup>37</sup> The same question occurs in 5:30.

*the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?<sup>38</sup> 5 "And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.<sup>39</sup>*

- 3) Story #2: As a woman Pharisee's heart is with the loss of a valued coin, so also is God's heart with the loss of a sinner.

*8 "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 "And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' 10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels<sup>40</sup> of God over one sinner who repents."*

- 4) **Story #3:** But the Pharisees heart is not like God's heart when it comes to the loss of a sinner.

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<sup>38</sup> This story may bear a literary resemblance to Ezekiel 34 and the evil shepherds. They did not seek the lost sheep, nor bind up the outcast. This was referring to the people of Israel, and the false shepherds did not treat them right. This story is following the context of Israel as salt losing its usefulness, and the shepherds of Ezekiel 34 were the ones guilty of not caring for the people. That chapter is about the outcast and so is this message. There is no comparison however in Ezekiel 34 to the contradiction of the way the Pharisees took care of their own sheep. That is Jesus'.

<sup>39</sup> Lit.: "not having need of repentance". This is a perceived need. The Pharisees do not perceive a need of repentance. It is the same answer that Jesus gave after their inquiry of 5:30. They are not the sick that Jesus comes to, but the well. The point is that they perceive themselves as covenant blessed, and thus it is perceived righteousness. It is the same principle with poverty and riches. It is not that one's riches or poverty determine their status but the perceived poverty (humility) or riches (pride and self-righteousness).

<sup>40</sup> This is substituted for "joy in heaven" in the previous illustration. Angels here likely indicate those who bring revelation, in Luke, Old Testament revelation. Thus the angels are rejoicing on behalf of the Old Testament, which represents God.

The younger son is not a made-up story. It is the story of God's lost son, Israel. They love the Gentiles and God sends them into exile with those they love. Jesus uses Deuteronomy 30:1-9 as his basis to demonstrate God's heart toward Israel. Yet Israel (in the Pharisees) rejects that heart and thus shows their contrariness to the God of the Old Testament, the very One they felt they obeyed.

- a) **The rejection and curse:** The son (like Israel of Deut. 30:1) finds himself in exile apart from his Father (God) in a foreign land.

*(Deut. 30:1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind **in all nations** where the LORD your God has banished you,)*

The Father here was the One who was to be represented by His son. Yet, the son perceived that he would represent himself with what the father had (his estate). He thought the father's value (inheritance) was in physical things. He was wrong.

Israel had received the inheritance from the Father (Genesis 12—1 Kings 11), but had rejected the Father and embraced other gods and other nations.

*11 And He said, "A certain man had two sons<sup>41</sup>; 12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate<sup>42</sup> that falls to me.' And he divided his*

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<sup>41</sup> From the beginning of this story one is reminded of Cain and Abel as the two sons of Adam. Their responses to God bear striking similarity. Also Naomi had two daughters-in-law. Genesis is full of a man who had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau.

<sup>42</sup> What the son was asking for was the inheritance that would come on his father's death. In the national sense, this was the land, which was the place that God

*wealth between them. 13 "And not many days later,<sup>43</sup> the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country,<sup>44</sup> and there he squandered his estate with loose living.<sup>45</sup> 14 "Now when he had spent everything,<sup>46</sup> a severe famine occurred in that country,<sup>47</sup> and he began to be in need.<sup>48</sup> 15 "And he went and attached<sup>49</sup> himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.<sup>50</sup> 16 "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that*

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provided for them so they could enjoy His blessings and represent Him fully, that is *live*. Thus the younger son was rejecting the representation of the Father and all that the Father would bless him with. It was a contradiction to use the estate to represent himself instead of the Father. In the case of Israel they had received the inheritance first, that is, they were given the land even though they did not deserve it yet. They rejected the Father and were sent into exile with the Gentiles they loved.

<sup>43</sup> The son was firm in his decision not reconsidering or delaying.

<sup>44</sup> The distant country would have indicated a rejection of his Jewish father and a rejection of God's land as he brought the very curse of Deuteronomy upon himself, that of departure from the land. He clearly valued life apart from the father.

<sup>45</sup> He uses the estate for something clearly not in his father's interests, and not in God's interests, in that loose living was clearly condemned by Deut.

<sup>46</sup> The son has come to nothing. He has no worthiness, especially as related to what the father had given him, yet he still thinks he has hope in his rejection as he pursues his own deliverance in the same way he has previously.

<sup>47</sup> Famine was the curse of God on Israel for disobedience (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28).

<sup>48</sup> At this point he is seeing that he is lacking, but continues to pursue aid from the Gentiles.

<sup>49</sup> Covenanting with a Gentile was prohibited by the Law in Deut. 7:3. Jews were only to covenant with God.

<sup>50</sup> The bottom line here is the value that the Gentile gives him, he is lower than swine as he is chosen to serve them.

*the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.<sup>51</sup>*

- b) The Return: The son (like exiled Israel of the future; Deut. 30:1b-2) realizes his unworthiness and humbly requests a return to the father (God).

*(Deut. 30:1b-2; and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,)*

*17 "But when he came to his senses,<sup>52</sup> he said, 'How many of my father's hired men<sup>53</sup> have more than enough<sup>54</sup> bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;<sup>55</sup> 19 I am no longer worthy<sup>56</sup>*

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<sup>51</sup> The son is now less valuable than the swine, as the Gentile cares less whether the son goes hungry than he does the swine. Thus, while the son has pursued his own meritorious recovery, the Gentile has evaluated him more accurately; he is worthless.

<sup>52</sup> He only now sees clearly, that is what is obvious. But his depravity has kept him from seeing himself clearly.

<sup>53</sup> The hired men were men who would work for their food, and were only worth what they could do. Thus he recognizes that he has lost any worth as a son (representative) but that his father will value his life more than is the situation of the Gentile's valuing him.

<sup>54</sup> He recognizes that his father is a generous father, as the hired men enjoy the benefits of his father.

<sup>55</sup> Note that the son relates the honoring of his father to the honoring of God. The father was the representative of God to the son. As he had done to the father so had he done to God.

Note also that these words are similar to the words used by Pharaoh toward Moses in Exodus 10:16; "Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you."'" Dr. David Jeremiah rightly

*to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.*<sup>57</sup>

- c) **The Response by Father:** The Father (like God of Deut. 30:3-6) rejoices (Deut. 30:9) over the returning son (Israel of the future) so much that he restores him to son-ship.

*(Deut. 30:3; then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 "And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.)*

*(Deut. 30:9; "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the*

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notes that at this point the son has not repented but only acknowledged his depravity. Acknowledgement of hopelessness is not enough. One must return to the Father for grace.

<sup>56</sup> This is the key word here that the Father is waiting for. ‘Unworthiness’, humility was necessary assessment prior to the Father’s mercy.

<sup>57</sup> Note here that the humility of the son was real. He was willing to prove himself with labor, but not with any worthiness of self as a son.



*LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;)*

*20 "And he got up and came to his father.<sup>58</sup> But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him,<sup>59</sup> and felt compassion<sup>60</sup> for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.<sup>61</sup> 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'<sup>62</sup> 22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and*

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<sup>58</sup> Following the realization, he approaches the father for a response.

<sup>59</sup> This is very interesting. The son only had to make the actual return to the Father so that the Father would see him. The Father would see him a long way off since the Father's heart was for the return of the son. The Father had never quit looking for the son from the moment he left, reflected in that he saw him the moment he came over the horizon.

**Isaiah 30:18** <sup>18</sup> Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.

<sup>60</sup> The word 'compassion' here is key. This is the same word used in Deut. 30:3 for Israel's return to God. Thus the point of Deuteronomy is that God is compassionate and forgiving. Jesus was not developing a new view of God, but the actual Old Testament revelation.

<sup>61</sup> Note the increasing intensity of the verbs. The father while appreciably old here, is seen running, which would not only be a great exertion for the father, but would be a disregard of one's own elevated position. The next verb is "embraced" demonstrating lack of any reluctance on the father to show that he loved his son. And finally the father kisses him. Remember that the son's past was living and eating with swine. He was undoubtedly covered with swine mud (and bacteria to put it nicely), had not bathed, was weak, skinny and sickly, not to mention the embarrassment that the son had given to the father. The increasing intensity shows that the Father had not regarded his own position, but had disregarded his position to rejoice over the son's return.

<sup>62</sup> Note very well, that the son had not given his 'unworthy' speech to the Father and the father had already received him. The speech is the verbal indication of what the father had already seen in his return. Note that the Father stops him in the middle of his speech and never hears the request to be a hired man.

*put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;<sup>63</sup> 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry;<sup>64</sup> 24 for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life<sup>65</sup> again; he was lost, and has been found. 'And they began to be merry.*

- d) **Response by the Elder Son:** The Elder son (like the present Pharisees or present Israel) is a contrast to the Father (God) as he is angry, disassociates himself from the younger son, and rejects joy over his return, justifying his behavior in comparison.

*25 "Now his older son was in the field,<sup>66</sup> and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be. 27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.'<sup>67</sup> 28 "But he became angry<sup>68</sup>,*

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<sup>63</sup> The son is being restored completely to son-ship; In fact, overwhelmingly.

<sup>64</sup> Note that the fattened calf was something that was extra. This was a special celebration. And the father is happy. In the context of dinner (chapter 13--14) being the kingdom feast, the father is celebrating with the younger son in dinner and thus indicating the exiles of Israel are returning for the kingdom while the elder son (a Jerusalem Jew) is rejected since he refuses to come in.

<sup>65</sup> Refer to Deut. 30:6 where Israel is dead outside the land, but when they return, it is to life or representing God. The point of the "life" here is that the son had realized the nature of his father when he had requested mercy. Now he would be happy in the mercy of the father since he had experienced it. He was truly a representative as he would be the very example of the Father's mercy.

<sup>66</sup> Note that the elder son is in the field working for the father. He does not know what is going on in the house, does not know his brother has returned, demonstrating he had not been looking for the brother. He is already not like the father.

<sup>67</sup> Note that this character is a "prop", only included to bring factual information to the elder son. Note that he correctly assigns the relationship of the son as "your brother".

*and was not willing to go in;<sup>69</sup> and his father came out<sup>70</sup> and began entreating him.<sup>71</sup> 29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look!<sup>72</sup> For so many years I have been serving you,<sup>73</sup> and I have never neglected a command of yours;<sup>74</sup> and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends;<sup>75</sup> 30 but when this son of*

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<sup>68</sup> Note the difference with the father's reaction; anger versus compassion. But note that he was not angry with the brother as he was with both the brother, and especially the father. The Pharisee was essentially angry with the Father (God) when he saw God forgive sinners. (This is an allusion to Cain's reaction with God when God straightened him out, "He became angry". Also note that Jonah became "angry" with God when He forgave the Ninevites).

<sup>69</sup> In other words, he was not willing to share the Father's heart, since he did not share it.

<sup>70</sup> Note here that the Father extends Himself to go outside the house as he had for the younger son, though the elder son will accuse the Father of not treating them equally.

<sup>71</sup> The Father was more than commanding him, he was begging him. In other words the Father was pouring out his heart in asking the son to come in to what he should have wanted in the first place. Again the father extends himself beyond his position. This is the same parallel back to the younger son when the Father had left his respected position to run after the younger son. Now the Father leaves the house and begs, thus submitting himself to the hope that the elder son will respond.

<sup>72</sup> The use of "look!" (*idou*) here is important. The elder son is straightening out the father for what he thinks is the father's ignorance or oversight. The question that needs reintroduced is the question of "who is representing the father's heart?" The elder son is stating that the father's heart is incorrect and needs to be readjusted to represent the elder son's understanding. This same phrase occurs in the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man as the Rich Man seeks to explain to Abraham what he does not understand.

<sup>73</sup> The elder son (the Pharisee) had taken that his relationship to the religious system and his self-efforts were arguably his justification, not the father's mercy or love.

<sup>74</sup> This is explanatory of the former statement regarding "long service". He felt that he had represented the Father's desires as reflected in his commands (the Law). The problem was that he had just rejected the father's entreaties (i.e., "commands" or "desires") to come into the house.

<sup>75</sup> Note that the Father is rejoicing with His friends already, and thus the elder son's friends are different than those of the father's.

*yours<sup>76</sup> came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots,<sup>77</sup> you killed the fattened calf for him. ' 31 "And he said to him, 'My child,<sup>78</sup> you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.<sup>79</sup> 32 'But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.' "<sup>80</sup>*

- b. Jesus tells the disciples to use their possessions to serve the ministry of the gospel of mercy for the sake of others entry into the kingdom.<sup>81</sup>

The question of possessions has been focused on how they relate to one's self-elevation. The steward had been in charge of the master's possessions. Yet he had squandered those possessions. Now the rich man calls the steward to account and thus removes him from his position. The steward finds that he has no abilities apart from the rich man (cannot work and has too much pride to beg). The question was 'what should he do?' He perceives that he still has time prior to the judgment and thus uses his position to further his benefit later by aiding the debtors

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<sup>76</sup> Note that he denies the relationship of the younger brother with himself, identifying the brother with the father, since in his view they are celebrating the younger brother's sin.

<sup>77</sup> Note that he identifies the son as a sinner, not as a returned sinner. Thus he refuses to leave the sin go as the brother's identity and restore him.

<sup>78</sup> Deut. 14:1, the Pharisee was God's son as was all Israel, but only potentially since they had been given the Abrahamic Covenant which provided the Seed of the Woman, but they had rejected God spiritually.

<sup>79</sup> God had given everything to the Jews, not only the revelation, but their deliverance, and their ultimate deliverance in Christ (cf. Romans 9:1ff.).

<sup>80</sup> The Father refers to the son's whole story, and notes clearly his position as returned to status through mercy, not through his just desserts. Life now is the representation of the father. While the son could have represented the father prior to the leaving, he now could really represent the father, since the very fact of his restoration exhibited the mercy and gracious heart of the father's

<sup>81</sup> For an illustration of this refer to 8:1-3 where the women who have recognized (and received) God's mercy support Jesus from their private means.

over whom he had control. Thus he made deals with them to cut their debts (and perhaps collect the loan) that he had the power as steward to do. The master praises him as being shrewd (acting for himself and benefiting the master at the same time). The point of the story is that this one had ability (riches) to enhance his position for later (in the kingdom). Thus, the riches are not able to buy status, but it could be put to the benefit of those who would be in the kingdom. The lesson here is that riches do not elevate one's status, but may be used (since they are given by God) to aid those who have need (brothers, the gospel) during the delay in order to enhance one's reward in the kingdom.

- 1) The Story addressed to disciples: A rich man threatens to remove an unjust steward, but in the delay the steward uses his position to benefit himself later.

This story has as its main character a man who is identified as "unrighteous". Like the "unrighteous judge" of Luke 19, the motivation of the character will not be the motivation one should have. Thus the story is using a figure of speech of the 'least to the greatest'. In other words if unrighteous do this, how much more should the righteous (or God in the case of the unrighteous judge) do so much more when the cause and motivation are righteous?

The main character is overwhelmed by self-centeredness and has squandered his master's possessions not looking out for his master's interests. Now, having been removed from his position, he utilizes it to grant mercy to the debtors so that they might love him when the master removes him (apparently there was some delay in the judgment).

He was so shrewd that even his master (whom he had defrauded) was in admiration of his shrewdness.<sup>82</sup> He is impressed with the quick insight of the steward who was on the edge of disaster and had preserved himself.

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<sup>82</sup> The word here for "shrewd" is not necessarily indicating sneaky or evil. It is used in the sense of "wise" or "sensible" or "thoughtful" elsewhere.

The parable, like the earlier parables in Chapter 15 have referents. The obvious referent of the certain rich man is God (as was the father in the previous story). The steward who has squandered the possessions are the Scribes and the Pharisees of the previous chapter. Note that the elder son is told by the father that all he had belonged to the elder son (yet he did not have the father's heart). Now this Pharisee realizes that God is going to remove him from his position as the means of representing the father since he has done it so badly. What should he do? While he has this position, before the judgment comes, he should begin to administer it as the rich man desired, give out mercy from the debt that is owed.

*16:1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' 5 "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, ' A hundred measures of wheat. 'He \*said to him,' Take your bill, and write eighty. ' 8 "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly;*

- 2) The lesson to disciples: Act shrewdly toward money, possessions and anything that one has to aid the gospel of mercy and those who are receivers of it and one will receive reward in the kingdom.

Having negated the value of money, possessions in relationship to self-worth (which could include anything physical such as one's looks, intelligence, talents) for self-righteousness. Thus, having rejected their value toward self or with respect to eternity the disciple is now encouraged to use them for the sake of the kingdom, that is the granting of mercy (the gospel) to the hopeless.

*for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. 9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

- 3) The example of the Pharisees: They feel that money, position, power endears them to God, but that very self-evaluation is abhorrent to God.

*14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.*

- c. Example of errant self-elevation against the brother: The Pharisees do not consider the welfare of their brother (divorce) but seek to enter the kingdom apart from the direction of God.

The Pharisees are seen forcing their way into the kingdom as they are trying to accomplish (forcing) this on their own merit (when it is graciously given). The Law

condemned man (required his death) and looked forward to Christ, and thus the Pharisees (who relied in the Law and denied Christ) would not make it into the kingdom. The example given here of the Law is the point of divorce. God hates divorce since it is the breaking of a vow whereby one commits to love another without any loopholes (as God loves us and commits in the Abrahamic Covenant). Thus one who is married is required to look out for the good of the partner above his own self-love. Anyone then who divorces another is not looking out for their good but their own, and self-elevation is the cause. God's point here is that the very things they proclaim as good are self-centered and abhorrent in God's sight. Thus in light of the parable of the unjust steward it is clear that the Pharisees are looking forward to their own selfish benefit during this age and not concerned about God's work in the kingdom that is required now.

Note also that when one goes back to the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant, that is, God's one-way, committed love, to helpless Israel through a marriage covenant (Gen. 2:24), it becomes clear that Israel was benefited only through God's benevolent character toward His enemy. Yet Israel does not imitate that but institutes divorce, a meaning contrary to the imitation of God which had kept Israel regardless of their status. The point is that the Pharisees see themselves as self-righteous on their own and reject their wives as an illustration of how they do not perceive their own status with God as His very enemies.

*16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. 17 "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail. 18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.*

- d. Jesus tells a story about two men's (rich and poor) destiny in order to show that Israel does not perceive the mercy of Jesus revealed in the Old Testament., but errantly perceives their riches as the approval of God.

In chapter 17 Jesus explains concerning disciples. The Kingdom of God manifests itself with the heart which



begins with disciples, not yet in a literal kingdom which is established by force, but in men's hearts. Will they reflect the heart of God? The Pharisee and the Tax Collector shows that it is what is in man's heart that counts. The Rich Man wanted to buy his way in, but it was not possible, for his heart was with his money. Zaccheus<sup>83</sup> on the other hand, gave his to the poor, exactly as a disciple should do. The parable of the nobleman and the minas, shows that the disciples are to invest the minas (mercy that was shown them) wisely for the master during the interim period while He is gone.

- 1) The Setting: A rich man (whom the Pharisee would feel had God's approval) ignores the plight of a hungry poor man (whom the Pharisees would feel was cursed by God) yet at death the poor man ends up in the reward of the Abrahamic Covenant while the rich man is suffering in hades.

*19 "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. 20 "And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

- 2) The Response of the Rich man: The rich man finding himself surprised at the outcome demonstrates his misperception of why he is there.
  - a) He testifies to the reversal of fortunes from earth to the judgment.

The first segment of the scene in the hereafter demonstrates from the mouth of

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<sup>83</sup> Not that Zaccheus was a tax collector, another person whose deeds made him unacceptable to the Pharisees, since he was pursuing what was considered being a traitor to Israel.

the rich man exactly what the situation is. First the rich man asks for mercy (just a drop of water) and cannot obtain it. Remember the Lazarus had desired crumbs and could not get them. Abraham notes that the separation between eternal bliss and agony is geographical and will continue forever. Thus the time for representation of God is over (if Lazarus cannot do it, then the rich man is prevented from mending his ways also and altering his destiny.). This is related to the unjust steward parable in that the time for action is during the period of delay before judgment.

*24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'*

- b) He testifies to the problem with his (and Israel's) theology which resulted in the state which he finds himself.

The man here then reflects on the errant destiny of his brothers (Israel) and seeks to give them his new understanding of their error (riches do not succeed, poverty does). He desires Lazarus to return from the dead (a miracle to affirm the testimony). Yet Abraham states they already have the Law and the Prophets which is enough (since they pointed to Jesus as the redemption for the condemnation of the Law. The rich man comically (though tragically) responds, "NO!" as he argues

with Abraham<sup>84</sup> But Abraham offers a prophecy (fulfilled in Acts) that though One (Jesus) returns from the dead ( a miracle) with the message (of the Law and the Prophets) Israel will not hear.

27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you,<sup>85</sup> Father, that you send him to my father's house-- 28 for I have five brothers<sup>86</sup>-- that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'<sup>87</sup> 29 "But Abraham \*said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, Father Abraham,<sup>88</sup> but if someone goes to them

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<sup>84</sup> Notice how this testifies to his ignorance of the theology. He is in hell, Abraham in heaven, yet he is debating that Abraham does not understand. This is a theme throughout the book, that the Pharisees are changing the O.T. and seeking to inform God (cf. the elder son informing the father regarding the error of the father's behavior).

<sup>85</sup> It would appear that the man is showing concern now for his brothers, yet it is again misplaced as he pleads for mercy on their behalf. His misplaced ignorance is the problem. Mercy has been given to his brothers in the Law and the Prophets as they pointed to Jesus. But both he and his brothers will reject mercy.

<sup>86</sup> The man seems to be showing some care for his brothers (almost like the unjust steward who has been removed) but he doesn't understand the Gospel (which cannot happen ever since it takes the Spirit to open one's mind). His perception, and what he wants Lazarus to tell his brothers, is that he was wrong and he wants Lazarus to tell them that riches are not the passport, but poverty is (a misperception of the Gospel, since it is the perception of one's value based on physical things that is condemned). Thus his concern is not a Godly heart concern, but simply physical observation of results as has always been the case.

<sup>87</sup> Warn them of what? The man is clearly ignorant of the fact that the warning has been given in the Law and the Prophets. What he is aware of is that riches do not insure position in the kingdom, since he can observe Lazarus (poor) and himself (rich) and the respective results. This of course, was all that Abraham had said. If anything, the man would tell his brothers to be poor since that appeared to him to be the physical activity that insured the kingdom. Of course, again his physical observation was wrong.

<sup>88</sup> It is clear as he argues with Abraham that he does not believe that the message of mercy, which will deliver them exists on earth. Thus one must come from beyond to issue the message (although that message is that a poor man will make it in while a rich man will not), because they would not believe in earthly provided evidence. Of course, Jesus will rise from the dead to tell them and they will still reject as Abraham said.

from the dead, they will repent!" 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

- d. The ones who will respond to the new order, should not perceive the service of the gospel as their right but as their privileged obligation to the Lord of the Sabbath (17:1-10).

Though the disciples had come to Jesus there would always be the tendency to revert back to their fleshly perception of themselves as deserving. This would be seen in their treatment of their brothers. As the Pharisees, they would be unforgiving, forgetting the reality of their own forgiveness by God. In addition, they would be tempted to find a limit to their forgiveness in light of the continual failure of a brother. The point here is that there is no limit to God's forgiveness in light of the continual failure of men to His call. Thus they should have no limit to their forgiveness.

- 1) Jesus warns against stumbling blocks to the gospel and thus He gives instructions on forgiveness of (mercy to) brothers. (17:1-5).

*17:1 And He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come! 2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."<sup>89</sup>*

- 2) The disciples are told that to act (in faith) on the knowledge of God (the Gospel) is to only perform an obligatory service to God and is not performing meritorious work (17:6-10).

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<sup>89</sup> In other words the gospel for the disciple is that of forgiveness (or rebuke) as God has treated him.

- a) The faith (belief in the revelation of what God does through Jesus) can do things which are far beyond their own abilities.

The Lord gives an illustration. Just as if a small mustard seed might say to a (large) mulberry tree to be removed and planted in the sea, so also the small faith of a believer (belief in the power of Jesus to forgive sins) can accomplish great things (the ability to overcome one's flesh and trust Christ as well as impart forgiveness to others) by bringing forgiveness to others and the ultimate victory over the oppressive Gentiles.<sup>90</sup>

*5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"<sup>91</sup> 6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.*

- b) The faith of the disciple is to serve Christ as great privilege and not as elevated on one own merit, and thus the performance of one's faith is on behalf of Christ (issuing the forgiveness of sins) and not to serve self.

*7 "But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? 8 "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself*

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<sup>90</sup> Frequently the mistake is made of mixing the categories. The mustard seed and the mulberry tree are part of the symbolic figure of speech. The 'faith' is the reality, which is compared to a mustard seed. Thus it is a picture, that is, is as if the mustard seed is commanding the great tree to be placed in the sea. He is not saying that the faith of the disciple will be able to accomplish the replanting of a mulberry tree.

<sup>91</sup> The point of this statement is that the apostles desire to understand more in order to do more for God. Yet the Lord explains that they need very little to do great things. But those things are not to be for their own possession (meritorious service) but to be as an obligatory service for God as a servant.

*and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? 10 "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"*

- C. There will be a delay of the kingdom due to Israel's rejection where Israel will persecute the believers unjustly, thus believers give their lives while praying for the Kingdom to come (17:11—19:10).
1. The discourse on faith is illustrated in the ten lepers who were healed, yet only one glorifies God and gives thanks, a Samaritan recognizing that his healing was a gift of God, while the others took it as their due. (17:11-19).

The most important thing to notice here is that the single leper recognizes Jesus as God coming to give him mercy. This illustrates the first coming, that all the mercy of God is in Jesus.

Believers typically expect that God owes them health and wealth like everyone else. Very few recognize their need as depraved people. Thus these lepers feel that their restoration is correcting a wrong done to them, and while they were likely thankful, they did not recognize Jesus as the One who has brought this mercy and give the glory to God.

The point is that it was all about the One who could heal leprosy, not the healing.

*11 And it came about while He was on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; 13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master"<sup>92</sup>, have mercy on us!"<sup>93</sup> 14 And when He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And it came about that as*

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<sup>92</sup> This is the word *epistatais*, which means leader or one of high position or command.

<sup>93</sup> This cry appears to have the formula for healing, that is they requested mercy of Jesus for their healing of bodies.

*they were going,<sup>94</sup> they were cleansed. 15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, 16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.<sup>95</sup> 17 And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-- where are they? 18 "Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Rise, and go your way; your faith has made you well."<sup>96</sup>*

2. The age of delay explained and the end of the age. (17:20—18:30).
  - a. The kingdom of God in Christ (first coming) will not be accomplished with observable signs but will be seen only as one perceives Christ as the fullness of the Old Testament mercy. (17:20-21).

*20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."<sup>97</sup> "*

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<sup>94</sup> It appears that they did believe Jesus since they had started on their way unhealed and were healed as they went, thus they did believe they would be healed. Recall Naaman who would not proceed into the water and then finally did, but reluctantly.

<sup>95</sup> This one recognizes that his healing is not for the total and isolated benefit of himself but that God might be glorified as in the parable of the slave in the field previously. He recognizes His unworthiness and gives glory to God. The other 9 while having asked for mercy see their healing as an end in itself apart from Jesus and God's work. Thus the point here is that one returned because he realized it was not about healing but about the One who healed.

<sup>96</sup> The word here is not the word for "healed" but is *sozo*, the word for saved. Since all were cleansed and healed already without the same faith as this man, then this must mean something more than the others received, i.e., salvation in the sense of the kingdom. Remember that the other nine had only asked for healing, not for spiritual deliverance. This one acknowledges that Jesus is God and gives Him glory.

<sup>97</sup> The question here is how is the kingdom of God "in your midst". Is it "in" you (as in the hearts of believers), or "among" you (as in Jesus). Based on the following context it appears that it is *not* "in you" since there does not seem to be a context in Luke for a literal kingdom being carried by the believers. It would be best seen in Jesus. Jesus was not coming with the great physical signs that the Pharisees expected, that of a

b. The Age of Delay (between first and second comings) is absent any obvious observable differences, and requires disciples to endure for the sake of Christ during His absence, for He will return to the surprise of the unbelievers. (17:22-37).

- 1) There will be an age intervening between Jesus' presence then and the time of His return in judgment during which time there will be a perception that the reward/judgment is happening then (invisible), but they are not to be believed for it will be visible to all when it comes.

*22 And He said to the disciples, "The days shall come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 "And they will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. 24 "For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. 25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.*

- 2) The days prior to the return will be lacking in signs for people will assume that things are continuing as they always have (and thus pursuing the activities of that status quo position), and will be living as if it is to go on indefinitely, and then will be surprised by the appearance of Christ to judge.

*26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on*

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conquering King who was prominent and rich. He came humbly. In the next verse Jesus says that He will not always be here ("in your midst"), but will be gone. Then by contrast He gives physical signs by which He will return. Thus all they will see now are the sufferings of Christ (hardly physical signs by themselves unless one knows the O.T.).



*the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.<sup>98</sup> 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

- 3) Warning to believers when the coming becomes apparent that they should escape for the persecution will become more intense than ever.

In Lot's case, he had been reluctant, but his wife had disobeyed the command and desired to return. The sense of impending judgment should drive one to escape it and not consider their earthly things. The knowledge of the judgment is what should drive them to Christ and not their protection of their earthly position.

*31 "On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back.<sup>99</sup> 32 "Remember Lot's wife.<sup>100</sup> 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it.<sup>101</sup> 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the*

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<sup>98</sup> In Genesis, the story of Noah (Gen. 6) and Lot (Gen. 19) are parallel stories picturing the ultimate judgment. Noah is in the section of Genesis 1—11 picturing individual judgment based on lack of response to Gen. 3:15 and the coming judgment, while Lot is the picture of God's judgment on the world while Lot (relationship to Abraham) is delivered out of the judgment.

<sup>99</sup> This is very similar to the supper in chapter 14 where they negate the kingdom invitation for the sake of their possessions. Now the judgment of the world is taking place and they are worried about their possessions.

<sup>100</sup> Lot's wife was a woman of little faith. While she had proceeded out of the city (very little faith) at the urging (actually dragging) of the angels, she had turned back to validate the destruction of her city and her goods despite the fact that the angels had said not to do that. Thus, here in context, she had valued her possessions as opposed to rejoicing over her escape. One recalls Kadesh-Barnea where Israel had been delivered under the Passover Lamb, but desired the benefits of Egypt once they had departed. God destroyed that generation who "looked back" and desired to return.

<sup>101</sup> The antichrist will offer them a choice between life and death. If they believe in Christ they will be executed, if they do not then they may live on.

*other will be left. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. 36 <"Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."> 37 And answering they \*said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also will the vultures<sup>102</sup> be gathered."*

- c. During the Age of Delay, the parable of the unjust judge instructs the disciples to prayerfully endure for the cause of Christ for vengeance on their persecutors will come at the return of Christ. (18:1-8).

*18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, 2 saying, "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man."<sup>103</sup> 3 "And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'<sup>104</sup> 4 "And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out. "' 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge \*said; 7 now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily.*

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<sup>102</sup> The same word is used for “vulture” or for “eagle”. The nature of the use of “body” seems to imply a vulture activity. If this is referring to Israel here, then it would be the body without breath of Ezekiel 37 (cf. also James 2:26 for the use of body and breath). In Deuteronomy 28:49 it states "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand," which would imply the judgment of God on Israel through the invasion of the Antichrist and his armies or those of the nations. This would be at the middle of the tribulation and would continue until Christ returns.

<sup>103</sup> This is the use of from the least to the greater. If the unjust judge does not fear God nor respect man, *how much more* will God do for his suffering saints.

<sup>104</sup> This bears a striking similarity to the Woman of Tekoa who came to David on behalf of Joab and told a story of avengers who were after her. She kept after David until he promised not only to keep her avengers away, but rendered a decision of mercy in a murderer’s case.

*However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?<sup>105</sup>*

- d. The judgment is shown as the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer illustrate that those who recognize their depravity and ask for mercy shall be justified while those who elevate themselves based on their self-perception will be humbled. (18:9-17).

*9 And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. 11 "The Pharisee stood<sup>106</sup> and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ' God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."*

- e. The story of the Rich man continues the demonstration of the reason why the Pharisees will fall under the judgment of God, since they do not have the heart of God reflected in the commandments (18:18-30).

*18 And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone."<sup>107</sup>*

*20 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO*

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<sup>105</sup> This question leads into the next story which is the definition once more of faith, and that is allowing (asking) God to have mercy on oneself.

<sup>106</sup> His standing is in great contrast to those who are humble in Luke and move to the ground or the feet of Jesus.

<sup>107</sup> Jesus question is meant to prompt the rich man as to whether He perceives who Jesus is as the administrator of God's mercy, the Messiah, God Himself.

*NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.*"<sup>108</sup>

*21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."*<sup>109</sup>

*22 And when Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."<sup>110</sup> 23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich.*

- f. Jesus continues the application of the 'Rich Man' by pointing out that while the heart of God in mercy must be given to the disciple, the disciple will nevertheless reflect his value of that mercy by negating the value of this world.

*24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And they who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God." 28 And Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You." 29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times as much at this time"<sup>111</sup> and in the age to come, eternal life.*  
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<sup>108</sup> These commandments reflected God's love of the brother and thus man was to act similarly.

<sup>109</sup> The rich man's statement implies that he feels that he is righteous (like the Pharisee in the preceding parable) based on his performance (which he is stating is like God).

<sup>110</sup> This in fact was the act of God as He, in Jesus, had given up all that He possessed and gave it to the poor (whom God had shown a love for in the Covenant).

<sup>111</sup> This would appear to be a paradox. If one receives many times as much of what he left, then he would have to leave it again (if the exhortation is to leave those things of physical value). The point is that he receives much more than he left, but it is something of value, that of reward in the kingdom and entry into a relationship with God. Particularly he is talking about multiple family members in the family of God now, and much greater reward later in the kingdom.

- f. Jesus announces His coming mistreatment and death as an example to them as to how He gave up all for them (the poor) (18:31-34).

*31 And He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again. " 34 And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.*

- g. Jesus restores the sight of two blind men as a fulfillment of Isaiah 42:7 demonstrating His service to others to dispense mercy for God. (18:35-43).

*35 And it came about that as He was approaching Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting by the road, begging. 36 Now hearing a multitude going by, he began to inquire what this might be. 37 And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David,"<sup>112</sup> have mercy on me!" 39 And those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he had come near, He questioned him, 41 "What do you want Me to do for you?"<sup>113</sup> And he said, "Lord, I want to regain my sight!"<sup>114</sup> 42 And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith<sup>115</sup> has made you well." 43 And immediately he regained his sight, and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.*

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<sup>112</sup> The reference to the Son of David is recognition that Jesus is the Servant of YHWH of Isaiah 40—66 who was the Seed of David. Thus he was calling on Jesus to fulfill the prophecy of the Messianic mission to give sight to blind eyes.

<sup>113</sup> Note the words here are those of a servant.

<sup>114</sup> In this statement the man realizes his need (depravity, hopelessness) and requests mercy from God.

<sup>115</sup> This "faith" is the knowledge of who Jesus was as the Son of David.

- h. Zaccheus, an outcast (rich<sup>116</sup> tax collector), rejects his personal valuation of his goods for Jesus. (19:1-10).

*19:1 And He entered and was passing through Jericho. 2 And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich. 3 And he was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. 4 And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 And he hurried and came down, and received Him gladly. 7 And when they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half<sup>117</sup> of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."<sup>118</sup> 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this*

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<sup>116</sup> Riches were important to the Pharisees and it was on that basis that they admired and included others in their worship. However, as a tax collector, Zaccheus would have been rejected by them, since they considered his occupation as that of a traitor to Israel. However, Zaccheus would have considered his own riches his value as pagans do even without the Law.

<sup>117</sup> Zaccheus only gives half of his possessions to the poor, which seems not up to the requirement that Jesus stated of "selling all one's goods and giving them to the poor". What Zaccheus is doing in the "four times" as much is related to the Law and taking someone's goods (recall the penalty David executed on himself when Nathan confronted him. He said the man who stole the lamb was to give back four times as much per the Law).

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep." (Exodus 22:1)

The giving half of the goods to the poor indicates that Zaccheus understands the mercy of God to the helpless and the rejection of material goods as his value.

<sup>118</sup> The Law required twice as much to be returned when one was convicted of theft, and the ox or sheep was still alive with him.

"If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double." (Exodus 22:4)

*house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.*<sup>119</sup> 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

- i. The kingdom reward is based on the valuing of the gospel of mercy (as opposed to the valuing of possession) which Christ has awarded during His first coming and will be rewarded at the second coming (19:11-27).

*11 And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. 12 He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. 13 "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' 14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' 15 "And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done. 16 "And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.' 18 "And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' 19 "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' 20 "And another came, saying, 'Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 "He \*said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 'Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' 24 "And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 "And they said*

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<sup>119</sup> Zaccheus would be a Roman or Greek name. As a chief tax collector it might have been that he was non-Jewish and thus Jesus' statement that he is a son of Abraham would have been strong in light of his genealogy. He would be a Son of Abraham because of his recognition of Jesus as Messiah. This might explain the "kai" ("also," or "too") in the sentence.

*to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' 26 "I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 27 "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."*