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LUKE 18:31-34; 19:29-48

Today we're going to see the beginning of the end of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Winston Churchill said during the latter days of the great conflict with Germany... **"This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end...but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning..."**

We've seen the end of the beginning of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, let's see the beginning of the end.

All of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ has been leading up to this point.

All of history had been leading up to this point.

All of Bible prophecy had been leading up to this point.

The Lord Jesus had told His disciples about this on more than one occasion. He had done all He could to prepare them for His death.

Over and over God's Word tells us that Jesus had resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem. And the reason is that Jesus had a mission to fulfill...the very reason He was made flesh and dwelt among us was so that He could ultimately die for the sins of mankind.

And in **chapter 18**, He tells them again...

Verses 31-34...

This was not an impulsive decision made by the Lord Jesus Christ! He was fulfilling a predetermined purpose. He was fulfilling prophecy that the prophets of old had prophesied. And He was preparing the disciples...those whom He loved so deeply for this.

He would be delivered up to the Gentiles.

He would be mocked and mistreated and spit upon.

He would be scourged and killed.

But, on the third day He would rise again!

If we had the time to go back and review every time the Lord Jesus had talked about this, we would see that each prophecy of His death was more explicit than the last. **Each time He talked about His death, He gave a little more detail.**

Yet...the disciples didn't understand any of it. It was hidden from them. They did not comprehend it.

Why? Wouldn't you believe that having lived with and having eaten with and having been taught by the dear Son of God, that they would believe Him when He tried to tell them this?

Mark tells us that at one point when the Lord Jesus told them about His death, that Peter rebuked Jesus! Poor old Peter...he was always saying the wrong thing at the wrong time! And it was at that point that Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan!" And then He said something very interesting...He told Peter...

"You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

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And that's why the disciples didn't understand this. They simply couldn't understand how God could allow His precious Son to be a part of this.

They could see the **hostility of the Jews**.

They could see the **hatred of the Gentiles**.

But, they could not see the **hand of God** in this! They could not see that God was orchestrating and ordaining this. They could not see that this had been in the heart of God from the foundation of the world.

And Satan was using every means at his disposal...even those closest to Jesus to keep the Lord Jesus Christ from doing what He had come to do.

So, with all that in mind, let's go over to **chapter 19**...because although Jesus would teach more lessons and preach more sermons, this is really the beginning of the end of His earthly ministry.

19:29-35...

As Dr. Warren Wiersbe puts it...in this last part of **Luke 19**, we see, **preparation, celebration, lamentation, and denunciation**...

Jesus sent two of His disciples to find a colt...a donkey that had never been ridden...and Jesus told them to bring it to Him.

Now, I don't ride horses. I don't even ride mules. However, I can remember a day when I would love to have had a mule to ride. We went to the Grand Canyon some years back and we hiked to the bottom. We stayed all night at Phantom Ranch. Have you ever been there?

We got up the next day and had a great breakfast and were feeling wonderful and anxious to start our hike out of the canyon. And I did great for about the first mile or two...and then I got a migraine headache...a **sick** migraine headache.

The rule at the canyon is that you come out the way you go in. If you hiked in, you must hike out. In other words, you can't hike down and ride a mule up. Mule rides are available to those who choose them. They have the most sure-footed mules in the world for that purpose. In fact, their mules come from Tennessee. That ought to make you proud! But, you have to ride the mule down and then back up as well.

Anyway, when I got this sick migraine, I would have given a lot of money to have a mule. Even though I'm afraid of horses and mules, I would gladly have gotten on one. But, with the encouragement and exhortation of my dear husband, we finally got out of the canyon.

He kept pointing little old ladies out to me and saying, "Those little old women were young when they hiked in and they've grown old trying to get out...you better get with it or you'll end up just like them!"

Now, that story was free and really doesn't have anything to do with **Luke 19** except to say that these mules that take folks in and out of the Grand Canyon are trained. They are broken! They are accustomed to having folks on their back.

And Jesus sent for this donkey to be brought to Him. And even this was prophecy fulfilled!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!"

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*Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold your king is coming to you; He is just and humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9*

And I believe if the disciples remembered this prophecy, then their hearts must have been filled with joy. They must have thought, *“At last, Jesus will take His rightful place as King! At last, the oppression of the Romans will be lifted! What we’ve longed for so long will finally take place!”*

As we said before, this was an **unbroken** donkey colt. But, the Lord Jesus didn’t have any trouble riding it, did He? And that shouldn’t surprise us either. I mean, Jesus created this little donkey. And the little donkey simply submitted to its Creator.

Isaiah 1:3...

*“An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master’s manger,
But Israel does not know, My people do not understand.”*

Not only do we see the **preparation**...the bringing of the donkey, but we also see the **celebration**...

And that’s another prophecy we see fulfilled in this passage of Scripture.

Verses 36-40...

We see another prophecy fulfilled in this passage when we see that the whole multitude began praising God joyfully with a loud voice...because in **Psalm 118** we see these same words and how this must have filled the hearts of the disciples with joy as they remember that psalm.

Surely this must mean that Jesus would immediately set up His kingdom! Surely they were about to see a wonderful thing take place before their very eyes! But they forgot the **next** verse of that psalm. The very next verse says, *“Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.”*

And the Lord Jesus was to offer Himself a sacrifice on our behalf before He could ever do what His disciples wanted Him to do.

And as always, the Pharisees couldn’t get with the program. They said to Jesus, *“Teacher rebuke Your disciples.”*

And what did Jesus say, *“I tell you, if these become silent, the **stones** will cry out!”*

Friends gave us a present some years ago. It’s a little rock that says, *“If you don’t praise Him, I will.”* Why? Because all creation declares the glory of God!

Verses 41-43...

In these verses we see the **lamentation**...

This word for “wept” means an audible, heart-felt sobbing!

This is not the first time we’ve seen Jesus weep over Jerusalem...

We saw in **chapter 13** how He said,
*“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, and you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall*

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not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

And it's this day that we're studying in **chapter 19** that this prophecy is being fulfilled.

Now, Jesus is making another prophecy in **verses 41-43 of chapter 19**, isn't He?

He said the days would come upon them when their enemies would throw up a bank or a siege mound before them and surround them and hem them in on every side. He said they would level them to the ground and their children with them and there would be left no stone upon another...because they did not recognize **the time of their visitation...**

And this happened in 70 A.D. when Titus of Rome came against Israel and totally destroyed Jerusalem.

I think the sad thing about this is what Jesus said in **verse 42...** "if you had known..." The sad thing is that they **did** know! They knew with their **head**, but not with their **heart**! That was the trouble with folks **then** and that's the trouble with folks **now**!

What did He mean "the time of your visitation?" God Himself had come to them...God Himself had visited them in the Person of His Son, but they refused to accept it.

The utter destruction of Jerusalem was divine judgment for the failure of the Jews to recognize and embrace their Messiah when He visited them!

Listen, we've said it before...God holds us accountable for what we know.

After the visitation period at the funeral home, all the cousins met at our motel to go over the next step we needed to take in settling the estate of our cousin. There were five cousins, two spouses and a friend of our deceased cousin.

I knew the Lord wanted me to share Jesus with that group. I knew it might be the only time all of us would be together...the next time, it will probably be at the funeral of one of us who were sitting in that room...

As I looked around that room last Sunday night after I had shared in my feeble way how our death is a certainty and there is an eternity awaiting each of us ...and the only uncertain thing is where we will spend it, I felt somewhat like the Lord Jesus must have felt. All these folks had been in church as children. All of them had a **head knowledge** of God.

But, not a one of them assured me that night that they knew Jesus and was assured that they would spend eternity with Him. I pray they were just in shock because they didn't expect to be confronted with that that night. But, I have an idea that more of my cousins are lost than are saved!

The morning we came home, my brother and his wife met us for breakfast and my husband shared his own personal testimony with my brother.

Our prayer is the Holy Spirit will take the seed I so feebly tried to sow Sunday night and my husband tried to sow Tuesday morning with my brother and will bring fruit from it. God doesn't hold us responsible for the results of the seed being sown...He only holds us accountable that we sowed it.

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Verses 47-48...

In these verses we see **denunciation**.

Jesus had cleansed the temple on another occasion, but the heart of man is deceitful above all else and desperately wicked, and things had returned to the way they had been before.

And Jesus denounced once again the evil they were practicing! What were they doing?

Well, they were making money on the animals the people needed for the sacrifices and they were doing it in the house of God!

A person needed a sacrifice and sometimes when traveling from a great distance, he would purchase his sacrifice from the priests at the temple. Sometimes folks would bring their animals and the priests would not approve them. This meant an animal must be purchased from the priests!

And they were overcharging for these sacrifices! According to Alfred Edersheim, the great Christian-Jewish historian, they charged **up to ten times what they should!**

And if that's not bad enough, folks who needed their currency exchanged were charged a 25% fee...

The priests were sinning in the house of God! Instead of **praying** for the people, they were **preying** on the people! The sanctuary of God had become a sanctuary of thieves and extortionists and robbers!

Well, **verses 47 and 48** tell us that Jesus was teaching daily in the temple, but the religious leaders were seeking to destroy Him. It was difficult for them because Jesus still enjoyed the favor of the people.

If anyone should have recognized that Jesus was the promised and prophesied Messiah, it should have been these religious leaders. They knew Scripture. They knew prophecy.

God told Daniel about how there were seventy weeks decreed for the Jewish people. And according to calculations that we really don't have time to cover, the Jewish people should have known the day Messiah would come to Jerusalem and subsequently be crucified.

And it happened **exactly** as the angel Gabriel told Daniel.

If anyone should have **recognized** this...if anyone should have been **aware** of this...if anyone should have **accepted** this...and **rejoiced** at this, it should have been the religious leaders of the Jewish nation. But, that didn't happen. How sad!

Sadder than that is the fact that folks today have the finished work of Calvary to look back to... They have the precious Word of God to look into...and they have the dear Holy Spirit to listen to...and they still cannot comprehend it. They still refuse to understand it. They still refuse to accept it!

But, we must be diligent to do what God has called us to do to sow the seed and spread the Word.