

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon December 8, 2019  
Luke 13: 22 – 30 - "The Narrow Gate Entry"

18 Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches." 20 And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

31 On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You." 32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.' 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "

I. Introduction

- a. History is God's Symphony. Set first in old covenant shadowy minor chords with dim brightness at the edges, God then unveils the dawning triumphant themes, whispering Deliverance first from a manger. He dwelt amongst us. We beheld His glory as He showed us the Way back to God's Kingdom. In today's text, Jesus again speaks to His hearers of the shining opening movement of the New Covenant blended with the dark and crashing closing of the Old Covenant age. One Song in two blended themes.
- b. The Kingdom parables (mustard seed, leaven) set in this section of Christ's warnings of coming judgment on Israel flow into today's text. The question from the crowd shows some may be awakening to the plight of that generation.
  - i. McDurmon "There is yet another lesson to draw from the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, and the lesson is subtle: if the Kingdom of God starts out small, that means it will have only a few

people in it at the start. This is a subtle deduction, and it takes a while before the light bulb comes on for anyone in Jesus' audience."<sup>1</sup>

- c. Today's sermon: Luke 13: 22 – 30 "The Narrow Gate Entry"
  - i. Setting v22
  - ii. The Question from the Crowd v23
  - iii. Work to Enter through the Narrow Gate v24
  - iv. Jesus' Parable demonstrates the Narrow Gate v25 – 27
  - v. Three ramifications of this Truth v28-30
    - 1. Apostate Israel will be cast out v28
    - 2. Many believing Gentiles will recline in the Kingdom v29
    - 3. Last will be first and First will be last v30

## II. Setting

- a. V22 "And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem."
- b. Luke directly references the journey's movement toward Jerusalem, the place where the prophets are killed.
  - i. The ominous tone of the journey's destination.
  - ii. 13:33,34 "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!"
- c. Jesus is teaching through the cities and villages of Israel on His way to Jerusalem. He has a message for the people of Israel, and this is helpful context to discern the meaning of today's text.

## III. The Question

- a. V23 "Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?""
- b. Lord – This person has seen enough to reference Jesus as "Lord"
  - i. The possessor and disposer of a thing
  - ii. The owner, the master
  - iii. A title of honor expressing reverence from servant to master
  - iv. Title used of sovereigns, princes, chiefs, emperors, God and the Messiah
- c. This person has come to realize a bit more about that wicked generation, likely remembering the prior episodes of apostasy and judgment in Israel's history.
  - i. Romans 11:1-5 "I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with

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<sup>1</sup> McDurmon, J. (2011). [\*Jesus v. Jerusalem: A Commentary on Luke 9:51–20:26, Jesus' Lawsuit Against Israel\*](#) (pp. 57–58). Powder Springs, GA: American Vision.

God against Israel, saying, 3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

- ii. Jeremiah 44:28 "Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs."
- iii. McDurmon "So it was a firmly established principal from Moses and into the prophets that in times of explicit covenantal judgment, only a few were saved."<sup>2</sup>

- d. This person was not asking primarily about spiritual salvation, but more so about how to escape the coming judgment upon that generation. Jesus will give an answer that shows the inseparable connection between the spiritual and the physical.

#### IV. Work to Enter through the Narrow Gate v24

- a. Jesus answer the person, speaking "to them", the crowd as He answers.
- b. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."
- c. Strive = work, endeavor.
- d. Narrow gate: only one gate.
  - i. Narrowness = Rushing through this gate at the last minute will not work. The emphasis in the word "narrow" is first of all upon the timing. As in recent teachings to the crowds in Luke 12, Jesus is stressing to these people the importance of responding to Him now. Don't wait.
  - ii. Narrowness also refers to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way to enter the Kingdom of God.
    - 1. John 10:7-9 "Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."
    - 2. Jn 3:3,5 "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ... "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

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<sup>2</sup> McDurmon, J. (2011). [\*Jesus v. Jerusalem: A Commentary on Luke 9:51–20:26, Jesus' Lawsuit Against Israel\*](#) (p. 60). Powder Springs, GA: American Vision.

- iii. So, Jesus is warning this generation, again, that they must listen to Him, heed His Word, and follow Him as the foretold Messiah. The only way into the Kingdom of God is to be born again from above. This spiritual rebirth by God's Spirit would lead some to repent and believe in Jesus as Messiah. Then, they would listen to His Words and know how to escape the coming desolation of Israel at the hands of Rome.
- e. "Many will seek to enter and not be able to"
  - i. To wait until the very end is to be shut out of the Kingdom, as the parable will show. Just like the time of the flood...
  - ii. These people are not motivated by conviction of sin or repentance before God. They are not motivated by love and gratitude for Christ. They are just seeking to save their own skin while still remaining their own master.
  - iii. Bock "The warning is graphic and straightforward: without response now or soon, there will be no access later. They must listen now to sit at the table."<sup>3</sup>

#### V. The parable

- a. V25-27 "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'"
- b. Here Jesus makes it clear that He is the Master Who will shut out apostate Israel as He brings the boots of Roman desolation upon them.
- c. The clock is ticking upon that generation, and once Jesus Christ shuts the door on them and initiates His judgment, they will rush to Him in selfish self-preservation and be rejected.
- d. Note the flattery and excuses of the unrepentant sinners:
  - i. Lord, Lord – flattery
  - ii. We ate and drank in Your Presence – familiarity, proximity excuse
  - iii. You taught in our streets – empty knowledge excuse
- e. Note the essence of Christ's response
  - i. V25 I do not know you, where you are from... v27 I do not know you, where you are from
  - ii. While they claim to be children of Abraham, their origins are unverifiable to the Master of the house. He won't let them in without

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<sup>3</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1236). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

certification they are His. They are not born again from above. The rejected His call to repentance. They are strangers to Jesus.

- f. Here His command to these flattering, excuse-laden, unrepentant hypocrites
  - i. “Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.”
  - ii. The Master discerns these strangers are not really submitted to Him as their Lord. He discerns they are actually lawless rebels pretending to be His friends just to save their own necks during the time of crisis.
    - 1. McDurmon “The divine reply would come in the form of rocks falling and blood spilling; and upon such a moment, the locked-out Jews will immediately have their wailing and gnashing of teeth. For the meantime, Jesus is clearly telling them why their current complacent and self-absorbed attitude toward religion was the very reason they would be condemned. If they did not embrace Jesus now, no appeal to their casual relationships to Him in the past would ever suffice to save them from the great division to come.”<sup>4</sup>
- VI. First ramification of the Narrow Gate Truth - Apostate Israel will be cast out v28
  - a. V28 “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.”
  - b. Apostate Israel will see the remnant in the Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Before all the lost Jews are destroyed in the great war with Rome, they will perceive the people of God being brought into the Kingdom as they are thrust out.
  - c. The weeping and the gnashing of teeth will occur and represent great, great torment of soul.
    - i. Bock “Jesus adds to the pain when he not only describes their exclusion but also notes that many others will enter the kingdom (13:29). The inclusion of others contrasts with the opportunity lost. The warning Jesus gives here is real—and quite tragic.”<sup>5</sup>
  - d. So, Jesus develops His answer to the question. The strong suggestion is that only a few of those in Israel will be saved from the coming wrath.
- VII. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ramification- Many believing Gentiles will recline in the Kingdom v29
  - a. “They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.”
  - b. From every place on this earth, others will come into the Kingdom of God. Gentiles from everywhere. Global.

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<sup>4</sup> McDurmon, J. (2011). [\*Jesus v. Jerusalem: A Commentary on Luke 9:51–20:26, Jesus’ Lawsuit Against Israel\*](#) (p. 63). Powder Springs, GA: American Vision.

<sup>5</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [\*Luke: 9:51–24:53\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1238). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- i. Is 9:6,7 “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”
        - ii. Lk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
      - c. They will be as welcome in the Kingdom of God as any Israelite, reclining at the Table of God.
        - i. The deliverance is both physical and spiritual. Complete.
- VIII. Last will be first and First will be last v30
- a. “And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”
  - b. First = Old covenant people of God on the earth at that time.
  - c. Last = New covenant people of God. Blend of Jews and Gentiles.
  - d. Bock “Those who appear to be close may in fact end up far off. Some Gentiles who are distant will end up near, while many Jews will miss the promised kingdom”<sup>6</sup>
- IX. Questions to know, love and obey God

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<sup>6</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1240). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.