

# *Truth for Today*

## **The Bible Explained**

---

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast :** 31 Oct/1 Nov 2020

**No.:** T1170

**Speaker:** David Anderson

---

## **Luke's Gospel 19:41 – 20:8 In Jerusalem**

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.  
English Standard Version (ESV) of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Today's talk readily divides into three sections:

1. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44).
2. Jesus cleanses the Temple (19:45-48).
3. Jesus' authority questioned (20:1-8).

But first,

### **Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem**

In these last verses of Luke ch.19, the Lord Jesus finally arrives at the destination He'd been heading for since 9:51. His journey started after the Transfiguration, where Moses and Elijah appeared with Him in the glory of His coming kingdom. They spoke with Him of His foreordained departure or exodus from this world, which was to be accomplished at Jerusalem (see, 9:30-31). The very next day, Jesus explained to His disciples how this would happen:

“The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men” (v.44).

But they didn't understand Him. Its meaning was hidden from them and they were afraid to ask Him about it (v.45). Shortly afterwards, Luke comments:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (v.51).

From then on, nothing would deter Him from fulfilling the task for which He'd come from heaven:

- 9:52-53 record that a Samaritan village didn't receive Him because His face was set toward Jerusalem.
- In vv.57-62, He made the cost of discipleship very clear to any would-be follower of His along the road to Jerusalem.
- Luke then traces His journey in subsequent chapters of his Gospel, arriving at 19:41:
- 13:22: “[Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.”
- 13:31-33: “Some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” 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 I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.”

- 17:11: “On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.”
- 18:31-34: “And taking the twelve, he said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.’ But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.”
- 19:11 & 28: “He proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. ... And when he had [told them the parable], he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.”

Last week’s talk was about the city’s reactions to Him, their King. Already in v.14, the Lord had prophesied that they would reject Him (v.14) and that even before His disciples in v.38 presented Him as “the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” with shouts of “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (v.38).

### **Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44)**

I’ll read these verses from the ESV:

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

Luke is the only Gospel writer who includes Jesus weeping over Jerusalem in the account of what’s commonly called The Triumphal Entry of the King into the city. After the Lord had begun His descent of the Mount of Olives, He would have a panoramic view of Jerusalem. Amidst the joyous celebrations of the crowd, He alone was sorrowful. His lamentation was both visible and audible. He cried real tears and wailed out loud because the people didn’t recognise their Messiah, even though they were praising Him: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” He, the perfect Man, acutely felt the pain of rejection by His own nation, which publicly manifest itself a few days later (see, 23:18-25).

A few months earlier in His journey to Jerusalem, He’d expressed His feelings about this coming rejection:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (13:34).

His laments remind us of Jehovah’s lament over Israel:

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own

counsels. Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!" (Psalm 81:10-13).

Constantly throughout their history they'd refused to listen to God. The writer to the Hebrews states that this attitude started at Mount Sinai, when they refused to hear His terrifying voice (see Hebrews 12:19 & 25, Darby footnotes). The same attitude had manifested itself time and time again when they murdered their prophets, who spoke the word of the LORD to them. Finally, it reached its zenith when they called out to Pilate: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" (John 19:15).

Jesus gave another reason why He wept over Jerusalem –they didn't realise the significance of His arrival at Jerusalem:

"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!  
But now they are hidden from your eyes" (v.42).

"This day" was the fulfilment Zechariah 9:9 prophecy:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble  
and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Their wilful ignorance as to the reality of what was happening that day is even the more startling when you consider that they were singing:

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (v.38).

At the Lord's birth, angels had celebrated:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (2:14).

But His rejection would bring anything but prevailing peace on earth, especially for Jerusalem and Israel. He prophesied days ahead, when their enemies would set up a siege surrounding them and hemming them in on every side then they would raze the city to the ground, not leaving one stone upon another (vv.43-44). Jerusalem didn't recognise and receive the Prince of Peace. Therefore, peace on earth was, and still is, impossible – that is until He returns to establish His kingdom. Instead, the Lord foresaw and predicted the city's violent destruction at the hands of the Roman army led by Titus some forty years later, in A.D.70. Historians tell us that about one million Jews were slain and, perhaps, this reveals the true reason for Jesus weeping over the city:

"The Lord is...not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

This prophecy of the Lord Jesus is similar to others recorded in Luke's Gospel, which have more of a Gentile (or worldwide)-slant:

- In 17:20-37, the Lord's prophecy concerns "the days of the Son of Man." These are likened to the global flood that destroyed the whole earth in Noah's day; and to the prevailing god-less attitude of mankind when Sodom was judged.
- In 21:20-24, the Lord gives instructions to His disciples who would be caught up in the siege of Jerusalem in AD.66, which preceded its overthrow in AD70. Most significantly for students of Bible prophecy is the Lord's pronouncement that: "Jerusalem will be trampled

underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (21:24). It’s key to our understanding of Daniel’s prophecies concerning the prevailing worldwide governing power when the Lord returns to set up His millennial kingdom upon earth.

The Lord Jesus finishes His prophecy in 19:43-44 by repeating the reason for Him weeping: “because you did not know the time of your visitation.” The expression “the time of your visitation” is used by Old Testament prophets to describe events of calamity and judgment upon the nation of Israel. For example:

“The days of punishment have come; the days of [ visitation, KJV] have come; Israel shall know it [is]...because of your great iniquity and great hatred” (Hosea 9:7).<sup>1</sup>

With Messiah’s arrival at Jerusalem, their day of reckoning had finally come. In v.39, the Pharisees publicly disowned Him and demanded He disown His disciples’ chant that He was the King come in the name of the Lord. Just a few days hence the Sanhedrin would kill Him, the Prophet, just like their forefathers had done to other prophets (cp.13:34). Jerusalem’s fate was sealed, and its judgement would soon follow. (And a few years later, Israel nationally, when offered forgiveness for this horrific sin, by the apostles who preached the gospel to them, refused it (see Acts 2:23 & 36-39).<sup>2</sup> Paul explained to the Thessalonians that they continued thereafter to obstruct the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles thereby filling up the measure of their sins (1 Thessalonians 2:16)).

But a warning to us Gentiles. 1 Peter 2:12 states that there’s a day of visitation in prospect for the whole world. In that day, everyone will be assessed as to how they have responded to the witness of the gospel; and they will be forced to glorify God for the grace demonstrated to them in the lives of believers.

## **Jesus cleanses the Temple**

I’ll now read 19:45-48:

“And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.” And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.”

Luke continues with Jesus’ entry into the city and states that He entered the temple. Luke omits the fact that it was actually the next day when Jesus went back to the temple to cleanse it. Mark 11:11 gives the actual chronology:

“He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.”

His expectation was that, as Messiah, He would have been accepted into the temple for Psalm 118:26, part-quoted in v.38, concludes with the words: “We bless you from the house of the LORD.” Instead, He found the temple void of hope of Messiah’s sudden appearance to His people (see Malachi 3:1); and it being profaned by the trading and corrupt profiting taking place there in preparation for the Passover Feast. It’s this fact that Luke brings out by merging the entry into the temple with Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The law had made practical provisions for Jews travelling from afar to exchange money for animals, etc. so that they could fulfil their obligations in the worship of Jehovah (see Deuteronomy 14:22-26). But these practices had been turned into a money-making racket. Passover was, evidently, the busiest time of the religious year

for these evil moneychangers.<sup>3</sup> Two years earlier Jesus had encountered these activities and commanded:

“Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade” (John 2:16). On that occasion, His disciples had remembered Psalm 69:9, in which Messiah prophetically said: “Zeal for your house will consume me” (v.17).

This second time, the Lord gives the reasons for His actions. That which should have been Jehovah's house, and a holy place of prayer for all nations (see Isaiah 56:7), had become a den for robbers (Luke 19:46). Fraud was being practised and with the approval of the religious authorities!

Even though the Lord predicted the destruction of the city and temple, it was still God's house. Thus, the temple being cleansed, Jesus was able to teach and preach the gospel during that final week in Jerusalem (19:47 & 20:1). The ordinary people attending the feast were very attentive to His teaching and preaching – the ESV uses the words “all the people were hanging on his words.” However, His actions and His teaching only made the rulers of the people more determined than ever before to kill him. But they were at a loss as to how to do that because of His popularity with the crowds who flocked around Him each day (vv.47-48).

### **Jesus' authority questioned**

I'll now read 20:1-8:

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

Jerusalem's religious and civil leaders became increasingly frustrated with Jesus' popularity and also with His bold uncompromising teaching. It was undermining their self-assumed authority. And the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead only compounded issues for them. It was this sign which caused them to plot putting Jesus to death (see John 11:47-57). But they also wanted to get rid of Lazarus as well (12:12:10-11). To them, Jesus was simply an upstart 'Prophet' from Nazareth, much like others around at that time. Therefore, they confronted Him with a “Who do You think You are?” type of question: “Tell us your authority to do these things and gave you that authority” (Luke 20:2, paraphrased). “These things” refer to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, His casting out of the temple traders and His daily public teaching in the temple precincts. But the arrogance of that delegation who questioned the Lord was their assumed ability to judge His credentials!<sup>4</sup> So He responded by asking them to settle the necessary preliminary issue regarding the credentials of His forerunner, John the Baptist. John had claimed that he himself was the voice crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” that Isaiah had prophesied some seven centuries earlier (see Mark 1:2-3, with Isaiah 40:3). The Lord's question was: “Was John sent from God or was he only a messenger from men?” The ordinary Jews believed John to be a prophet and that immediately put the rulers in a quandary. To admit that he was indeed “from heaven” would open the way for the Lord to ask them why they didn't believe him. Instead, they said they didn't know, which enabled Jesus to decline to reply to their question. It wasn't that the Lord cleverly avoided their question. No. Rather it was to

emphasise to them that His authority came from the same source as John's - from heaven! John had given clear witness that Jesus was the promised Coming One, their Messiah:

“John [said], “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:27-30).

Yes, the Lord was in effect saying to the rulers, “John has already told you that My authority is from God himself.” And so He continued to speak with that God-given authority in Luke 20:9-16 by telling them the parable of the owner of the vineyard. He made it obvious that He himself was the owner's “beloved son” (v.13), that is, the Son of God sent from heaven. Verse 19 states that the rulers realised that He'd spoken the parable against them. But that simply served to make them even more determined to get rid of Him. However, I must leave the detailed explanation of the parable to next week's speaker, God willing.

### **Practical considerations**

I conclude today's talk with some practical implications which arise from our meditations of our Lord and Saviour's journey into Jerusalem at the commencement of what is known as the Passion Week. He's left us an example and we have been called to follow in His steps (see, 1 Peter 2:21). So what can we learn about Him from Luke 19:41 – 20:8?

First, and that which only Luke records concerning the Triumphal Entry, that Jesus wept over Jerusalem on His descent of the Mount of Olives. He wept whilst His disciples and the crowds were celebrating the arrival of their King. He foresaw the nation's rejection of Him and the consequent terrible judgment that would befall the city. We, too, should have compassion for the lost and the perishing who continue headlong to eternal judgment, heedlessly ignoring the great love that God offers to them in the gospel of His grace.

Second, in the cleansing of the temple incident, that the Lord Jesus was ultra-concerned for the holiness of the temple, the House of God:

“Holiness befits your house, O LORD, forever...” (Psalm 93:5).

Paul wrote about the present-day meaning of this in 1 Timothy 3:15 so that we:

“may know how one ought to behave in the house...of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”

The profane practices the Lord removed in His cleansing of the temple would indicate to us that we must avoid all types of such worldly practices in our churches. We must maintain the sanctity of God's house in all our services and activities. But, positively, we must ensure that it's a place of prayer by following Paul's instructions given in ch.2.

Finally, we must take account of the manner in which the Lord Jesus asserted His authority in the temple. Because He was “from heaven”, He gave priority to the preaching of the gospel – that's what the people needed to hear and believe. He also taught them the doctrine of God. When this enraged the rulers, He wasn't riled by their demands to explain His authority and His mission. In righteous self-control, He dealt graciously and firmly with them. Therefore, His disciples are enjoined to:

“Turn away from evil and do good; [to] seek peace and pursue it. For...even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil” (1 Peter 3:11-17).

Thank you for listening to this *Truth for Today* talk, T1170 on Luke's Gospel 19:41 – 20:8.

### **Footnotes**

1. See also: Isaiah 10:3; Jeremiah 8:12, 10:15, 11:23, 23:12, 46:21, 48:44, 50:27, 51:18; Micah 7:4 (KJV).
2. See also Acts 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; ch.7; 13:23-47.
3. See *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Press.

In those days, a Jewish rabbi's reputation was derived from his own teacher's credibility. For example, part of the apostle Paul's defence before the Jews when he was arrested in Jerusalem for supposedly defiling the temple was: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day” (Acts 22:3).

---

### **Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1.