

## Chapter Nineteen (19:1-48)

### THE SON OF MAN SPEAKING ABOUT SALVATION

#### IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE:

1. Why did Zacchaeus think he should restore *four times* anything he had defrauded (19:8)?
2. How does the parable of the pounds correct the misconception of the immediate coming of the kingdom of God (19:11)?
3. How could "stones" cry out in acclamation of Jesus (19:39)?
4. Who are the "enemies" of Jerusalem who will cast up a "bank" (19:43)?
5. Where is it written, "My house shall be a house of prayer" (19:45)?

#### SECTION 1

#### Penitence (19:1-10)

**19** He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. <sup>3</sup>And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup>So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. <sup>7</sup>And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." <sup>8</sup>And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

**19:1-5 Confrontation:** Jesus passed on from healing the two blind men to the Roman Jericho. Jericho at that time was largely populated by Roman tax-gatherers and priests of Jerusalem. It was an important "customs gate." Archaeological ruins of the Roman Jericho produce a picture of magnificence with pools, villas, a hippodrome and a theater. A great civic center, of the best Roman masonry, with a spectacular facade containing statuary niches, potted plants and a reflecting basin before it, testify of the grandeur of the international culture that was Jericho's at the time of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Jericho was an important tax collecting station because of the many caravans passing through it or near it. It was a "winter resort" place for the affluent Jews and Gentiles in Palestine at that time.

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Herod had his winter residence there. Date palm trees flourished there, and balsam, from which medicine was extracted and its vegetable growing season was ideal making it a green oasis in the middle of the dry Jordan wilderness and a prosperous place to do business.

Zacchaeus was a "chief" publican (Greek, *architelones*) which probably means he was an executive of some sort in the tax-system of the Roman province of Judea. He may have been in charge of all the collections in Jericho and supervisor of a number of subordinate tax-collectors. He was rich, and influential. Tax-collectors (publicans) became rich only by extortion and dishonesty. Rome's method of collecting taxes in the provinces was to appoint certain natives of the province, assign certain tax amounts to be collected and forwarded to Rome, and then ask no more questions. The tax-collector had all the authority of Rome behind him and so if he were minded to do so he could "shake down" individuals and businesses by threats, demand more taxes than Rome required and pocket the excess. The publicans who became rich in this way were despised by their countrymen as "traitors" and "Gentiles." The financial dishonesty of government agents is reflected in John the Baptist's charge to the publicans, "Extort no more than is appointed you" (Lk. 3:13, see comments there). Zacchaeus admits he has wronged others and thus violated God's law. The Greek, *kai ei tinos ti esukophantesa*, is first person singular, first aorist indicative, and therefore a first class condition which means that Zacchaeus is saying, "On the condition that I have robbed anyone of anything, which I admit I have done. . . ." He had become rich by dishonesty and extortion. Most men who have become rich through dishonest means are men who have put their whole trust in riches and what they can buy. Riches gained by wickedness separate men from God and men from men. It is very unusual that a rich, powerful man like Zacchaeus should want to see the poor, itinerant, Galilean teacher who was violently opposed by Jewish officials. G. Campbell Morgan writes, "I am inclined to think one reason why he was glad to receive Jesus was that he was pleased to do anything that would annoy the Pharisees!" Whatever the case, Zacchaeus was *determined* to see Jesus. He had to overcome serious obstacles to fulfill his wish. The crowd selfishly pressed around him and paid no attention to him because he was "small of stature." They were not like the friends of the paralytic let down through the roof. They were the same crowd who told the blind men to shut up. Knowing Zacchaeus to be a publican and feeling safe with their numbers they probably blocked him away from Jesus deliberately. But neither the hostility of the crowd, his own secure position in wealth nor his physical impairment (small) kept him from his desire. He climbed up into a "fig-mulberry" tree. The "sycamore" tree of Palestine is *shiqmah* in Hebrew and is of the genus *ficus sycomorus*, the sycamore fig tree, bearing a fruit like the ordinary fig tree but of inferior quality.

When Jesus came to the tree He could see Zacchaeus there. Jesus would have known he was there even if he had not been visible. Jesus knew his name and there is no indication they had ever met before. The Lord said, "Zacchaeus, quickly come down from there, for in your house it is necessary that I stay this day." The Greek syntax emphasizes the *necessity*. The necessity was for Zacchaeus' benefit, not Jesus'. Jesus often accepted invitations to visit people's homes and eat with them, but this is the only recorded instance where Jesus invited Himself to someone's home. He had a compelling purpose—He saw in this "sawed-off" little government official, the possibility of repentance. Even though Jesus is bearing the heart-rending burden of the cross, His first thought is not of Himself but of "lost sheep."

Jesus risked His reputation with that crowd by calling upon Zacchaeus. He showed that He loved men even though He hated their sin. He showed that love and truth are not "cowed" in the presence of sin, power, wealth or popular opinion. Jesus took time to go into Zacchaeus' house (away from the hostile crowd) and teach the despised publican about the kingdom of God. Jesus demonstrated "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve."

**19:6-10 Change:** Zacchaeus came quickly down out of the tree and was almost beside himself with joy that Jesus was coming to his house. The Greek verb *hupedexato* means Zacchaeus was "hyper-receiving" Jesus. His expression of reception to Jesus' announcement was over and above normal welcoming. Add to that the Greek word *chairon* ("joyfully") and one gets a picture of Zacchaeus' excitement and joy so evident that the great crowds thronging the streets of Jericho saw it and were astonished. Many of them murmured (Gr. *diegogguzon*, "growled"), "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!"

How we would love to know what Jesus said to Zacchaeus and how the visit went. G. Campbell Morgan writes, "I have often wondered what Jesus said to him. I am sure He talked to him courteously, but there was more than courtesy." No doubt Jesus spoke firmly about the Law of Moses and sin and repentance. Jesus undoubtedly promised the tax-collector forgiveness if he would repent and believe in His Word. Zacchaeus' first commitment to Jesus' way of life was, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." Now there are many rich men who will give half their goods to the poor—as tax breaks, as salve for guilty conscience, or as attempts to earn righteousness before God. But Zacchaeus' commitment was by way of true repentance, for his second statement was, "and if I have defrauded any one anything, I restore it fourfold." Zacchaeus was willing to fulfill his trust in Jesus' word by complying with the law of God. Exodus 22:1 and II Samuel 12:6 indicate that four-fold restitution was a requirement of repentance for stealing or defrauding. The Greek word

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translated “defrauded” is *esukophantesa* and means literally, “a fig shower”; it is the word from which we get the English word, *sycophant* which also means, “accuse falsely, advise falsely, defraud or flatter to deceive.” Jesus replied, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.” Note the following things which indicate a dramatic change in Zacchaeus’ thinking and living:

- a. He accepted Jesus and called Him, “Lord.” Originally he got up into the tree to “see who Jesus was”—now he acknowledges Him as Lord.
- b. He acted in accordance with his trust in Jesus’ conversation with him (whatever that was). He cut himself loose from his former life of trust in his money and power. He followed Jesus in offering service to an exploited, defrauded, oppressed society.
- c. He acted to remove the barriers between himself and his fellow man. His repentance was public. He said, “To the poor I am giving now. . . .” (Gr. *didomi*, present tense), not some future date. He repented in accordance with divine revelation.
- d. Jesus’ closing statement implies Zacchaeus entered into a saving relationship. Salvation came to Zacchaeus by the grace of God through his faith in the Lordship of Christ, by repentance and by obedience to covenant terms. He had lost his inheritance by sinning against the Old Covenant, he became a true descendant and heir of Abraham by faith in Christ.

## SECTION 2

### Persistence (19:11-27)

11 As they heard these things, 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. 12 He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Trade with these till I come.’ 14 But his citizens hated him and sent an embassy after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. 16 The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made ten pounds more.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ 18 And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made

five pounds.' <sup>19</sup>And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' <sup>20</sup>Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your pound, which I kept laid away in a napkin; <sup>21</sup>for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' <sup>22</sup>He said to him, 'I will condemn you out of your own mouth, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? <sup>23</sup>Why then did you not put my money into the bank, and at my coming I should have collected it with interest?' <sup>24</sup>And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the pound from him, and give it to him who has the ten pounds.' <sup>25</sup>(And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!') <sup>26</sup>'I tell you, that to every one who has will more be given; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>27</sup>But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me.' "

**19:11-19 Faithful:** As the multitudes in Jericho heard Jesus talking to Zacchaeus about being a son of Abraham, about salvation having come to his house that very day, about seeking the lost, they must have expressed some excited anticipation of an immediate messianic kingdom. They probably were talking among themselves that when Jesus got to Jerusalem, He would begin the proceedings of establishing an earthly kingdom much like Jewish tradition pictured it then. Jesus immediately told a parable to squelch that false concept. There are three things Jesus intends to teach in this parable: (a) He is going away to receive His kingly inheritance, but He is going without having brought His kingdom to the earth in its full, glorious and final manifestation; (b) in the meantime, those who wish to come under His rule must be faithful in keeping the instructions He left behind; (c) and, finally, He will return in all His magnificent authority to call all men to account for their attitudes and actions toward His kingship. There is a teaching on rewards for faithfulness, but that is coincidental. The main objective is to say, "I go to Jerusalem to do the Father's will, but my disciples will be disappointed because my kingdom does not come in earthly glory immediately—and my enemies will be encouraged to think they have rid themselves of My rule." Jesus says, essentially, "But, I want you to know, in spite of My death My kingdom *will* come and the faithful shall be rewarded, while the rebellious will be judged and punished." "Be faithful," Jesus says, "use what you are given to the king's advantage—rewards will certainly come when the king finally returns." Now the church Jesus established on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, is the kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Acts 8:12; Rom. 14:17; I Thess. 2:12; Mt. 16:18-19, etc.), but it is the kingdom functioning while the King is away temporarily, anticipating His imminent return to consummate and manifest His kingly glory when He shares His inheritance with

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His citizens and banishes His enemies. Make no mistake about it, Jesus is now king, and His kingdom has (past tense) been established in fact. All who believe and obey Him become, in fact, citizens of His kingdom.

Some commentators believe Jesus referred vaguely to an incident in the political life of that country some 27 years earlier. Archelaus, son of Herod the Great had received the tetrarchy of Judea, Samaria and Idumea upon the death of his father in 4 B.C. But he was not satisfied with that. Leaving his palace in Jericho in 6 A.D., he journeyed to Rome to ask that he be declared "*king of the Jews*," as his father had been titled. When he went to Rome he left a man, Philippus, in charge with funds to apply to the maintenance of his "kingdom" while he was gone. But after he left for Rome, a disgruntled party of Jews sent a special deputation from his "kingdom" to inform the emperor of Rome, in no uncertain terms, that they did not wish Archelaus to rule over them. This may be so. But what Jesus says in this parable is going to come to pass just as He told it. The story of Archelaus has a different ending. Archelaus was deposed and lost his kingdom altogether. Jesus will not lose His!

Do not confuse this parable with the Parable of The Talents (Mt. 25). They are not the same. Note the following differences:

### *Parable of Pounds*

1. Spoken publicly
2. Approaching Jerusalem
3. A Nobleman goes to a far country to receive a crown
4. Pounds are given to 10 men equally.
5. Enemies are mentioned in addition to servants.

### *Parable of Talents*

1. Spoken privately to the apostles
2. Two days after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem
3. A man goes on a journey
4. Talents are given to 3 men unequally.
5. No enemies mentioned

Both parables, however, teach the same fundamental of discipleship—  
FAITHFULNESS

Jesus sets forth the encouragement to faithfulness, diligence and persistence. His kingship is established. When He ascended to heaven, He was enthroned at the right hand of the Father. But the rewards for His citizens must await His return for them. In the meanwhile, while He is away, His citizens must put to work what He has left with them—the Gospel of Grace. Salvation, in all its rewarding glory, is yet to be. Salvation in its consummation depends upon faithfulness.

The Greek word translated "pound" is *mina*. There is a Hebrew word similar to it (*maneh*, I Kings 10:17) and the word *mene* ("weighed") in Dan. 5:25-26, may also be related. Some think the "pound" was worth about \$25 while the "talent" was worth about \$30,000. Here, Jesus chose

the smaller monetary amount because it was sufficient to illustrate His main point—faithfulness in using what had been given for the nobleman's profit. The nobleman left each servant with one pound to test the capacity of the servants to receive the promotion he had in store for them at his return. Some Christians, at first reading this parable, are confused about its very clear teaching on a difference in rewards. There is nothing inconsistent about there being a difference of rewards in heaven. In fact, such a difference would seem to be the inevitable result of differences in individual capacities developed. Jesus did not deny that there would be chief seats in the kingdom (Mt. 20:20-28; Mk. 10:35-45), He simply said they were not His to give at that time; they would be given later by the Father. Jesus did emphasize that those who think they should be first may be last and vice versa (Mt. 20:1-16). The parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30) infers rewards will differ according to faithful stewardship of differing abilities and opportunities. Paul indicates (I Cor. 3:5-15) there will be some works burned up and some survive. Ultimately, reward will be based on faithfulness and dispensed by an Absolutely Just and Omniscient God! No human being converted to Christ's image will have reason or desire to complain. Note in this parable, the man who had gained five pounds was *praised* as warmly as the one who had gained ten, even though the reward was different in extent. Perhaps the servant who gained ten, had more opportunities and privileges. What would have happened to him, with all his opportunities and privileges, had he been slothful and gained only five? He would have been condemned! You see, the focus is on faithfulness—not numerical success.

**19:20-27 Fearful:** "Another" of the servants entrusted with a "pound" from his nobleman made no use of it at all. He did not spend it. He did not fling it away. He did not lose it accidentally. In fact, he congratulated himself that he had preserved it by hiding it. When presenting the one pound he had so carefully preserved, he gave the reason for hiding it his fear of the austerity of his master. The Greek word *austeros* is usually applied to unripe fruit and means, "sour, bitter, harsh." This servant believed his master was demanding more than his servant was able to render and therefore, more than he had a right to demand. The servant believed he knew better than the nobleman how to be a good steward of the gracious gift of the pound.

Study carefully the nobleman's reply. He does not admit to such an unfaithful characterization. As a matter of fact, his actual conduct shows this to be a false charge. He was gracious, trusting, more than fair and just. But the nobleman judges the faithless servant on the basis of the servant's own false charge. He says in effect, "If this was your evaluation of my character, that I would be rigid, firm and even severe, you would have been smart to have made much better use of the pound I gave you.

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If you fully expected me to require more of you than normally required, you certainly have no right to complain if you are judged by the standards you expected. That is how I will judge you!" The least the fearful servant could have done was put his "pound" out to the money-lender's tables (Gr. *trapezan*, "table"—not bank), so it could earn interest. But he was afraid even to do that. Every Christian is a steward of (a) the grace of God in the Word of God (I Cor. 4:1); and (b) the grace of God in personal talents or abilities (I Pet. 4:10; Rom. 12:4-8). Every Christian must do something to invest as much of the Word as he has in him and as much of his abilities as he has that it may bring a return for his King. No Christian is without something to invest. No Christian should think Christ will demand more than he is able to produce—Jesus is not unjust or unfair. He is gracious, trusting and completely fair. The nobleman in the parable did not rebuke the one who had made five because the other had made ten. Both were given the same but produced differently. It is not how much, but whether! His only rebuke is to the one who *did* nothing. Censure is for the one who was afraid to do anything and then tried to put the blame on the nobleman. The Christian servant never need be afraid to invest God's Word. It will always prosper. His Word will not return unto Him void (cf. Isa. 55:11) but will accomplish His purpose. His Word is living and active and will penetrate even to the thoughts and intents of men's hearts (Heb. 4:12-13). So put it to use!

When the nobleman took the one pound from the fearful servant and gave it to the one who had gotten ten, those standing by appeared to object. They wanted to know why the man with ten pounds should have his reward increased at the expense of the man who had only one pound. The principle of the nobleman's actions is this: The one who proves the most faithful in his stewardship is the one who can be trusted most with what has never been put to use while the one who proves altogether unfaithful cannot be trusted with anything. It is a principle running through the whole fabric of life. To every man a "pound," use it or lose it!

G. Campbell Morgan cites Paul's dissertation on each man's work being tested by fire (I Cor. 3:5-15) to illustrate his belief that the servant "was still a servant, but he had neglected his opportunity." In other words, Morgan believes the servant who produces nothing will be saved but he will lose his reward—his "wood, hay and stubble" will be burned up with fire.

We have difficulty with this interpretation, because of the Lord's following judgment. Jesus said, "But as for these enemies of mine. . . ." and the Greek word for *enemies* is *echthrous* and means literally, "those who hate." Jesus also said, ". . . who did not want me to reign over them. . . ." and the Greek words for *did not want* are *me thelesantas*, literally, "are not willing." Certainly the unfaithful steward despised the nobleman because



he considered him unfair and tyrannical. The unfaithful servant was not willing to be ruled by the nobleman or he would have obeyed instructions. Furthermore, Jesus pictures the nobleman calling the unfaithful servant a "wicked servant" (Gr. *ponere doule*, evil slave). Apparently, the servant who does nothing with his pound is accounted as an enemy and an evil servant and is slain along with the rest of those who are unwilling to have the nobleman rule over them. After all, every person is a servant of God and every person has been given a "pound." Those who try to save their lives shall lose them and those who lose them for Christ's sake shall save them. The reference to the enemies of the nobleman being slain (Gr. *katasphaxate*, "hewn to pieces") is a cryptic warning to the Jewish nation which will soon demonstrate rebellion against the Messiah and be destroyed. This is very much on the mind of Jesus as He faces the cross. In one week He will be humiliated and murdered, and the uppermost thing on his heart is the ruin his murderers are bringing upon themselves (Lk. 19:41-44).

### SECTION 3

#### Praise (19:28-40)

28 And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup>When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup>saying, "Go into the village opposite, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat; untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If any one asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this, 'The Lord has need of it.'" <sup>32</sup>So those who were sent went away and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" <sup>34</sup>And they said, "The Lord has need of it." <sup>35</sup>And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their garments on the colt they set Jesus upon it. <sup>36</sup>And as he rode along, they spread their garments on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" <sup>39</sup>And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." <sup>40</sup>He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

**19:28-34 Creation:** John's gospel account tells us that Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover of His last week on earth (Jn. 12:1). Bethany was on the eastern side of the Mt. of Olives, about two miles from

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Jerusalem. Jesus apparently stayed in the home of Lazarus and his sisters (Martha and Mary) Friday night and Saturday night and left early Sunday morning to enter the city of Jerusalem (cf. Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 21:1-8). About a mile down the road toward Jerusalem, lay the village of Bethphage. The word Bethphage in Hebrew means "house of unripe figs"—it was in the vicinity of Bethphage that Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree (cf. Mt. 21:18-20; Mk. 11:12-21). It was from this little village that Jesus began what is called His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

This passage exudes divine authority. The reader cannot escape the implication that everything is done by foreknowledge and by divine schedule. When Jesus sent the two disciples (probably Peter and John) into Bethphage for the colt, there had been no prearrangements so far as the record goes. The description of the animals, where they were to be found and the reply to be given the owners all indicate the disciples were sent not by prearrangement but on the basis of the foreknowledge of Jesus. The same kind of foreknowledge was displayed by Jesus (undoubtedly for the benefit of His disciples) when the room for the last supper was obtained (cf. Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13). If the action of Jesus here seems presumptuous, that is because it is! He intended this whole event (entry into Jerusalem) to be one of triumph. He would now affirm His lordship over all creation. He intended to receive the praise of all creation as due Him. The earth and all that is in it belongs to Him. The owners of the colt were doubtless disciples of Jesus; the animals were only borrowed for a time and then to be returned or reclaimed. The two sent for the colt were to furnish the explanation, "The Master has need of it," if they were challenged. Actually, they brought two animals—the colt and its mother (cf. Mt. 21:2), undoubtedly necessary to get the colt to come willingly.

Jesus might have walked into Jerusalem that Sunday morning, A.D. 30 but He rode on the colt of an ass to lay before the city (especially its rulers) a graphic, symbolic claim to be the Messiah. It was predicted by the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 9:9) that the King of the Jews would come to them humble and lowly, riding on the foal of an ass. Earlier, thousands would have *made* Him "king" according to their earthly aspirations (Jn. 6:15). Now, He announces He *is* King according to the Father's pre-ordained plan. He enters royally. He enters freely, not as a prisoner or victim. He did not hide or hurry. He acted deliberately and purposefully. The time has come for the great struggle—for the showdown. The time has come for the world to either acknowledge its ruler or to renounce Him. Not only was He announcing His kingship, He was announcing the nature of His kingship. He did not claim kingship as the Gentile world would expect (cf. Jn. 18:33-38). He did not ride in on a white stallion with a troop armed with swords. He rode on a beast of burden. His "army" was an unorganized mob; a multitude of shouting, conquered shepherders and farmers. John records

that His disciples did not understand at first the mysterious or unique action of Jesus in riding upon the colt—but after He was “glorified” they remembered that this had been written of the Messiah in their prophets. This event which is said to be a *fulfillment* of the prophecy of Zechariah concerning the Messiah’s first coming, gives the careful Bible student a clear key for understanding the many other highly figurative and symbolic prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and His kingdom. The whole context of Zechariah 9:9-17 is about the Messiah. Barnes thinks the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 was “always, by the Jews, applied to the Messiah.” We have not found that to be so. In fact, one modern Jewish Bible encyclopedia, in its article on the prophet Zechariah, attributes Zechariah 9-11 “to the final days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, to the beginning of the Assyrian conquest.” Only the part of Zechariah’s imagery depicting the coming king as a “triumphant and victorious” one “commanding peace to the nations” would fit apocryphal aspirations. It is evident even from the New Testament that few Jews would accept (not even Jesus’ own disciples) a “humble, lowly” messiah.

**19:35-40 Crowds:** Even before Jesus’ arrival at the home of Lazarus, the crowds of Passover pilgrims were awaiting His coming to Jerusalem (see Jn. 11:55-57). Passover was the most significant national memorial of the Jews with all its overtones of deliverance from foreign oppression and divine intervention in history. The pilgrims were already engaged in religious rites of purification so they could participate. Josephus estimates some three million pilgrims jammed into Jerusalem and its suburbs at Passover time. People renewed old acquaintances, met cousins and other relatives for the first time in years, gossiped, talked politics, taxes and the state of the religious *status quo*. Popular opinions of the great, new Prophet and Rabbi (reputed to be a miracle-worker) versus the official pronouncements of the rulers concerning Him were discussed.

There were thousands of pilgrims already inside the city of Jerusalem (cf. Jn. 12:12-13) and these came out to meet Him (Jn. 12:18) as He approached. In addition, there were thousands of pilgrims still coming toward Jerusalem surrounding Him as He rode on the colt (Mt. 21:8-9; Mk. 11:8-10; Lk. 19:35-38) accompanying Him toward the city. This whole multitude was expecting Jesus to come to Jerusalem and make good on His promises to set up God’s kingdom as they perceived God’s kingdom (cf. Mk. 11:9-10). This multitude was in a state of frenzied euphoria remembering all the “mighty works” they had seen the Prophet of Galilee do. The thousands began to throw their cloaks down in the path of the colt upon which Jesus rode. Many of them climbed palm trees and cut off branches to throw down for the colt to walk upon, (Mt. 21:8; Mk. 11:8; Jn. 12:13). Some waved the branches back and forth. The palm branch was an emblem of victory and restoration of peace (cf. I Macc. 13:51; II Macc. 10:6, 7; Rev.

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7:9). They all shouted with loud roaring (Gr. *phone megale*, "voice, great"), joyfully, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Some shouted "Hosanna" (Mt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9; Jn. 12:13) which is an Aramaic word meaning, "Save now, we pray!"

The common pilgrims are shouting, "King!" But His garment is not a royal robe; it is homespun and seamless. His "charger" is a dumb, beast of burden, not yet old enough to be ridden. His "court" is of fishermen and hated publicans. His cavalcade is a mob of Galileans. Yet no pageant that ever passed through the streets of imperial Rome has so impressed the centuries as this one. The triumphal entries of Roman emperors have all but been forgotten, but this one, in every detail, is known and retold year after year, century after century.

As He moved toward the city He was creating a great "stir" (Mt. 21:10) (Gr. *seismos*, "quaking, trembling"). He was creating an "earthquake" of emotional excitement, but that is about all it amounted to with most of the thousands. The most striking characteristic of Judaism, of that century, and one which set it apart from all other religions of antiquity was its messianic fervor. The Jews looked for their "golden age" in the messianic *future* and not in the past like Greece and Rome. The Messiah of the Jews was supposed to usher in:

- a. Perfect happiness and peace.
- b. Super-abundance of materialism.
- c. Power over the whole world, politically.
- d. Destruction of all enemies.
- e. Supernatural renovation of the natural order.

The rulers were also "quaking" but from a different emotion—envy and hatred. They had already given orders for Jesus' arrest (see Jn. 11:53-57). Now they are wringing their hands in frustration and fear (Jn. 12:19; Mt. 21:10-16) because they want to kill Him but they do not dare while the cheering, jubilant thousands are acclaiming Him as their king. A confrontation is about to take place in one of the remote and despised frontiers of the Roman empire which will have cosmic repercussions. Men charged with teaching and administering the Word of God and His covenant are preaching to kill a Man who has already raised three people from the dead! They are even planning to kill one of those He raised from the dead (Lazarus, Jn. 12:10-11).

There were even Pharisees in that clamoring, shouting multitude with Jesus that Sunday morning as He approached Jerusalem. They knew very well that the Tower of Antonia was fully garrisoned with Roman troops with orders from Pontius Pilate to subdue with swift and ruthless force any signs of rebellion or sedition. The Roman procurator always reinforced

his troops in Jerusalem at Passover time. Sentries were placed on the roofs of all the great colonnades like Solomon's Porch and others. Many of the soldiers, off-duty, roamed the streets and shops of Jerusalem. When the great roars of "Hosanna," and "Blessed is the King. . . ." went up just outside the city walls and echoed across the Brook Kidron it sent "shivers" up the spines of the Roman soldiers. It would signal to their way of thinking, rebellion, riot, fighting and bloodshed. Many such skirmishes had already occurred within the city of Jerusalem between "hot-headed Jews" and Roman soldiers. Roman patience was wearing thin with the Jews. The Pharisees knew this well. They wanted to keep their political positions and their city from devastation by these powerful conquerors. So Pharisees curtly admonished Jesus, "Rabbi, rebuke your disciples." They demanded that Jesus quiet the crowd and put an end to all the praise lest some very serious blood-letting result from it.

Jesus' answer was a refusal to even try to silence the shouting. He could not do so (except by miraculously suspending their voices or some other supernatural intervention over human free will). If He should try to suppress such spontaneously strong emotions, they would find some other way to express what is being shouted. "Even the stones would cry out," would not seem to be intended literally, but figuratively. Although there is a sense in which "the things which have been made" (nature) cry out in testimony to God when men refuse (cf. Rom. 1:18ff.)! It is impossible to extinguish praise to God by hard repression. The Pharisees were soon to find that out! The Pharisees were trying to save their nation by repressing Messianic praise; Jesus knew that praising and acknowledging the Messiah would be the only way to save it.

#### SECTION 4

#### Peace (19:41-44)

41 And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and dash you 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."

**19:41-42 Weeping:** The crowds were clamoring, almost in hysteria, shouting loudly, "Peace in heaven. . . ." They were apparently oblivious to the Lord Himself so taken were they with their own emotions. As He rounded the crest of the Mt. of Olives and the thousand-year-old capitol

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city of the Jews came into view, He wept. The Greek word *eklausen* is translated "wept" but it means much more than tears; it suggests that His whole body was heaving with sobbing. It is the kind of deep, soulful sobbing the human body suffers at the death of a loved one. None of the crowd seemed to notice except perhaps one of His disciples who gave Luke this eyewitness account later. It is interesting that this particular incident is recorded only by Luke.

Jerusalem (Hebrew, *Yerushalom*) means, "Righteousness - Peace." They were shouting "Peace in heaven. . . ." but they had no idea of what it meant. Peace (in the Hebrew language, *shalom*) means, "soundness, wholeness, well-being." Peace as it relates to God may be experienced by man even in the midst of earthly conflict (cf. Jn. 14:27; Isa. 26:3). Jerusalem was the City of Peace and yet it represented the center of all that stood in opposition to the God of peace. Its people, for the most part, did not know the way of peace—not then, not ever. Isaiah condemned the nation in his day because it did not know the way of peace (cf. Isa. 59:8). This is the city of God's presence but the frivolous, materialistic-minded mobs, and the self-righteous rulers have taken the kingdoms by "violence" for themselves. The attitudes of the Jews toward Jesus are so vividly like those of the Jews toward God and His prophets in the days of Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 6:16ff.) that one should not be surprised at the terrible devastation predicted by Jesus here. Peace, true peace, is not the absence of struggle, discipline or conflict; it is the result of reconciliation and surrender to the will of God by being "in Christ" (cf. Eph. 2:11-22). This is what the inhabitants of Jerusalem rejected.

**19:43-44 Warning:** Jesus gives a somber and gruesome prediction in a general way here of what will happen to the Jews because of their soon rejection of the Prince of Peace. Later He gives in great detail the same prediction (Lk. 21:5-32; Mt. 23:37—24:35; Mk. 13:1-31). We will deal with this prediction fully in Luke 21:5-32. Jerusalem's enemies (the Romans) would "cast up a bank" (siege wall) around the city and "hem" them in. Thousands would starve to death, other thousands would fight and kill one another. Then the Romans would "dash" many to the ground, including infants as they slaughtered the besieged Jews. Josephus documents the literal fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in 66-70 A.D. in his history of the Jews. Titus Vespasian razed Jerusalem so that it looked like "a plowed field," and not one stone was left upon another. The crowds seem unaware of this shocking prophecy. His prediction, if heard, would have been considered outrageous and completely out-of-place. Even His own disciples later (Mt. 23:37—24:35) could not believe that "not one stone would be left upon another" in their beloved Jerusalem. When Jesus said that so they could hear it later, they thought He was talking about the end of the world. To a Jew, the destruction of Jerusalem would be "the end of the world."

But, as incredible as it seemed, it came to pass to the very letter of the prediction just 40 years after Jesus said it.

All this was to come upon them "because they did not know the time of their visitation." The Greek word *episkopes* means literally, "to look upon, care for, exercise oversight." It may be used to denote a "visitation" from God in judgment (Isa. 10:3 in the LXX *episkopes*) or a "visitation" by the Son of man with mercy and redemption (Lk. 1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 15:14; Heb. 2:6). God "visited" man in the Person of His Son, as Man, to exercise oversight for the purpose of accomplishing man's redemption. The prophets of the Jews predicted God would visit man as Man (Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2ff.; Isa. 9:6ff.; Isa. 11:1-9; etc.). But when that Man came and claimed to be God in the flesh (Jn. 1:14, 18) they accused Him of blasphemy (Jn. 5:18) and plotted to kill Him. He invaded history in a fashion quite contrary to the human concept of how God would come. God's chosen people had been manipulating the written Law of God, His temple, His priesthood and His creation so long they thought they could manipulate Him. But God in the flesh, Jesus, would not be manipulated. When they rejected Him, He rejected them. They did not know Him because they did not know God (Jn. 5:30-47; 8:19; 8:42-47; 10:31-39; 14:8-11, etc.). "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not . . . He came to his own home, and his own people received him not," (Jn. 1:10-11). Tragedy—tragedy—tragedy! And in spite of documentation by eyewitnesses of the historical reality of visitation by God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, most of the world today does not acknowledge with any personal obligation and responsibility—not even of praise—that He has visited to bring peace. What is left then for those who pass from this life into the next without personal recognition and responsible commitment to that "Visitor"? The opposite of peace—eternal rebellion, fragmentation and torment. It is important to notice here Jesus' pity never led Him to compromise the truth. In spite of the deep grief which made His whole body shudder with sobbing, He pronounced the terrible truth of Jerusalem's doom. Had He known it and kept it to Himself no sane person could call Him compassionate! Pity alone never saved anyone; the compassion which elicits truth spoken and acted is what saves.

## SECTION 5

### Prayer (19:45-48)

45 And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, <sup>46</sup>saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers."

47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and

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the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him; <sup>48</sup>but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people hung upon his words.

**19:45-46 Temple Purged:** Apparently Jesus and the Twelve entered Jerusalem each morning for four successive days and went out to lodge in Bethany each night. He entered Jerusalem Sunday morning for the Triumphal Entry and returned to Bethany that night, doing the same on Monday, Tuesday and probably Wednesday (cf. Mk. 11:11; Mt. 21:18; Mk. 11:19-28; Lk. 21:37-38). Thursday He entered the city to keep the Passover (Mt. 26:18-20), was arrested that night in the Garden of Gethsemane, put on trial all night long and crucified on Friday. On Sunday He merely entered the Temple precincts, looked around at the despicable commercialization and exploitation of the Temple and its worshipers and departed for Bethany with the Twelve since it was late in the evening (cf. Mt. 21:10-17; Mk. 11:11).

As He returned toward Jerusalem the next morning (Monday), He cursed the unproductive fig tree (Mt. 21:18-19; Mk. 11:12-14. After entering the city on Monday He went to the Temple and taught and healed. Children shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David" and Jesus cautioned the indignant Pharisees, ". . . Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast brought perfect praise. . . ."

The incident of the cleansing of the Temple in our text took place on that same Monday, (see also Mt. 21:12-17; Mk. 11:15-19). The Temple of Jesus' day was magnificent. Herod the Great initiated grandiose plans in 20 B.C. for remodeling the Temple Zerubbabel had finished about 516 B.C. This remodeling was not completed until 64 A.D. (only 6 years before it was totally destroyed in 70 A.D.). Workers and materials were scattered about the Temple which Jesus knew. Ten thousand workers were employed in its remodeling. With nearly 3,000,000 people in Jerusalem at Passover time, and most of them coming to the Temple at least once a day, it was a very packed and busy place. Jesus was there probably every day of this last week. He would naturally gravitate to the Temple because of the teeming masses of people there at Passover time. He would have not only somewhat of a captive audience, but one with its mind concentrating on spiritual things. There also, were the rulers and religious leaders of the whole nation. This last week is the nation's "moment of truth." This last week will be the "crisis of the cosmos" (see comments on Luke 21). No longer will He keep a "low profile" on His Messiahship. Now is the time the issue is to be faced openly, thoroughly and plainly. There must be no lingering doubts about how much authority Jesus claims. The logical place for that authority to be claimed is the Temple. In addition to all this, the Temple, and its services, will provide immediate, vivid symbolism and



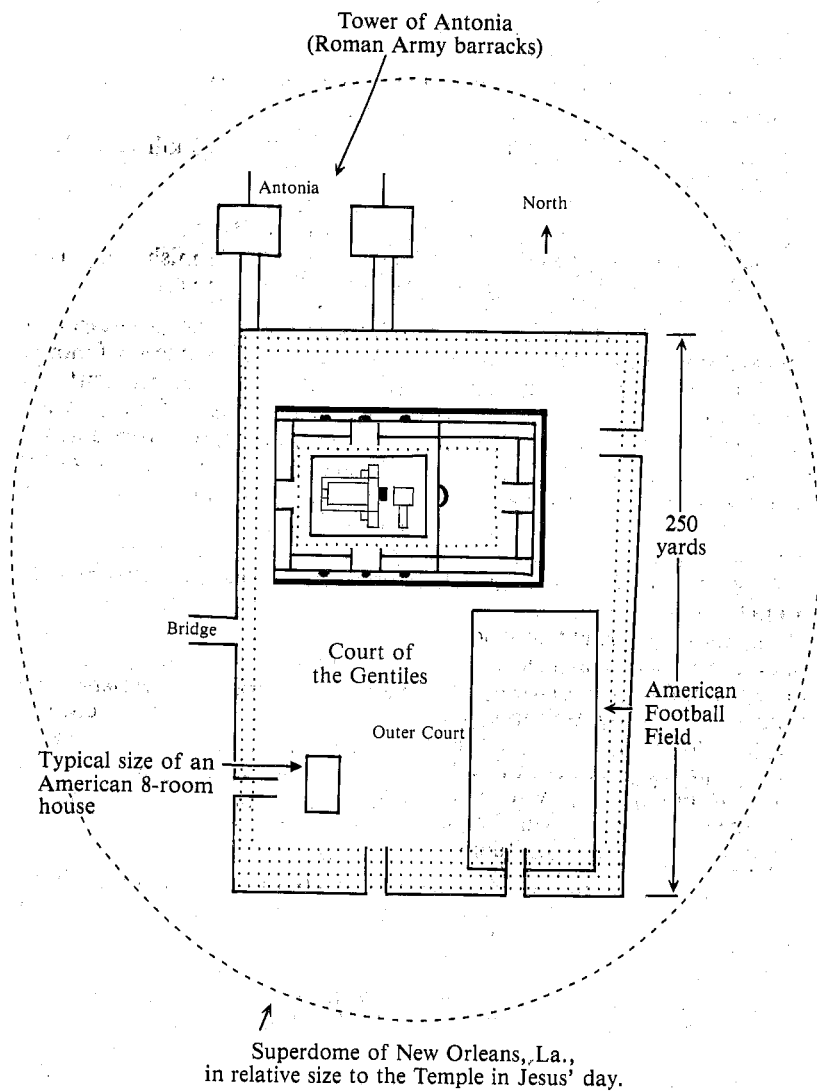
typology for Him to relate His redemptive work to the Old Testament of the Jews. Thus, He entered the Temple.

The Court of the Gentiles was called the "Bazaar of Annas" because the family of the High Priest made their fortune from the "markets" there. The Court of the Gentiles was a public place very much like the Forum in Rome or the Agora in Athens where anyone could go, including infidels, heretics, excommunicated Jews or unclean Jews. It was always crowded like a modern "Farmer's market" with people gossiping, buying, shopping, strolling around and selling. Merchants from all over the world were allowed to set up booths in it to hawk their wares. Along the walls, the huge colonnades (sheltered walk-ways) were gathering places. Roman soldiers walked along the roofs at Passover time patrolling the Court. It was "big business." Over \$1,000,000 a year was cleared by the family of the High Priest. The Roman general, Crassus, plundered the Temple of \$30,000,000 himself. The family of the High Priest had a "corner" on the market of "kosher" animals and "kosher" money for sale to Passover pilgrims. Jewish worshippers came from all over the Roman empire. Many of them could not bring a Passover lamb or Jewish shekels for their offerings. Nothing else was acceptable. Furthermore, all the priests had to do was pronounce any lamb that had been brought, unsuitable, and another one had to be obtained before the worshiper could observe the Passover. Often prices at the great feasts went up as much as fifteen times over the usual price of a lamb or a shekel. People were being exploited and defrauded in the name of religion.

Jesus was angry about this. He entered the Temple courts and began to drive out those who sold. The Greek word translated "drive out" is *ekballein* and means literally, "throw out." It is a word of action. Matthew records that He "overturned" the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of the merchants. The meek and mild Jesus vents His anger. There is a righteous magnificence to His roughness. He is demonstrating by actions what the prophets said so many times about the zeal of the Messiah for justice and relieving the oppression of the poor (Isa. 9:7; 11:1-5; 42:1-4; 61:1-4). As long as there was corruption in the Temple and its priesthood, there would be corruption in the whole nation. Where there is corruption in the religious leadership of any nation it will filter down and permeate the whole citizenry.

God never intended His "house" (covenant family) to become a marketplace where men buy and sell, exploit the weak and powerless, and worship the god mammon. Isaiah predicted that God's "house" (the church) would be set aside to evangelize the "foreigner" and call all who would to come into covenant relationship and worship (prayer), (Isa. 56:1-12). Jeremiah told the people of his day the Lord was going to remove them from their land and take His presence from them because they made His house a "den

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of robbers." There is, in Jesus' reference to both these prophecies, a direct claim to deity and messianic authority. He vindicates His actions by claiming the divine authority of messianic prophecy.

**19:47-48 Teaching Popular:** Jesus, in this action on Monday, excited a whole spectrum of emotions that lasted for several days as He taught in the Temple.

- a. The rulers were indignant (Mt. 21:15) and sought to kill Him (Lk. 19:47-48).
- b. The sick flocked to Him to be healed (Mt. 21:14).
- c. The children shouted Biblical praises, (Mt. 21:15-16).
- d. Most of the multitude watched and listened in astonishment, awe and appreciation, "hanging on His words" (Lk. 19:48).

For one brief moment the Temple was what it should be—beautiful, holy and spiritual. It was untidy and noisy, but lovely. For one brief moment the Temple was no longer a market-place that made you feel dirty and ashamed for having been there. It was a house of prayer and glory to God. For one brief moment Jesus revived in the minds of the worshipers the spiritual ideals and atmosphere of the Temple and turned them from their crass materialism.

The rulers were filled with rage and would have killed Him on the spot but they were afraid to do so. Jesus did something which was very popular with the multitudes. It warmed their heart to see anyone with enough courage to take action and overturn money tables and drive the merchants out. With only a slight provocation, the crowds would have joined Jesus against the rulers. Furthermore, the rulers were guilty and they knew they were guilty. What Jesus was doing was right and their consciences told them so. Guilty consciences have made many powerful men cowards. Finally, although they were filled with rage, they were also calculating. They knew the expedient thing to do was wait for the right moment and hope for an opportunity to make Jesus appear to be the criminal. Then they knew they could win the popularity of the multitudes to their side.

The church, made of "living stones," is God's temple today (Eph. 2:11-22). He wants it to be His house of prayer and evangelism. He is angry when it prostitutes itself before the gods of materialism, false teaching and sensuality. Some of the last admonitions of the New Testament are for the church to purge itself—to repent—lest He come and take away its light (cf. Rev. 2-3). Let the church know what happened to the Temple (Mt. 23:37—24:35; Lk. 21:5-33), and repent.

## STUDY STIMULATORS:

1. Would you risk your reputation to visit in the home of a "traitor" to teach about God's kingdom if invited? Jesus did!

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2. Is the "religious experience" of Zacchaeus (his salvation) an accurate example for salvation now?
3. What does the Parable of the Pounds do for your concept of rewards in heaven?
4. What do you think about faithfulness as the divine criterion for reward versus *amount* of work accomplished? Can you think of other teachings in the N.T. along the same line?
5. Have you ever been tempted to think of God as austere and too demanding? How do you overcome it?
6. Do you believe the Master has given you a "pound" to invest? What is it? Have you invested it?
7. What do you think you would have thought had you been a Roman soldier stationed in the city of Jerusalem the day Jesus rode in on the colt? What do you think you would do today if He rode into your town in an old, broken down automobile, followed by an entourage of common laborers, farmers and alleged traitors, claiming to be President of the United States?
8. Have you ever wept over the impenitence of your home town? Have you ever grieved over all the lost people who live there?
9. How many people do you know who have never acknowledged that Jesus was God in the flesh, visiting mankind? Have you ever talked to them about this?
10. Are there religious leaders making God's house (the church) a den of robbers today? How does Christ feel about this? What about your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit—is there anything in it that Christ might want to "drive out"?