



Type: Book Chapter

---

## Luke Chapter 19

Author(s): S. Kent Brown

Source: *The Testimony of Luke*

Published: Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2014

Page(s): 849–891

---

**Abstract:** A commentary on the events of Luke 19, accompanied by parallel columns of the King James translation of the chapter alongside a new rendition.



BYU Studies is collaborating with Scripture Central to preserve and extend access to BYU Studies and to scholarly research on the Book of Mormon and other Restoration scripture. Archived by permission of the author S. Kent Brown and BYU Studies.

<http://byustudies.byu.edu/>

# Luke Chapter 19

## INTRODUCTION

“Ascent and Descent” fits neatly as a title for this chapter because the Savior walks out of Jericho (see 19:1, 28), the lowest city on earth at 825 feet below sea level,<sup>1</sup> and ascends over undulating ground to the top of the Mount of Olives, about 2,700 feet above sea level where the road from Jericho crests the summit.<sup>2</sup> He then descends to the temple in Jerusalem, which lies about 2,420 feet above sea level (see 19:37: “at the descent”).<sup>3</sup> This means that a traveler who ascends the east side of the Mount of Olives, as Jesus does, climbs an additional 300 feet before dropping down to Jerusalem. Even from here, a person walks steeply down into the Kidron Valley that holds the Mount of Olives apart from the walled city, and then ascends another hundred feet to the capital. There is another ancient route, called the “Salt Road” that runs around the south end of the Mount of Olives via Bethany and avoids the climb to the mount’s summit.<sup>4</sup> If a pilgrim joins this road at Bethany where it circles the mount, the total ascent from Jericho is about six-tenths of a mile when traveling the approximately fifteen miles to Jerusalem, an average grade of 4 percent.

Another suitable title for this chapter might be “Keep your eye on the master” or “Respect your master.” In a couple of instances—the story of Zacchaeus (see 19:1–10) and the fetching of the colt (see 19:29–35)—the results of showing respect are very positive for the obedient believer. In other instances wherein respect is minimal or nonexistent, the results are not: the parable of the pounds (see 19:12–27) and the fate of Jerusalem (see 19:41–44).

---

1. Ehud Netzer, “Jericho,” in *ABD*, 3:723–24.

2. Warren J. Heard Jr., “Olives, Mount of,” in *ABD*, 5:13.

3. Kathleen and Leen Ritmeyer, “Reconstructing Herod’s Temple Mount in Jerusalem,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15 (November–December 1989): 36.

4. Menashe Har-El, “The Route of Salt, Sugar and Balsam Caravans in the Judean Desert,” *GeoJournal* 2, no. 6 (1978): 549–56.

Concerning Jesus' departure from Jericho, he and the crowd evidently leave Jericho very early in the day (see 19:28) because he arrives in Jerusalem early enough to enter the temple and scatter merchants and their goods before departing for the night (see 19:45).

Two miracles grace the end of this chapter. They are the last that we shall see, though they are not in the usual miraculous mode: Jesus' ride on an untamed donkey (see 19:29–35) and—this one is hiding in plain sight—the Roman noninterference with his intimidating actions against those who buy and sell in the temple (see 19:45–46). In the case of the Romans, in order to bottle up unwanted enthusiasm of the multitudes during festival times, soldiers sit menacingly upon the roofs of the porticos that surround the temple grounds as well as patrol the top of the Antonia fortress that overlooks the northwest corner of the temple area, thus keeping the entire temple precinct under surveillance.<sup>5</sup> Speaking of miracles, although the crowd rejoices and celebrates miracles past that they have witnessed (see 19:37), another miracle beyond this chapter will occur that dwarfs the earlier occurrences: Jesus' Atonement. And even nature will offer up the miraculous. For Jesus' statement about the response of nature—"if these [people] should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (19:40)—is prophetic in terms of the dramatic reaction of natural forces to his death (see 23:44–45; Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; also 1 Ne. 12:4–5, 19:12, and 3 Ne. 8:5–23 for events in the New World).

We suspect that "the whole multitude of the disciples" who are with him "at the descent" from the top of the Mount of Olives into the city (19:37) includes people who are simply coming up to the city a week or so early to purify themselves (see John 11:55; the Notes on 18:35 and 23:26)<sup>6</sup> and make up part of "the multitude" and "the press" of people already in Jericho when Jesus walks into that town (18:36; 19:3). We imagine hundreds, if not thousands, of people on their way to the capital city who, learning that Jesus is in the crowd, try to get close to him. Hence, the voices of Jesus' "disciples" (19:37), including the Twelve (see 18:31), are augmented by the voices of many others ("the multitude"), creating the noisy din to which "some of the Pharisees" object (19:39).

5. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.5.8 (§244); 2.12.1 (§224); Schürer, *History*, 1.366.

6. Josephus, *B.J.* 1.11.6 (§229); *Mishnah Oholoth* 2:3 ("These convey uncleanness . . . earth from a foreign country" etc.); *TDOT*, 5:339; Hyman, "Pilgrimage," 13:512; Hayes, "Purity and Impurity, Ritual," 13:1409.

Above all, at the chapter's end we witness in Jerusalem the arrival of the "coming one" of prophecy. Long before this moment, this grand personage graces the pages of scripture. Long before the Exile, the psalmist sings, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. 118:26). In the sixth century BC, Zechariah writes that "thy King cometh unto thee . . . having salvation . . . and riding upon an ass" (Zech. 9:9). In the fifth century, Malachi sees that "the Lord . . . shall suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3:1). In his turn, the Baptist pulls his followers' attention away from himself and toward "one mightier than I [who] cometh" (3:16). The most meaningful intersection of history and prophecy occurs as Jesus rides a donkey into the city where he will suffer, die, and rise from the dead.

## MEETING WITH ZACCHAEUS (19:1–10)

### King James Translation

1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

### New Rendition

1 And entering Jericho he began to pass through it. 2 And behold, there was a man called Zacchaeus by name. And he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, and he was not able owing to the crowd because he was small in stature. 4 And running ahead, he climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see him, because he was about to pass through there. 5 And when he came to the spot, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry down, for I must stay in your house this day." 6 And he hurried down and received him joyfully.

7 And when everyone saw, they began to murmur, saying that he went in to lodge with a sinner. 8 But standing there, Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions I give to the poor, Lord, and if I have extorted anything, I pay him back four times as much." 9 And Jesus said to him, "This

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

day salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to search out and save the lost.”

## Notes

**19:1 *entered and passed through*:** The verb “to pass through” (Greek *dierchomai*) stands in the imperfect tense with either a continuing sense, “was passing through,” or an inchoative meaning, “began to pass through.” With either understanding, we grasp that Jesus is still in the town when he meets Zacchaeus.<sup>7</sup>

**19:2 *a man named Zacchaeus*:** Evidence from the study of Jewish names in ancient Palestine and the appearance of such names in the Gospels and book of Acts leads to the conclusion that Zacchaeus is the first reporter and the source of the following story.<sup>8</sup>

***chief among the publicans*:** This office, attested only here in ancient literature and held by Zacchaeus (Greek *architelōnēs*),<sup>9</sup> is supervisory in character and means that he does not make all of his money directly from taxpayers but, in part, from the tax collectors who work under his supervision in nearby towns and villages. He and his fellow publicans, in a corporate effort, bid on the right to collect what are termed “indirect taxes” for the Roman government, that is, taxes on all purchases and leases, in contrast to “direct taxes” that consist of payments of the poll tax and on agricultural produce. Because publicans represent Roman interests, they are despised and even judged by some to be ceremonially unclean. Jesus, of course, reaches out to them and welcomes them among his followers, as illustrated by his call of Levi, who is a collector of tolls, and by his ready association with such people (see the Notes on 3:12; 5:27, 29–30; 15:1–2).<sup>10</sup> After all, he comes seeking the lost (see 19:10; Matt. 18:11).

***he was rich*:** The contrast between the blind beggar on the other side of town (see 18:35) and the rich man seems intentional. Jesus’ interaction with both illuminates his plan to extend himself to all classes of people.

7. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §§1890–92, 1900.

8. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 39–40, 46–47, 54–55, 67–84.

9. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 253; BAGD, 112.

10. Schürer, *History*, 1:372–76; *TDNT*, 8:94–98, and n. 105; 8:101–5; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 303–4, 310–12; Donahue “Tax Collector,” 6:337–338.

Moreover, this man's wealth frames one of the reasons why taxpayers resent such people—because, many assume, they acquire their wealth dishonestly.<sup>11</sup>

**19:3 *he sought to see Jesus:*** Luke does not offer any reason for Zacchaeus's desire. Perhaps he is curious; more likely, he is aware somehow that Jesus welcomes tax collectors like Levi among his closest disciples (see 5:27–28).<sup>12</sup> We also note the siting of verbs in this story that have to do with sight (see 19:2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8). Plainly, the account has to do with spiritual sight, “to see Jesus who he [is],” and purposefully ties to the temporary blindness of the man whom Jesus heals on his way into town (see 18:35–43).<sup>13</sup>

***could not for the press:*** On one level, because of his lack of height, Zacchaeus cannot see Jesus and the passing entourage. On another, because he is disliked as a tax collector, people in the crowd apparently refuse to allow him to squeeze between them even for a peek.<sup>14</sup>

***he was little of stature:*** This detail, of course, explains one reason why he climbs a tree so that he can see Jesus pass by (see the prior Note and 19:4). But it also points to an eyewitness who is acquainted with Zacchaeus and the event (see 6:10; 9:55; 10:23; 14:25; 18:40; 19:5; 22:41, 61; 23:28; John 8:6–8; the Notes on 7:9, 44; 22:31, 34).

**19:4 *climbed up:*** The expression buttresses the basic theme of ascending in the chapter. Not only does Zacchaeus climb up to see Jesus but his act leads to a more profound ascension, that of becoming Jesus' follower (see 19:8–10).

***a sycamore tree:*** Luke has in mind the sycamore fig (Greek *sykomorea*), not the mulberry (see the Note on 17:6). This tree is common in level areas of ancient Palestine; New Testament Jericho, with its open areas in the town, supports this tree.<sup>15</sup> In modern Jericho, far removed from the New Testament town, two large trees are claimed to celebrate Zacchaeus's act, one on a main thoroughfare and one on Greek Orthodox property.

**19:5 *he looked up:*** This small detail points directly to an eyewitness memory (see 6:10; 9:16, 55; 10:23; 14:25; 18:40; 19:3; 21:1; 22:41, 61; 23:28; John 8:6–8; the Notes on 7:9 and 7:44).

11. Schürer, *History*, 1:374–76; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 310–11.

12. Marshall, *Luke*, 696.

13. Green, *Luke*, 667.

14. Morris, *Luke*, 297.

15. *TDNT*, 7:758; Hareuveni, *Tree and Shrub in Our Biblical Heritage*, 80–94, esp. 80–81 (photographs) for large size of sycamore trees, and 90–91; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1224.

**come down:** Jesus' directive adds another piece to the ascending and descending motif (see 19:6). The verb (Greek *katabainō*) also anticipates the scene of Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane when "his sweat was as it were . . . blood *falling down*" (22:44; emphasis added).<sup>16</sup>

**and saw him:** Some early manuscripts omit this expression, which is redundant in light of the verb "to look up" (Greek *anablepō*).<sup>17</sup>

**I must abide at thy house:** The strong indicator that Jesus "must" (Greek *dei*) stay in the home of Zacchaeus points to a pre-designed plan on Jesus' part to bless this man, a plan that will bring salvation to him and his family.<sup>18</sup> Most commentators hold that Jesus simply goes to Zacchaeus's home for a meal,<sup>19</sup> even though the verb "to abide" or "to stay" (Greek *menō*) can also mean "to lodge" or "to pass the night."<sup>20</sup> It is important to observe that thousands of pilgrims are making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover and Jericho is certainly filled with travelers.<sup>21</sup> So Jesus finds a place to stay—in the home of Zacchaeus. Because Jesus will arrive at the temple on a Sunday afternoon, a day set by John's Gospel (see 19:45; John 12:1, 12; also Mark 14:2),<sup>22</sup> and will not travel on the Sabbath, the conversation between the two men likely takes place on Friday, meaning that Jesus will spend most if not all of the Sabbath day with Zacchaeus and his family, a notable blessing for them all. Seemingly, Luke knows nothing about this experience in Jericho, or decides not to report it (see the Notes on 5:6, 11). That he and the other Gospel writers miss significant items in their accounts is underscored by the abbreviated reports of events on the Mount of Transfiguration (see the Note on 9:33). As an added note, the Gospel of John recalls Jesus' approach to Jerusalem differently and puts Jesus in Bethany, evidently by Saturday evening, for a dinner in his honor (see John 12:1, 12; the Analysis on 19:1–10).

**19:6 received him joyfully:** Luke repeats the Greek verb *hypodechomai* elsewhere as a term for Martha hosting her special guest (see 10:38).<sup>23</sup> The

---

16. BAGD, 409.

17. Marshall, *Luke*, 696–97.

18. *TDNT*, 2:22–25.

19. Marshall, *Luke*, 694, 697; Morris, *Luke*, 297–98; Green, *Luke*, 670.

20. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1103; Plummer, *Luke*, 434; BAGD, 504–5.

21. Richman, *Holy Temple of Jerusalem*, 71, 74.

22. C. Kingsley Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1955), 342; Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 203; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 1:456; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1971), 574–75.

23. BAGD, 852.

participle translated as the adverb “joyfully” (Greek *chairōn*)<sup>24</sup> points immediately both to Zacchaeus’s relief that Jesus pays attention to him, a tax collector, and to the thrill of hosting Jesus in his home. On a deeper level, however, the verb “to rejoice” and its associated noun “joy” (Greek *chara*) link to expected salvation (see 1:14; 2:10; 6:23; 8:13; 10:17, 20; 19:37) and to repentance (see 15:5, 7, 10, 32), both of which play across the surface of this scene, as we shall see.<sup>25</sup>

**19:7 *they all murmured*:** According to Luke, the entire crowd erupts, citizens of the town who know Zacchaeus’s background likely leading out in protest. In contrast, the Joseph Smith Translation substitutes “the disciples” for “they,” attributing to the disciples an ability to spot a publican and then to complain (JST 19:7). The verb (Greek *diagonguzō*), of course, nods toward the murmuring of the children of Israel in the Sinai wilderness (see LXX Ex. 15:24; 16:2, 8; Num. 14:2, 36; 16:11; Deut. 1:27). As with the actions of the former Hebrew slaves, murmuring reduces the Savior’s motives to the level of uninformed human intentions, thus cheapening his act of reaching out to Zacchaeus and his family.<sup>26</sup>

**19:8 *Zacchaeus stood*:** Besides providing a subtle counterpoint to the movement of Jesus and his entourage, Zacchaeus’s act (Greek *histēmi*) reminds one of a court of law wherein the accused stands, or is caused to stand, before a council or judge, in this case Jesus (see 21:36; Acts 22:30; 24:20–21; 25:10; 26:6).<sup>27</sup> From Zacchaeus’s defense here against criticism, which resembles other defenses known from scripture (see Gen. 31:36–42; 1 Sam. 12:1–3; Mosiah 2:9–22), coupled with Jesus’ commendation (see 19:9), it is clear that his determination to see Jesus reaps an unexpected but ultimate reward.

***the Lord*:** As in other passages, a connection to the name Jehovah lies just under the surface (Greek *kyrios*).<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 17:6; 18:6; 19:16, 18, 20; 22:31, 61; 24:3; and the Notes on 7:13, 31.

***half of my goods I give to the poor*:** The contrast to the young ruler’s hold on worldly goods, and their hold on him, seems intentional (see 18:22–23). The despised one, Zacchaeus, is generous; the respected one, the ruler, is not. In a word, Zacchaeus’s actions genuinely take up the quest of the ruler “to inherit eternal life” (18:18).

---

24. BAGD, 881.

25. TDNT, 9:366–68; Johnson, *Luke*, 285.

26. BAGD, 181; TDNT, 1:730, 732.

27. BAGD, 382–83; TDNT, 8:434, n. 260; Black, *Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 134; Marshall, *Luke*, 783.

28. BAGD, 459–61; TDNT, 3:1058–62, 1086–93; TLNT, 2:347–50.



**by false accusation:** This expression is changed in the Joseph Smith Translation to read “by unjust means,” broadening the grounds for Zacchaeus’s restoring actions; he does not wait until someone brings forward an accusing complaint.

**fourfold:** The Mosaic law requires, in some circumstances, that a person pay back goods acquired by illegitimate means at a fourfold or fivefold rate (see Ex. 22:1; also D&C 98:44, 47; 124:71); in others, the fine is the full value of the principal plus an added fifth, combined with a trespass or guilt offering (see Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:6–7). As is evident, Zacchaeus adopts the steeper rate so that, when he discovers any case of misconduct that may tie to him, he stands beyond reproach (see 3:12–13).

**19:9 *This day:*** The Greek term *sēmeron* (“today”) is emphatic and, as in some of its other occurrences, points to the arrival of a significant moment initiated by the Savior, in this case salvation (see 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 13:32–33; 19:5; 23:43). The expression in the Old Testament also exhibits the sense of God bringing to pass critical moments in the religious history of his people, including covenant making and judgment (see Deut. 26:17–19; 30:15–20).<sup>29</sup>

**salvation:** In Hebrew, this term forms a play on the name Jesus, which itself means “salvation.”<sup>30</sup> Hence, Jesus is not just the epitome of salvation; he is salvation itself.

**this house:** It appears that this part of the conversation takes place inside or in front of Zacchaeus’s home, just before entering. Early Christian sources regularly envision Jesus staying in Zacchaeus’s home.<sup>31</sup>

**a son of Abraham:** With these words Jesus establishes both that Zacchaeus is Jewish and, most likely, that he is an honorable descendant of Abraham, not a contemptible renegade as the crowd’s whining tries to broadcast (see 19:7).<sup>32</sup> Thus Jesus’ words are directed as much to the crowd as to Zacchaeus himself.

**19:10 *the Son of man is come to seek and to save:*** In addition to what Jesus spells out in other *Son of man* sayings, he adds this dimension to his heavenly assigned tasks (see the Note on 5:22). In fact, Jesus’ sweeping statement can be read as a grand summation of his entire ministry, bringing closure to his work away from the capital city.<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, the

29. TDNT, 7:270–71, 274.

30. TDOT, 6:443–46, 449, 462.

31. Carl Griffin, “Cyrillona’s *On Zacchaeus*,” in Skinner, Davis, and Griffin, *Bountiful Harvest*, 179, 185, 194, n. 50.

32. Morris, *Luke*, 298–99.

33. Marshall, *Luke*, 695.

authenticity of this saying has been challenged, but Marshall brings forward reasons that the saying comes from Jesus' lips, including its ties to the prophecy about the rescuing shepherd in Ezekiel 34.<sup>34</sup>

## Analysis

A subtle yet visible emphasis rests on the family when the Savior evidently stays in the home of Zacchaeus from Friday afternoon through the Sabbath before he begins the uphill walk to Jerusalem on Sunday morning. To spend so much time with this man and his household signals clearly the value that Jesus places on marriage, spouse, children, and home, a point unsubtly underlined by calling Zacchaeus, “a son of Abraham” (19:9). Jesus intentionally focuses attention on Zacchaeus, rather than passing the tree where he is perched without a glance, an act that discloses a plan to interact meaningfully with this chief publican: “I must abide at thy house” (19:5). Thus, Jesus' last act in his public ministry away from Jerusalem is to spend time with a family.

We also need to notice that Jericho is certainly packed with pilgrims and travelers who, among thousands, are making their way to Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup> Hence, places to rest indoors are at a premium and Jesus finds a place in Zacchaeus's home.

At this point, we are left to imagine what the next day consists of—Jesus, his disciples and Zacchaeus's family will all attend the synagogue service, “as his custom was” (4:16). Of course, Jesus will spend time discussing gospel principles with any and all. And relatives and neighbors will visit Zacchaeus's home on this Sabbath to meet his guest of honor. We can also imagine that, at the end of the Sabbath, as on an earlier occasion, “when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them” (4:40). It is a most memorable day in Jericho.

On the other hand, if we insist on harmonizing Luke's report with John's account of Jesus staying in Bethany before walking to Jerusalem on Sunday (see the Note on 19:5), meaning that he arrives in that town at least by Friday afternoon because he will not travel on the Sabbath, we are still left with Jesus spending a night with Zacchaeus and his family, an extraordinary event for them as he makes his way toward the capital city.

In addition, within the story of Zacchaeus, preserved only by Luke, lies proof that rich people can receive salvation, for “he was rich” (19:2). The

---

34. *TDNT*, 6:492–93; Marshall, *Luke*, 698–99; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1221–22.

35. Richman, *Holy Temple of Jerusalem*, 71, 74.

fact that he gives “half of [his] goods . . . to the poor” and makes amends “fourfold” illustrates that this man forsakes “the things . . . of this world” and thus can “enter in” the kingdom (19:8; JST 18:27; see the note on 18:27). Plainly, his wealth has become a vehicle for doing good and does not impede his spiritual progression. Further, when an opportunity to see Jesus presents itself, he makes an effort to climb a tree, demonstrating his genuine interest in “who [Jesus] was” (19:3).

Jesus’ encounter with Zacchaeus effectively brings to a conclusion his merciful ministry to the outcasts of society.<sup>36</sup> To be sure, such people will mix with the throngs in Jerusalem for the Passover. But no stories of Jesus’ interaction with these people survive from the last week of his life. Instead, at Jericho we witness his gracious outreach to the blind man and to Zacchaeus, both of whom stand on the margins of society. Although their circumstances differ markedly, each presents a counterweight to the rich ruler: the blind man demonstrating what a person with real sight does, he “followed [Jesus]” (18:43), and Zacchaeus demonstrating that, by responding honestly and genuinely to the Savior, wealth need not be an impediment to salvation (see 19:9).

## **PARABLE OF THE POUNDS (19:11–27)**

(Compare Matt. 25:14–30)

### **King James Translation**

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after

### **New Rendition**

11 And after they heard these things, he went on to tell them a parable because he was near to Jerusalem and it seemed to them that the kingdom of God was going to be revealed immediately. 12 Therefore he said, “A certain nobleman went into a far land to receive a kingdom for himself and then return. 13 And, summoning ten of his servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I return.’ 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a

---

36. Green, *Luke*, 665–68.

him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to be king over us.’

15 “And it came to pass that, when he was returned from having received the kingship, he said that those servants to whom he had given the money should be summoned to him, so he might know what they had gained by trading. 16 And the first came saying, ‘Your pound has earned ten pounds.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant. Because you were dependable in a very small matter, you will have authority over ten cities.’ 18 And the second came to him and said, ‘Your pound, master, has produced five pounds.’ 19 So he said to this one, ‘And you will be over five cities.’ 20 And the other came saying, ‘Master, behold your pound, which I have kept stored away in a napkin. 21 For I feared you, because you are an exacting man; you take out what you have not put in and you reap what you have not sown.’ 22 He said to him, ‘I condemn you from your own mouth, wicked servant. You knew, didn’t you, that I am an exacting man, taking out what I have not put in and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Then why did you not put my money in a bank, and when I came, I would collect it with interest?’

24 “And to those who stood by he said, ‘Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ (25 And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds.’) 26 ‘I say to you, to all those who have shall it be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken away. 27 But as for these my enemies who did not want me to be king over them, bring them here and execute them before me.’”

## Notes

**19:11 as they heard:** A stress on hearing, of course, runs throughout Jesus' teachings (see 6:47, 49; 8:8, 12–15, 21; 14:35; 16:29, 31; the Notes on 6:27; 11:28; the Analysis on 8:4–15). Here Luke seems to be nodding both to the listening crowd that gathers around the Savior in Jericho and to the recent events of the long journey, thus connecting the parable with the past.<sup>37</sup> He now takes opportunity to teach the throng about potentially missing an opportunity to respond properly to their new king, an opportunity that will arise in the immediate future in Jerusalem.

**a parable:** See the Notes on 5:39 and 8:4.

**nigh to Jerusalem:** For Luke, the following parable will connect on some level with Jesus' approach to the capital city and will therefore frame part of its interpretation.

**they thought:** Luke attributes to the collected crowd in Jericho an almost breathless anticipation that, as Jesus draws near to Jerusalem, the kingdom will appear. Luke thereby captures in this moment a formerly widespread, popular view of Jesus' future work. The Joseph Smith Translation intensifies this conclusion by rendering this expression "the Jews taught" (JST 19:11).

**the kingdom of God should immediately appear:** We must keep in mind that it is Luke's comment about misunderstanding the coming kingdom that frames the occasion for the parable of the pounds, which follows immediately (see 19:12–27). Luke's note lets us know that this expectation is held by some in Jesus' day, including some in the crowd. By retelling this fact, Luke gains some distance between Jesus' day and the coming kingdom. In addition, Luke points to this false expectation as the occasion for Jesus' following parable of the pounds. That is, the fundamental interpretation of the parable is that the Second Coming of Christ and the kingdom is not to be immediate. But a careful reading of the parable links it rather naturally to the issue of righteous and unrighteous stewardship, a dimension that becomes a natural issue as Jesus approaches the city whose stewards already grovel in corruption.

**19:12 He said:** Jesus' parable about the pounds, which features a master who leaves to receive a kingdom and ten servants who accept a pound each, seems to be, on one level, a veiled allusion to Jesus' departure, that is, his death, and to his eventual return. But these do not constitute the whole story. Into the fabric of the parable are stitched the themes of accountability,

---

37. Green, *Luke*, 674–75.

reward, and punishment. At the end, in a scene that does not match the portrait of Jesus elsewhere in Luke, the punishment of those who oppose the master is firm and grimly final (see 19:27).<sup>38</sup>

**a certain nobleman:** Some surmise that Jesus draws reference to a historical person, likely Archelaus, son of Herod. People in Jericho will remember him as the ruler of Judea who refurbishes the palace in Jericho and whom the Romans later remove from power (4 BC–AD 6).<sup>39</sup> If Jesus is instead speaking allegorically, then he may have himself in mind.

**went into a far country to receive . . . a kingdom:** After the death of his father, Herod, in 4 BC, Archelaus goes to Rome to receive the office of king from Augustus, the emperor, though he does not succeed.<sup>40</sup> If Jesus is pointing to himself, then he is alluding to his looming death.

**to return:** The newly minted king is not due back for a long time because he travels far. Even his fellow citizens know that he plans to come back (see 19:13, “till I come”).

**19:13 ten servants:** These people are evidently not slaves but of higher status; otherwise, they will not be permitted to undertake business in the name of their master.<sup>41</sup> This sense is reinforced when the master, in scolding the shiftless servant, does not physically punish him, as he is permitted to do, but simply transfers the money to another, effectively releasing him (see 19:22–24). In a similar parable, Matthew writes that the master deals with three individuals, not ten (see Matt. 25:15).

**ten pounds:** The unit is the mina (Greek *mna*) whose value is 100 drachmas, the rough equivalent of three months’ wages (see the Note on 7:41). The sense is that each person receives one such amount.<sup>42</sup>

**Occupy:** The meaning of the verb (Greek *pragmateuomai*), appearing only here in the New Testament, is in this context “to do business, to trade.”<sup>43</sup>

**19:14 his citizens hated him:** This verse ties most closely to the last (see 19:27) and seems to offer an added aspect that may not have been an original part of the parable. Within the story as it now stands, the ten servants or stewards seem to be in a position to influence the citizens’ attitude toward

38. Green, *Luke*, 676.

39. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.7.3 (§§111–13); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.13.1–2 (§§340–44); Morris, *Luke*, 300.

40. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.6.3 (§93); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.8.4 (§202), 17.11.4 (§317); Schürer, *History*, 1:326, 330–33, 353–56; David C. Braund, “Archelaus,” in *ABD*, 1:367–68.

41. Marshall, *Luke*, 704; Morris, *Luke*, 300.

42. BAGD, 526; Marshall, *Luke*, 704; Schürer, *History*, 2:64–65.

43. BAGD, 704; *TDNT*, 6:641.

the nobleman, but they apparently do nothing. To be sure, the parable focuses on the servants' management of the money, but the dimension of hate is highlighted and brought to a drastic resolution at the end, thus begging for a different culmination for those who want to see the master in a different light (see 19:27). This added aspect suggests that the story may originally concern chiefly the management of stewardships rather than wealth and that Jesus adapts and expands it for another purpose.

**sent a message:** If Jesus' parable rests on a historical incident, that is, Archelaus's effort to receive the title of king from the Roman emperor, we know that opponents sent an embassy of fifty persons to Rome to try to persuade Augustus not to take such action.<sup>44</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation may add ballast to this understanding when it changes "message" to "messenger" (JST 19:14). In the current story, the master takes vengeance against the citizens for their conscious, public interference (see 19:27).

**We will not:** Luke's readers will see the rejection of Jesus in the citizens' declaration.

**19:15 having received the kingdom:** Archelaus succeeds in receiving royal power according to Herod's last will and testament, if Jesus indeed is referring to this event. But at first, Archelaus receives the title of ethnarch from the emperor Augustus, who promises the title of king after a demonstration of the ability to rule. But it seems that Archelaus never receives the title from the emperor though he apparently holds equivalent power.<sup>45</sup>

**that he might know:** The time of accountability arrives. For the leaders of Jesus' nascent church, the lesson will be obvious: returning to the master or presiding officer and reporting are important parts of how the kingdom operates (see 9:10; 10:17; Acts 15:2, 4; D&C 104:11–13, 15–16).

**19:16 Lord:** For this term's ties to the name Jehovah (Greek *kyrios*), see 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 17:6; 18:6; 19:8, 18, 20; 22:31, 61; 24:3; and the Notes on 7:13, 31.<sup>46</sup>

**thy pound hath gained ten pounds:** The mechanisms for gaining 1,000 percent during the nobleman's absence consist of high interest rates and commissions.<sup>47</sup> Plainly, this servant and the second do not feel bound by the laws against usury or interest, or they may be dealing with non-Israelite traders in their business transactions (see 19:23; Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35–37; Deut 23:20).

44. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.6.1 (§80); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.11.1 (§§299–300).

45. Josephus, *B.J.* 1.33.7–8 (§§664–69); 2.6.3 (§93); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.8.1, 4 (§§188–90, 202); 17.11.4 (§317); Schürer, *History*, 1:326; Braund, "Archelaus," 1:368.

46. BAGD, 459–61; *TDNT*, 3:1058–62, 1086–93; *TLNT*, 2:347–50.

47. Marshall, *Luke*, 705.

**19:17 *because thou hast been faithful*:** Rewarding faithful stewardship appears consistently in Jesus’ teaching elsewhere, forming a constant theme (see 12:35–48; 16:10–12; Matt. 25:21, 23; D&C 52:13; 70:12–17; 124:113; 132:44, 53).

***authority over ten cities*:** The nobleman elevates the servant to a ruling regent, awarding him a stunning gift. As a regent, the servant receives the financial benefits of the cities and their surrounding territories, namely, from the produce that comes from government-owned lands and from agricultural and commercial taxation.<sup>48</sup> On another level, the master does not reduce the responsibilities of the servant, but increases his opportunities for service.<sup>49</sup> All of this fits with the view that what we do in this life can lead to awe-inspiring rewards in the next (see 6:23; 8:21; D&C 78:15, 17–18; 84:38; 101:61, 65; 121:46; 132:19–21, 44, 53).

**19:18 *thy pound hath gained five pounds*:** This gain of 500 percent is remarkable, even when compared to that of the first servant. Importantly, as with the first servant, the second does not take credit for the increase, instead saying to the master, “*thy pound hath gained . . .*” (emphasis added; also 19:16).<sup>50</sup>

**19:19 *Be thou also over five cities*:** See the Note on 19:17 about the added stewardship, rewards, and expanded opportunities for service.

**19:20 *another came*:** Of the remaining eight who receive money, Jesus’ words feature only this person. The parable’s concentration on three recipients has led almost all commentators to see a link to the parable of the talents and its three featured servants (see Matt. 25:14–30).

***I have kept laid up in a napkin*:** Besides the incidental links to an eternal reward that the verb exhibits (Greek *apokeimai*; see Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8),<sup>51</sup> the statement points to a rather relaxed way of keeping money safe. The preferred manner is to bury it for security (see Matt. 25:18).<sup>52</sup>

**19:21 *an austere man*:** Besides the nobleman’s high rank, this is the first intimation of his character—he is exacting and strict (Greek *austēros*),<sup>53</sup> very possibly reflecting the servant’s hyperbole, as we shall see.

***takest up*:** The meaning of the verb (Greek *airō*) has to do with the act of lifting up by the hand and carrying. As is seen in the servant’s next

---

48. Josephus, *B.J.* 7.6.6 (§§216–17); Schürer, *History*, 1:288, 298–300, 302, 374; for the situation two generations later, see Yadin, *Bar-Kokhba*, 175–83, 239, 253.

49. Morris, *Luke*, 301.

50. Morris, *Luke*, 301.

51. BAGD, 92.

52. Jeremias, *Parables*, 61, esp. n. 51; Marshall, *Luke*, 706; also Hel. 13:18–20, 35; Morm. 1:18.

53. BAGD, 121.



statement, in his view the master takes what he has not set aside, expecting a lot for little.<sup>54</sup>

***thou layedst not down:*** In connection with the prior expression, and in its tie to economic transactions, the full sense of the Greek verb *tithēmi* concerns the master withdrawing what he does not deposit.<sup>55</sup> One suspects that this inflated and fawning declaration rests only in the heart of the fearing servant.

***reapest that thou didst not sow:*** In a shift away from commercial ideas, the servant speaks of the master harvesting agricultural produce that another plants (see Matt. 25:24; also D&C 6:33).

***19:22 Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee:*** This principle is an old legal point to the effect that the words of the accused, or even accuser, trigger the penalty (see 2 Sam. 1:2–16; Job 15:6; Dan. 6:4–24; Alma 30:43–50).

***wicked servant:*** The term translated “wicked” (Greek *ponēros*)<sup>56</sup> here does not draw a picture of wicked actions but of a slothful, conscious refusal to do as the nobleman directs upon his departure (see 19:13).

***Thou knewest:*** The nobleman accepts the characterization of the servant, at least for the moment, though it may not be accurate.

***19:23 into the bank:*** The phrase can be translated “onto the table [of money lenders]” (Greek *epi trapezan*), pointing to one source for increasing a person’s investment (see “the exchangers” in D&C 101:49).<sup>57</sup> But the servant omits even this simple act of obeying the master’s directive (see 19:13), thus underscoring the evil of omission.

***required mine own:*** This expression, which rests on the Greek verb *prassō* with the sense in the context of “to collect,”<sup>58</sup> is adjusted in the Joseph Smith Translation to say “received mine own,” plainly affirming that the master owns the original pound as well as the interest that it generates (JST 19:23).

***with usury:*** The phrase means “with interest.” Because Jesus is addressing a Jewish audience and seeks to make a memorable point, he weaves usury into his story because Jews are not allowed to earn interest or usury from other Jews (see Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35–37; Deut 23:20). In this light, the master seems to expect his servant to deal with non-Jews when increasing his cash.<sup>59</sup>

54. TDNT, 1:185–86; Marshall, *Luke*, 707.

55. BAGD, 823; TDNT, 8:152, 154, 155; Marshall, *Luke*, 707.

56. BAGD, 697–98.

57. BAGD, 832; TDNT, 8:211.

58. BAGD, 705.

59. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1237.

**19:24 he said unto them that stood by:** In a few words, the master empowers his other servants to act decisively and forcefully against the slothful servant. Whether Jesus intends us to think of the other nine servants or only of the two whom his parable features remains unknown.

**Take from him the pound:** Although the pound belongs to the nobleman and not to the servant, this action dramatically signals an end to the relationship between the two men.

**give it to him that hath ten pounds:** Two points are relevant. First, the obedient servant keeps the money entrusted to him, presumably so that he can now invest it for his own benefit. Second, the amount of extra money that he receives, one pound, is a very minor amount when compared to the ten cities that he receives (see 19:17),<sup>60</sup> thus making the reception of the one pound a highly spiritual acquisition: the obedient will make good use of even small opportunities.<sup>61</sup>

**19:25 they said:** The respondents remain unidentified, whether they are the other nine servants in the story or are members of Jesus' audience. Whoever they are, they register surprise. But Jesus' point is not yet fully made: God's astonishing generosity to the obedient will surprise all, as will his cutting off of the disobedient (see 19:26–27; D&C 78:15, 17–19; 84:38, 41; 101:55–58, 66, 89–93). Incidentally, some manuscripts omit this verse.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps significantly, the Joseph Smith Translation also drops the entire verse.

**19:26 I say unto you:** This expression loads Jesus' authority onto what he is about to say (see 5:24; 7:9, 14, 26, 28, 47; etc.; the Notes on 4:24, 6:27, and 19:40).

**unto every one which hath:** Does this statement come from the nobleman in the story? Possibly. Even so, Jesus now comes to one of the notable nubs in his parable, one that he makes before (see 8:18). But he is not here congratulating the wealthy who happen to own more than others. Rather, he points to those who make the most of opportunities to make spiritual improvements, whatever their social status may be, and to the sweeping, everlasting rewards that will follow (see the Notes on 8:18 and 19:17).<sup>63</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation reinforces this view by substituting the very active verb “occupieth” for the rather flat verb “hath” (JST 19:25).

**even that he hath shall be taken away:** The spiritual application of this announcement arises in other scripture: “they that will harden their hearts,

---

60. Marshall, *Luke*, 708.

61. Morris, *Luke*, 302.

62. Plummer, *Luke*, 443; Marshall, *Luke*, 708.

63. Marshall, *Luke*, 708.

to them is given the lesser portion of the word [of God] until they know nothing” (Alma 12:11). The Joseph Smith Translation agrees: “even that he hath *received* shall be taken away,” stressing the loss of a meaningful gift (JST 19:25; emphasis added).

**19:27 enemies:** Who are these people? Do we find a veiled allusion to those who oppose the rulership of Archelaus, son of Herod, and then send an embassy to Rome?<sup>64</sup> To be sure, we hear of these enemies earlier but then they fade away from our view (see the Note on 19:14).

**bring [them] hither:** An escort, likely armed, for “enemies,” mirrors the language of escorts that bring individuals into God’s presence for judgment (see Rev. 20:13; 1 Ne. 15:33; Mosiah 16:10; Alma 5:18; 11:43–44; 12:8, 12; 24:15; 36:15; 40:21; Hel. 14:15; Morm. 9:2).

**slay them before me:** What serious crime do these “enemies” commit? If Jesus has Archelaus in mind, this man’s army massacres three thousand people on the temple grounds *before* he goes off to Rome to receive confirmation of his rulership, a reverse of Jesus’ story, although Archelaus treats subjects on his return “with great brutality.”<sup>65</sup> If Jesus has a spiritual situation in mind, the final outcome is still harsh, an outcome that may reflect the final judgment against the wicked. On another level, these proceedings occur only after the nobleman has “received the kingdom” (19:15). If this person represents the Savior, it may be a metaphor for him eventually turning the tables on those who hate him and seek his life, even in light of his prayer for their forgiveness (see 23:34).

## Analysis

The challenges in understanding this parable match the difficulties in interpreting the parable of the unjust steward (see 16:1–8). The range of suggested interpretations flits from the notion that the master represents exploiting Roman officials and the slaves stand for Jewish leaders who must decide whether or not to join Rome as exploiters of their people;<sup>66</sup> to the idea that the parable joins two stories about the end-time, one about a man who receives a kingdom and rewards his faithful servants, and the other about Archelaus, son of Herod, whose actions remind hearers not to adopt “a false sense of security”;<sup>67</sup> to the view that the parable is about the Savior

64. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.6.1 (§80); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.11.1 (§§299–300).

65. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.1.1–3 (§§1–13); 2.7.3 (§111—quote appears here); Josephus, *A.J.* 17.8.4–9.3 (§§200–18); Schürer, *History*, 1:330.

66. Ford, *Parables of Jesus*, 32–46.

67. Jeremias, *Parables*, 58–60 (quotation appears on 59).

and the Twelve, offering a blueprint for events that will soon come to pass, including the rejection of Jesus by Jerusalem authorities and the need for the Twelve to be equipped for the future.<sup>68</sup>

These do not exhaust the matter. Some hold to an opinion that, as a variant of the parable of the talents (see Matt. 25:14–30) and as a parable with no link back to the story of Zacchaeus, the account stands as a partial allegory that portrays the responsibilities of believers to employ properly the benefits of the earthly kingdom until the end-time.<sup>69</sup> Others maintain a concept that, as the disciples' expectations for Jesus rise as he approaches Jerusalem, he sets the record straight to the effect that “the kingdom of God” will not “immediately appear” (19:11) but the days ahead will be filled with judgment that offers both rewards and punishments.<sup>70</sup> This last view holds the most promise for grasping this parable.

Many commentators agree, though not in individual details, that Luke's account of the parable of the pounds and Matthew's report of the parable of the talents go back to a common source. Even so, a number hold out the possibility that, perhaps, they are independent stories that Jesus repeats on different occasions for different purposes.<sup>71</sup>

In Luke's hands, both Jesus' approach to Jerusalem—his objective since the beginning of his historic journey (see 9:51)—and the popular misconception that “the kingdom of God should immediately appear” when Jesus reaches the capital city (19:11), frame the parable and its purpose. According to Luke, Jesus repeats the parable to correct the misconception because, with his presence, the kingdom of God already resides among them (see the Note on 17:21). Moreover, he does not come as a militant Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom complete with heavenly trappings, as Pilate discovers (see 23:3–4, 13–16). Although a person might frivolously conclude that Luke makes “a thorough mess” of introducing and then repeating the parable in its current form because of the challenges in grasping both its parts and its full meaning,<sup>72</sup> we have to reckon that the entire account, as it stands, makes sense to Luke and his audience.

One of the complaints is that, if the nobleman represents Jesus in some way, the actions and character of the man do not match Luke's portrait of

---

68. Johnson, *Luke*, 292–94.

69. Marshall, *Luke*, 700–2; with slight differences, Dodd, *Parables*, 108–14.

70. Green, *Luke*, 674–77.

71. Plummer, *Luke*, 437; Marshall, *Luke*, 701; Morris, *Luke*, 299; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 283–86; see also Jeremias, *Parables*, 107–8, 115, 202; *TDNT*, 2:631, n. 29; 4:326.

72. Johnson, *Luke*, 293.

Jesus throughout his Gospel, thus arguing for an adjusted understanding of how the parable reveals the Savior's future actions.<sup>73</sup> But we cannot simply degrade the parable on such grounds. We must be willing to entertain the possibility that the incidents and teachings that come to Luke from his sources carry varying impressions about Jesus that even he, in his portraiture, cannot reshape or reconfigure. Does Jesus condemn wickedness or not? Does he not warn against eternal consequences of evil behavior? Will the final judgment be harsh on some or not? In Luke's efforts to offer an accurate picture of Jesus' ministry (see 1:3), even with his own overlying emphases by which he seeks to set Jesus' ministry into proper perspective, elements that do not fit exactly will certainly pop into view. And the nobleman's drastic actions with his enemies may qualify for this sort of understanding.

In this light, we notice that Jesus regularly lifts an incident or custom from life and, with reshaping or restating, fits it to his teaching, whether it be the parable of the sower, the parable of the good Samaritan, or something else (see 8:4–8; 10:29–37). Hence, it is reasonable to see the rise to power of Archelaus, son of Herod, informing elements in the story, particularly those that have to do with the nobleman who receives his authority in “a far country” (19:12) and who then must deal with detractors who seek to undermine his appointment (see 19:14). But the similarities are few and limited.

The main story has to do with stewardship and accountability at the master's return, particularly as highlighted by the inaction of the slothful servant.<sup>74</sup> A strong sub-theme, of course, draws attention to the gap in time between the nobleman's departure and return, for it is during this period that the servants' activities will uncover their commitment to obeying the commands of their master. Thus, Jesus not only corrects the mistaken belief that the kingdom is to “immediately appear” in dramatic fashion (19:11) but also sketches out a picture of responsibility: that his disciples are to engage themselves in his work until his return. At that point, they are to report to him (see D&C 104:11–13, 15–16). Otherwise, matters will turn out as they do for the complacent servant—he is released from his master's service and, worse, severed from him.

But what about matching the nobleman with Jesus in ways that bend away from Luke's prior portrait of Jesus as the one who reaches out compassionately to all people, specifically the master's admission that he takes what is not his (see 19:22) and his slaughter of enemies before his eyes

---

73. Marshall, *Luke*, 701, 709; Green, *Luke*, 676.

74. Dodd, *Parables*, 111–12.

(see 19:27)? Can we reconcile this portrait of overreaching and cruelty? About the former, the accusation of the master's intimidation comes on the lips of the slothful servant and therefore has to be reckoned as a form of hyperbole (see 19:21). Even though the master repeats the words of the servant, we need not think that he is affirming their truth. In fact, he holds the words at arm's length and keeps them in the servant's mouth, "Thou knewest" (19:22). Instead, he makes the point that the servant knows he will need to account for his actions before a strict master and yet does not perform his duty.

Concerning the latter point about the master's cruelty, the fate of the master's enemies mirrors what is in store for those who oppose the Lord's work. And some of these people will soon confront Jesus in Jerusalem. This view is not new. Does not Jesus speak of God avenging "his own elect" in speedy fashion (see 18:7–8)? Does he not draw his hearers' minds to "the day" of the Son of Man and "the days" of reckoning, terms that carry enormous weight as pointers to judgment and punishment (see the Notes on 17:22, 26, 30)? Accordingly, we are justified in seeing the nobleman as a rough, though perhaps not precise, representation of the Lord and his doings at the time of judgment.<sup>75</sup>

The relationship between the parable of the talents reported in Matthew 25:14–30 and this parable has invited discussion and debate. Many hold that the two are mere variants of one another with editorial adjustments, naturally.<sup>76</sup> The similarities are many, including the master who spends time away (see 19:12, 15; Matt. 25:14, 19), the three main servants to whom are entrusted varying amounts of money (see 19:13; Matt. 25:15), the dismissal of the lazy servant (see 19:24; Matt. 25:28, 30), and the statement at the end about rewards and depletions (see 19:26; Matt. 25:29).

But the numbing number of differences weighs densely against the similarities.<sup>77</sup> A short catalogue illustrates. (1) In Luke, Jesus narrates the story in Jericho, in Matthew, he tells it on the Mount of Olives (see 19:1; Matt. 24:3). (2) In Luke, the master travels to "a far country to receive for himself a kingdom" (19:12); in Matthew, he goes for no stated purpose (see Matt. 25:14). (3) In Luke, ten servants receive money; in Matthew, only three do (see 19:13; Matt. 25:15). (4) In Luke, the ten receive a *mina* each, a relatively modest

---

75. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 508–10; McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:571–73.

76. Dodd, *Parables*, 108; Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 201; Bultmann, *History*, 176, 195–96; Jeremias, *Parables*, 58.

77. Morris, *Luke*, 299.

amount; in Matthew, the three servants each receive an ample fortune (see 19:13; Matt. 25:15).<sup>78</sup> (5) In Luke, the master gives his servants a charge to multiply the money entrusted to their care; in Matthew, the master gives no such instruction, though it is implied (see 19:13; Matt 25:15, 19). (6) In Luke, the two faithful servants multiply their funds by ten times and five times; in Matthew, the two servants double the monies entrusted to them (see 19:16, 18; Matt. 25:20, 22). (7) In Luke, the slothful servant keeps the money in a napkin, a dubious place to hide it; in Matthew, the lazy servant buries it, a much better place for hiding (see 19:20; Matt. 25:18). (8) In Luke, the faithful servants are rewarded with stewardships over cities; in Matthew, they enter “into the joy of [their] lord” (see 19:17, 19; Matt. 25:21, 23). (9) In Luke, the neglectful servant is dismissed; in Matthew, this servant is thrust “into outer darkness” (see 19:24; Matt. 25:30). (10) In Luke, the master faces enemies; in Matthew, no such persons appear (see 19:14, 27). Thus, it is a fair conclusion that the two parables are really independent though similar, Jesus rehearsing them on different occasions for different purposes.<sup>79</sup>

## ASCENT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES (19:28–40)

(Compare Matt. 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; John 12:12–19)

### King James Translation

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.  
29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.  
31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

### New Rendition

28 And when he had said these things, he went ahead, going up to Jerusalem.  
29 And it came to pass, when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount called Olivet, he sent off two of the disciples, 30 saying, “Go to the village on the opposite side. When you enter, you will find a colt tied up, on which no man has ever sat. And when you have released it, bring it. 31 And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you releasing it?’ reply this way, ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’”

78. BAGD, 526 (*mna*), 811 (*talanton*).

79. Plummer, *Luke*, 437; Marshall, *Luke*, 701; Morris, *Luke*, 299.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. 33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now 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 that they had seen; 38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

32 And when those who were sent went, they found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were releasing the colt, its masters said to them, “Why are you releasing the colt?” 34 And they said, “Because the Lord has need of it.” 35 And they brought it to Jesus. And after they had thrown their clothes on the colt, they put Jesus on it.

36 And as he was making his way, they kept spreading their clothes on the road. 37 And as he approached the descent down the Mount of Olives, the entire multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully in a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace be in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40 And replying he said to them, “I say to you, if these keep silent, the stones will cry out.”

## Notes

**19:28 when he had thus spoken:** Luke, like the other Synoptists, does not record the details of Jesus’ Sabbath stay in Jericho at Zacchaeus’ home (see the Note on 19:5; the Analysis on 19:1–10). Hence, he collapses Jesus’ time in Jericho to the interaction with Zacchaeus and the utterance of the prior parable (see 19:1–27).

**he went before:** Plainly, Jesus takes the lead in climbing up the road,<sup>80</sup> as the Greek adverb *emprosthen* (“ahead” or “in front of”) illustrates.<sup>81</sup> Here is the last section of his long journey (see Mark 10:32, 46). Implicitly, he is still in the lead when he sends the two disciples to Bethphage to find the young colt (see 19:29–30). These scenes are consistent with his taking charge of matters throughout his ministry. The picture of Jesus taking the lead also

80. Morris, *Luke*, 303; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 160.

81. BAGD, 256; Marshall, *Luke*, 711.



conveys the sense that he is hastening toward the city where he will suffer and die rather than hanging back as if reluctant. This detail may be one of the most important to observe in trying to grasp his mental and emotional state as he faces his future suffering. We contrast this to his earlier statement which seems to show distress on his part (see the Note on 12:50). In a different vein, this verse may show that Luke is not acquainted with the long, arduous ascent from Jericho because he quotes Jesus reciting a lengthy parable while in the town before beginning the journey (see 19:11–27).

***ascending up to Jerusalem:*** Although Luke is describing the ascent of Jesus and the crowd from Jericho (825 feet below sea level) to Jerusalem (more than 2400 feet above sea level), we wonder whether his language also points to the symbolic ascent to the holy place, to the temple (see the Note on 2:4). If so, then Jesus' journey—the ascent, the ride on a donkey as a king into the city, and his arrival in the temple—bears significance beyond itself. On one level, as a prophet he is not to perish away from Jerusalem (see 13:33). But he is more than a prophet (see 11:31–32), though the plain sense of his declaration in chapter 13 shows the light that is guiding him. That light will bring Jesus to Jerusalem for the last time as a deliverer. To be sure, he is a deliverer from death and sin because he comes to the temple as the final sacrifice, this time as a sacrifice for death and sin (see Heb. 9:13–15, 28; 10:1–14). But he will also offer deliverance to those who will listen both to his prophecies about the eventual fall of the city (see 13:34–35; 19:41–44; 21:6, 20–24; JST 21:19–24) and to his stern warning to all of us about not being deceived (see 21:8). In both cases, hearers will escape the fate of Jerusalem and, being forewarned, escape the traps set by deceivers. Perhaps importantly, even though he comes as deliverer, he will not deliver the temple from its physical destruction but he will cleanse it so that it becomes more holy, at least in the days leading up to his death, before the doors of the temple are symbolically yet effectively shut against his followers because we hear no more about Christian worship in the temple (see Acts 21:30).<sup>82</sup>

***Jerusalem:*** The capital city has been the goal of Jesus at least since the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration (see 9:31, 51; 12:50; 13:33; JST 13:34). Now Jerusalem looms ahead of him, full of both promise and menace.

**19:29 come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany:** Luke mirrors Mark's notation of geography (see Mark 11:1). Evidently, the mention of both towns points to the spot where the road forks, one path leading south to Bethany and the other continuing westward and upward toward Bethphage, which

---

82. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 396.

may lie near the southernmost crest of the Mount of Olives.<sup>83</sup> At some point before he and the traveling company arrive at Bethphage, they will undergo purification by bathing in ritual baths that are prepared for arriving pilgrims so that they enter the city ritually clean (see the Notes on 2:42; 18:35; 23:26).<sup>84</sup>

**the mount:** At the crest of the Mount of Olives, Jesus will see the city below him. This mount divides the arable land from the desert because it forms a rain shadow, separating the wet and verdant from the dry and desolate.<sup>85</sup>

**he sent two of his disciples:** Why does he send someone ahead? Surely, Jesus is himself not far behind when the two secure the donkey and then “brought him to Jesus” (19:35). He certainly can find the donkey on his own, without much delay. So why send them? Has Jesus made a prior arrangement? Nothing in the accounts suggests this possibility. It seems that, as elsewhere, Jesus exposes his close followers to experiences that make them witnesses of his divinity, finding “even as he had said unto them” (19:32). In this case, they learn of Jesus’ ability to see the unseen, effectively “not [to] judge after the sight of his eyes” (Isa. 11:3; compare John 1:47–50).

**19:30 the village:** Traditionally, this village is identified as Bethphage. But it may be Bethany or another tiny enclave near the top of the Mount of Olives.<sup>86</sup>

**a colt tied, . . . whereon . . . never man sat:** The series of miracles in the vicinity of Jerusalem, beginning with Jesus’ knowledge of the waiting donkey, continues with Jesus riding an animal that has never been ridden. The prophet Zechariah foresees this event and prophesies that it will be fulfilled by Israel’s coming King (see Zech. 9:9). The Septuagint reading of this passage specifically notes that the donkey will be “young” (Greek *neos*).<sup>87</sup> The fact that the animal is young indicates that Jesus’ weight does not overwhelm the donkey’s strength so that it cannot negotiate the steep descent down the west slope of the Mount of Olives. Incidentally, the echoes of this experience in Genesis 49:10–11 hint at Jesus’ Davidic royalty.<sup>88</sup>

---

83. John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It: Archaeology as Evidence* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 112–16, illustrations 84, 89; Larry J. Perkins, “Bethany,” in *ABD*, 1:702–3; Scott T. Carroll, “Bethphage,” in *ABD*, 1:715.

84. *Mishnah Yoma* 3:3; Richman, *Holy Temple of Jerusalem*, 71; on the need for such baths before Passover, see Hayes, “Purity and Impurity, Ritual,” 16:748, 752–53.

85. Ogden and Chadwick, *Holy Land*, 19–21; Rasmussen, *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible*, 18–19.

86. Green, *Luke*, 684.

87. BAGD, 537–38; Green, *Luke*, 684–85.

88. Green, *Luke*, 684.

**bring him hither:** The text preserves only the verb; the KJV translators supply the other two words—italicized in the verse—to complete the sense. The Joseph Smith Translation changes this expression to “bring him to me,” personalizing Jesus’ request and recognizing the colt as male (JST 19:29).

**19:31 the Lord:** Significantly, we find this christological title in Jesus’ mouth and He applies it to himself, thus identifying himself with Jehovah (see the Notes on 18:41 and 19:16).

**need:** What is Jesus’ need in this situation? Is it simply to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9? Luke does not quote this passage, though it is not far from his narrative (see Matt. 21:5; John 12:15). It seems that Jesus’ need grows out of the prophetic necessity to demonstrate that he comes in triumphant humility, arriving as Zechariah prophesies (see 19:34). After all, he is approaching the city of destiny.

**19:32 they that were sent:** The verb (Greek *apostellō*) is the same that underlies the noun “apostle” (see the Note on 6:13) and points to an official delegation, adding weight to the disciples’ mission as forerunners of his entry into Jerusalem.<sup>89</sup>

**found even as he had said:** Luke plainly intends to underline brightly the prophetic quality of Jesus’ instructions. One may suggest that Jesus makes arrangements beforehand,<sup>90</sup> but such a suggestion flies in the face of Luke’s point (see the Notes on 5:22 and 11:17).<sup>91</sup> With this statement, Luke only alludes to Zechariah’s prophecy (see Zech. 9:9)—he does not quote it as John does (see John 12:15)—and hence enhances the emphasis on Jesus’ prophetic powers (see 22:13).

**19:33 as they were loosing the colt:** Luke stresses the exact obedience of the disciples, even if their actions may appear a bit high-handed in taking the colt without asking. However, if the keepers are operating a riding or transportation business,<sup>92</sup> because the ascent and descent along the western slope of the mount is very steep, the actions of the disciples may not seem unusual except for the fact that the young animal is unbroken (see 19:30).

**the owners:** The Greek term *kyrios* here means simply “the masters” and bears no tie to Jehovah (see the Note on 19:16). In fact, the masculine plural may point to both a man and a woman who own the animal or, perhaps because of poverty, to two owners who share the animal.<sup>93</sup>

89. BAGD, 98; TDNT, 1:398, 400, 404; TDOT, 15:53–54, 61; TLNT, 1:186–89.

90. Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 205; Marshall, *Luke*, 713.

91. Green, *Luke*, 685.

92. Marshall, *Luke*, 713.

93. BAGD, 459; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1250; Morris, *Luke*, 304.

**19:34 *The Lord hath need of him:*** This expression, repeating the instructions of 19:31, leads some commentators to conclude that Jesus arranges for the colt in advance, or that he is well known in the village,<sup>94</sup> because it serves as a password of sorts. With a different tone, Jesus' claim to the colt, though temporary, supplants the owners' title and thereby points to his royalty, a dimension that receives emphasis in this set of scenes.<sup>95</sup>

**19:35 *cast their garments upon the colt:*** Some agree that the garments serve as a saddle of sorts,<sup>96</sup> but that does not make compelling sense in Jesus' case because, with skill, youths still ride donkeys bareback in the Middle East. And he knows how to ride bareback, as this story shows. Instead, the emphasis should be on the respectful nature of this act.<sup>97</sup> Notably, Jesus' bodily weight is light enough that the colt can carry him.

***they set Jesus thereon:*** This is one of the few instances in scripture wherein Jesus accepts assistance from others—Matthew and Mark do not preserve this detail. In this case, it consists of physical aid, others helping him to climb on, though he certainly does not need the help. The aid recalls the assistance given to Solomon at his coronation, thus strengthening the scene's ties to royalty (see 1 Kgs. 1:33). This human response is to be contrasted with the response that nature might give (see 19:40).

**19:36 *they spread their clothes:*** This action heralds the coming king (see 2 Kgs. 9:13). Luke writes the Greek imperfect tense for the verb *hypostrōnnuō*, indicating movement as well as continual and repeated action.<sup>98</sup> He does not report that the crowd takes up branches to herald the arriving king, as the other Gospels do (see Matt. 21:8; Mark 11:8; John 12:13). Such an act, recorded elsewhere, will recall the Feast of Tabernacles as does the quotation from Psalm 118:26 in 19:38, although branches do come to mark other festivals (see Lev. 23:40).<sup>99</sup>

**19:37 *when he was come nigh:*** At last, Jesus' long journey is ending. From the crest of the Mount of Olives, the city comes into full view, now backlit by the afternoon sunlight from the west, and lying as it were at the

---

94. Marshall, *Luke*, 713–14.

95. Green, *Luke*, 685.

96. Marshall, *Luke*, 714; Stein, *Luke*, 479.

97. Marshall, *Luke*, 714.

98. BAGD, 855; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §§327, 325; Johnson, *Luke*, 296–97.

99. Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 584; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, vol. 3B of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2040–43.

pilgrims' feet. Especially the towering temple of white marble draws the gaze of all.<sup>100</sup>

***at the descent . . . the whole multitude . . . began to rejoice:*** It is in this general area that, days later, Jesus will deliver his private sermon to his Apostles about the fate of Jerusalem and the end of the world. We note the contrast between the rejoicing on this occasion and the somber tones a few days later that will characterize Jesus' discussion about the terrors facing the city (see Luke 21:5–36; Matt. 24–25; Mark 13; JS–M 1:2–55; D&C 45:16–59). Yet the rejoicing will win out. Why? Because Jesus' prophecies about the city and the end of days will carry an assurance to believers that God is in charge of such events; and because the purpose for Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem is to bring about a merciful deliverance. The same contrast exists between the king who arrives this day in "peace" (19:38) and the armies that will surround the city, stealing away the city's peace (see 19:42–44; 21:20).

***the whole multitude of the disciples:*** We know that huge crowds gather to Jerusalem for the Passover each year.<sup>101</sup> Luke identifies the majority of those who are traveling with Jesus as disciples, some newly acquired from among the visitors in Jericho who join the procession to Jerusalem (see the Notes on 19:5; 19:11; the Analysis on 19:1–10). In the capital city, authorities will not be so welcoming.

***the disciples began to . . . praise God with a loud voice:*** One obvious reason that the disciples wait to shout their praises until this moment, when they and Jesus reach "the descent of the mount of Olives," is because of the steep climb. Followers are out of breath during the climb to Bethphage. After reaching the crest of the mount, and catching their breath, they have enough wind to cry out with loud voices. This detail, although preserving the recollection of eyewitnesses, may also rest on Luke's own memory of what is required to climb the path to Bethphage and then further up the hill (see the Introduction V.C).

***all the mighty works that they had seen:*** Those who have been traveling in Jesus' entourage for a long time are witnesses to many "mighty works" of his ministry (Greek *dynamis*).<sup>102</sup> Remarkably, a few have seen almost all of them (see Acts 1:21–22).

---

100. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.5.1–6 (§§184–226); Josephus, *A.J.* 15.11.3 (§§391–402); *Mishna Middoth* 1:1–5:4; Edersheim, *Temple*, 28–31; Marshall, *Luke*, 759.

101. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.9.3–4 (§§420–25); Baruch M. Bokser, "Unleavened Bread and Passover," in *ABD*, 6:762–63; Richman, *Holy Temple of Jerusalem*, 71.

102. BAGD, 207; *TDNT*, 2:300–2.

**19:38 *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord:*** This tantalizing line appears in Psalm 118:26, which psalm links to the Feast of Tabernacles, not Passover.<sup>103</sup> The adoring multitude substitutes the term “the King” for “he” in the line, an expression that both reveals their state of mind about Jesus and, unintentionally, reemphasizes the theme of royalty flowing through these verses. In its turn, the verb “cometh” (Greek *erchomai*) unmistakably points to the “coming one” of the Baptist’s prophecy (see 3:16 and the Note thereon; 13:35; 21:27; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Acts 13:25; Mal. 3:1; Mosiah 3:9; D&C 133:2, 10, 17, 19, 66; the Notes on 12:40; 20:16; 21:8, 27; the Analysis below and on 3:7–20; 22:39–46). According to Psalm 24:7–10, “the King of glory” will “come” to his temple when his people are worthy to receive him; the Joseph Smith Translation adds that this king “shall redeem his people, and establish them in righteousness” (JST Ps. 24:7–10).<sup>104</sup>

***peace . . . glory . . . highest:*** The focus of the praise rises up and up to the celestial sphere, soaring above the terrestrial. By recording this praise, Luke seems to be saying that some in the crowd understand Jesus’ ultimate mission—he is not to be an earthly king. Accordingly, Luke omits any reference to David, who appears in the other reports of this scene (see Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10). For Luke, Jesus’ family connection to David already receives ample voice in the shrill, relentless cry of the blind man near Jericho (see 18:38; also 1:27, 32).

**19:39 *some of the Pharisees:*** Within the revering crowd stand Pharisees who apparently have just walked up from Jericho. These may be of the friendly type (see 7:36; 11:37; 13:31; 14:1), although their plea for Jesus to restrain exuberant followers falls on deaf ears.<sup>105</sup>

**19:40 *I tell you:*** On this expression as a marker for an authoritative declaration, see the Notes on 4:24; 6:27; 19:26. The Joseph Smith Translation omits these words (see JST 19:39).

***the stones would immediately cry out:*** At least two ways of thinking about this cry of inanimate stones present themselves. Either the stones cry out in sweet adoration of their king—assuming that the disciples withhold their praise—or they cry out accusingly against the silent disciples

---

103. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2043.

104. TDNT, 2:666–69; David A. LeFevre, “‘Give Me Right Word, O Lord’: The JST Changes in the Psalms,” in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. David R. Seely, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Matthew J. Grey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 349–66.

105. Marshall, *Luke*, 716.

(see the Note on 4:34).<sup>106</sup> A further aspect has to do with the continuity of Jesus' miraculous powers outside the human realm (see 5:4; 8:22–25; Jacob 4:9). Just before this moment, he mounts a young, untamed donkey, demonstrating his influence over the world of animals (see Mark 1:13). Now, the words from his lips declare that the so-called inanimate sphere knows of his presence and will declare its praise if humans withhold theirs (see the Notes on 8:24–25; also Isa. 48:13; D&C 128:23). Incidentally, no adverb “immediately” appears in the text.

## Analysis

The Savior's last statement presents the key, which he now firmly wraps in his fingers. Not only does he arrive in the city as its king but, infinitely more, he comes as the absolute lord of nature: “if these [disciples] should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (19:40; also D&C 128:23). The astonishing breadth and length of his realm, carved out during past months by stunning miracles and riveting teaching (see the Analysis on 4:38–39; 5:1–11; and 5:17–26), now come sharply into view: the one who sits astride a young donkey rides into the city under a canopy of joyful song that announces his kingship; that celebrates his powers over nature; that binds him to the holy city; that hymns the chords of justice in Zechariah's prophecy, “he is just . . . and riding upon an ass” (Zech. 9:9); that lifts his people's hopes as God now speaks “comfortably to Jerusalem” and pardons “her iniquity” (Isa. 40:2); and that hails the “coming one” of prophecy: “Blessed be he that cometh” (Ps. 118:26) and “thy King cometh unto thee” (Zech. 9:9; also Mal. 3:1).

The reemphasis on the “coming one” of the Baptist's prophecy (see 3:16) and of Jesus' words on the fate of Jerusalem (see 13:35) draws in the frightful specter of judgment. It is both the disciples' evident singing of Psalm 118:26, a passage associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, and its close link to Jesus' dire words about the looming fate of Jerusalem (see 19:38, 42–44), that underscore in dark hues this sense of warning. But the “coming one” does not reach the city simply to judge, “to send fire on the earth” (12:49), and to bear witness that its “peace” will soon depart (see 19:41–44). He also comes to “destroy” the devil's kingdom (4:34), to “preach the kingdom of God” (4:43; see 4:18), to call “sinners to repentance” (5:32), to befriend the outcasts of society (see 7:33–34), to force choices that will draw people

---

106. *TDNT*, 4:270.

into hard, life-changing decisions (see 12:51–53), “to seek and to save that which was lost” (19:10; also 9:56), and to offer salvation through his death, as the hymn following the Last Supper promises (see Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; the Analysis on 22:14–20).<sup>107</sup> Thus, the expression “the King that cometh” recalls all of these functions of the “coming one.”

Almost more than any other recorded incident in the Gospels, save for events that begin with the Last Supper, the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem blows in a windstorm of topographical detail,<sup>108</sup> turning us to face Jesus’ every movement as he sends the two disciples forward to fetch the colt, as they interact with the colt’s owners in the village, as they bring the colt to him and assist him to mount, as the crowd continues the ascent with him to the crest of the mount, and as the throng bursts into song and praise. Plainly, the sequence of a simple half hour packs itself, almost minute by minute, into a few verses, ringing the whole with a bright line that underscores the importance of this moment—the king finally approaches; he comes earnestly and fearlessly; he arrives in humility, transported on a donkey; he allows his movements to be trumpeted in the adoring songs of his followers. His time has come.

As a steady drumbeat, Jesus repeatedly draws the attention of his disciples to this destined time. It is his time. A few months into his ministry, after feeding the five thousand, he informs the disciples that the “Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day” (9:22). Within days, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the three chief Apostles overhear the Savior’s discussion with Moses and Elijah about “his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,” giving geographical place to Jesus’ initial prophecy about his death (9:31). Following the descent of Jesus and the three from the mount, he says to his disciples, almost as a point of emphasis, “the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men” (9:44). Then, after a passage of time, he turns toward Jerusalem: “when the time was come that he [Jesus] should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51). Do the disciples know that he is going to Jerusalem? Of course. And a few among the Twelve, from repeated experiences, know that he faces death there. Finally, as Jesus approaches Jericho and the last leg of the journey to the city, he takes the Twelve aside and utters the ominous words “we go up to Jerusalem, and . . . the Son of man . . . shall be delivered unto

---

107. *TDNT*, 2:668–69.

108. Green, *Luke*, 683.



the Gentiles, and . . . they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again” (18:31–33). Here, in the city that he moves toward, all of the prophecies about his suffering, death, and resurrection will come to pass; here, he meets a destiny that is set out for him “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; Moses 7:47).

Not surprisingly, Jesus’ approach to Jerusalem begins with a miracle: he rides an unbroken donkey up over the crest of the Mount of Olives and down the steep slope into the Kidron Valley, along a trail that would be extremely difficult even for a seasoned mount. He and the donkey arrive at the city walls after another climb to a gate that leads into the temple grounds. To be sure, most in the huge, accompanying multitude do not pay attention to what has happened. But for the two disciples who fetch the colt, and for the owners, the miracle stands in plain sight. For those who have eyes to see, they “have seen [the Lord’s] salvation” (2:30; also 10:23–24; 19:42).

Turning to another matter, Luke does not write of Jesus’ Sabbath stay in Jericho at the home of Zacchaeus, though his source carries a strong hint when Jesus says to the publican, “To day I must abide at thy house” (19:5). But neither do the other Gospel writers notice this brief visit. Instead, all bind Jesus’ trip through the town directly to his ascent to Jerusalem, as if one immediately follows the other (see Matt. 20:29–21:1; Mark 10:46–11:1). Luke alone inserts the parable of the pounds (see 19:11–27). But a reader still comes away with the sense that Jesus’ stroll through Jericho is interrupted briefly by the exchange with Zacchaeus and the recitation of the parable before he begins the ascent to the capital city. This set of observations opens the question: How much does Luke follow Mark’s report? The short response is that, except for the riding of the donkey and the singing of the throng, little else matches.

In a word, it appears that Luke’s report stands separately from Mark’s.<sup>109</sup> The differences outweigh the similarities: only Mark records that Jesus instructs the two disciples whom he sends for the colt to promise that Jesus will “straightway . . . send him” back (Mark 11:3); Luke alone, in concert with his emphasis on Jesus’ prophetic powers, writes that the two disciples “found even as [Jesus] had said unto them” (19:32); singularly, Luke notices that those who challenge the two disciples are “the owners” (19:33); by himself Luke reports that disciples assist Jesus to seat himself on the colt (see 19:35); only Mark portrays that “others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way” in front of the donkey (Mark 11:8);

---

109. Marshall, *Luke*, 709, 714.

Luke alone fills in the picture that one reason for singing and shouting is because of “all the mighty works that [followers] had seen” (19:37); by himself Mark introduces the praise for “the kingdom of our Father David” (Mark 11:10); and only he repeats the Hebrew expression “Hosanna” (Mark 11:9, 10), a term unfamiliar to Luke’s gentile audience. Moreover, as an additional piece, Luke alone rehearses the scene of Jesus weeping over the city when it at last rises into view (see 19:41–44).

## JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM (19:41–44)

### King James Translation

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

### New Rendition

41 And as he drew near, when he saw the city he wept over it, 42 saying, “If you—even you—knew on this day the things that concern peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 Because the days will come upon you, and your enemies will throw palisades against you, and surround you, and press upon you from every side. 44 And they will dash to the ground you and your children within you, and they will not leave stone upon stone within you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

### Notes

**19:41 when he was come near:** The Greek verb *engizō* often bears the meaning of approaching God or of facing a crucial moment. In Jesus’ case, he arrives at the predetermined place for his final activities (see the Note on 10:9).<sup>110</sup>

**he beheld the city, and wept:** Even today, the climb from the east side of the Mount of Olives ends at the top with a breathtaking view of the city. Jerusalem, Jesus’ final destination, now lies before him (see 9:31, 51; 13:33;

110. *TDNT*, 2:330–32.

18:31–33). Only two other recorded times during his earthly ministry does Jesus weep, on his way to Jerusalem (see JST 13:34) and at the death of Lazarus (see John 11:35). It is also written that he weeps after his resurrection (see 3 Ne. 17:21, 22).

**19:42 *thou . . . even thou:*** Jesus apparently addresses Jerusalem by repeating the singular pronoun and its matching verbs, evidently covering the city itself with a pall of guilt (see also 19:43–44). It is also possible to understand his words as directed toward each individual within the city, appealing to every person to heed his warning. This observation receives support when Jesus utters “keep thee in” (19:43), alluding to the siege walls that the Romans will erect around Jerusalem almost four decades later (see 19:43; 21:20).<sup>111</sup> The city will not be kept in but its citizens will.

***thy day:*** This future moment will be crucial in nature, as the term “day” clearly hints (see 5:35; 17:30; 19:43; 21:6; 23:29; D&C 112:24; 128:24; the Notes on 17:22, 26; 19:43).<sup>112</sup>

***thy peace:*** This expression (likely Hebrew *shalom*) possibly forms a play on the second part of the name Jerusalem, elsewhere called the city of peace (see Heb. 7:2).<sup>113</sup> On one hand, if Jerusalemites respond favorably to the true king of Israel, their action will deflect the very severe difficulties that lie ahead (see 19:43–44), which, Jesus declares on another occasion, are to be the worst ever visited on the inhabitants of the city (see JS–M 1:18). On the other hand, the peace that Jesus holds up to view may well include a person’s inner peace with God.<sup>114</sup> Some ancient manuscripts omit the pronoun “thy” or “your” while others preserve it.<sup>115</sup>

**19:43 *the days shall come:*** This ominous expression appears elsewhere in scripture (see 5:35; 21:6; 23:29; Isa. 39:6; Jer. 7:32; Amos 4:2; 8:11; the Notes on 17:22, 26; 19:42).<sup>116</sup>

***thine enemies:*** Jesus likely has in mind the Roman armies that will surround Jerusalem and later bring it to its knees in AD 70. These “enemies” are the subjects of all the verbs in this verse and the next.

***keep thee in on every side:*** This expression probably alludes to the Roman siege walls that will pin Jerusalemites within their city and also serve as a barrier to those who seek to escape through the tunnels or mines,

111. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.11.4 (§466); 5.12.2 (§508).

112. *TDNT*, 2:946; *TDOT*, 6:25, 30.

113. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1256–57; Philip J. King, “Jerusalem,” in *ABD*, 3:751.

114. Morris, *Luke*, 306.

115. Marshall, *Luke*, 718.

116. Also Jer. 9:25; 19:6; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52; D&C 52:11; 61:15.

recently excavated by archaeologists<sup>117</sup> (see the Note on 19:42). Jesus simply repaints a desperate situation envisioned by earlier prophets (see Isa. 29:3; Jer. 6:6–21; Ezek. 4:1–3).

**19:44 lay thee even with the ground:** Continuing his address to Jerusalem, Jesus warns ominously that much of the city will be flattened when the Romans burn it in September of AD 70 because the supporting timbers will collapse, bringing the charred roofs and walls of homes and other buildings to the ground.<sup>118</sup>

**thy children:** Although Jesus may be referring to the city’s inhabitants (see 13:34; Joel 2:23; Zech. 9:13; the Notes on 21:20; 23:28),<sup>119</sup> we know that children will suffer immensely during the long siege of the city, even falling victim to rapacious parents who turn to cannibalism.<sup>120</sup>

**one stone upon another:** Jesus’ prediction of the destruction of the temple that leaves not one stone standing atop another appears elsewhere (see 21:6; D&C 45:20). In contrast, this prophecy has to do with the entire city that the Romans will deform after capturing Jerusalem so that future visitors will not believe that the city “had ever been inhabited.”<sup>121</sup>

**the time:** The Greek term *kairos*, translated here as “time,” usually has to do with a critical moment in one’s response to God;<sup>122</sup> here the word adds fuel to the alarming character of Jesus’ words (see 21:8; the Notes on 8:13 and 12:56).

**thy visitation:** The sense of the noun (Greek *episkopē*) and its associated verb splits between pleasant (see 1:78; 7:16; 1 Pet. 2:12) and unpleasant visits, usually from God (see Isa. 10:3; 24:22; 29:6; Jer. 6:15; 10:15). In Jesus’ case, he approaches his visit to the city under the promising banner of praise (see 19:38) but is soon rejected by officials of Jerusalem (see 19:47; 20:1, 19–20; 22:2, 52–53, 66; 23:23, 35).<sup>123</sup>

---

117. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.2.7 (§§150–51, 156), 6.7.3 (§§370–71), 6.8.4–5 (§§392, 402), 6.9.4 (§§428–29, 433).

118. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.8.5 (§§404–7), 6.9.4 (§434); Benjamin Mazar, “Herodian Jerusalem in Light of the Excavations South and South-West of the Temple Mount,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 28 (1978): 230–37.

119. *TDNT*, 5:639; Marshall, *Luke*, 719.

120. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.3.4 (§§201–13); compare 5.10.3 (§430) and 5.12.3 (§§512–13).

121. Josephus, *B.J.* 7.1.1 (§§1–4); also 6.9.4 (§434); Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1259.

122. *TDNT*, 3:455–56, 458–61.

123. BAGD, 299; *TDNT*, 2:605–8.

## Analysis

At last, the Savior comes face to face with his last week of life, gazing down on the capital city while perched on a donkey, ready to descend to its gates. He already knows that here, in Jerusalem, he will thrash sellers in the temple; here he will teach his last gospel lessons; here he will greet throngs of disciples and admirers; here he will gather his beloved Apostles for a last meal together; here he will suffer and bleed in one of the city's olive orchards; here he will be accosted by an arresting band led by one of the Twelve; here he will face an angry group from the Sanhedrin that will seek grounds to execute him; here he will be judged guiltless three times by the Roman procurator who thereafter will bow to pressure to execute him; here he will die; here he will rise from the dead on "the third day" (18:33).

Luke alone preserves these verses that shelter within them the inner conflict that rages in Jesus' bosom—he desperately seeks to bring peace and salvation to his people but, painfully, through tears, knows that their representatives already conspire against him.<sup>124</sup> Now, at the mount's crest, sitting astride a young donkey, he painfully mourns that the people whom he will meet in coming days do not know "the things which belong unto [their] peace," not only a peace of heart but also a peace free of conflict with their Roman overlords (19:42).<sup>125</sup> Both kinds of peace will be lost within a generation. Visible to history and archaeology, Jerusalem's "enemies shall cast a trench about [it], and compass [it] round, and keep [it] in on every side," a plain allusion to the two surrounding walls that the Roman general Titus will order to be constructed around the city (19:43). What is horribly worse, after Titus's troops breach the temple walls and storm the edifice and then capture the city, they will "lay thee [Jerusalem] even with the ground" (19:44).<sup>126</sup> In the less visible realm, one line of Jesus' words captures the rupture of people's peace of heart: the soldiers shall also lay "thy children within thee" even "with the ground" (19:44). The city's citizens, especially the children, will suffer "great tribulation . . . such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom" (JS-M 1:18).

As we see in the Notes above, the verb "come near" (19:41) and the nouns "day" and "time" (19:42–44) all frame citizens' opportunities, at this critical and promising moment, to answer correctly God's call to his kingdom as

---

124. Brown, "Arrest," 166–75, 178–85.

125. Morris, *Luke*, 306–7.

126. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.9.4 (§434).

his Son rides to the temple and makes himself available during the coming week. Painfully, and maliciously by week’s end, the framework of promise will be bent and gnarled to show a wave-like landscape of missed opportunities and wrong decisions, of clear choices and bungled judgments.

Some commentators charge that Luke writes much of this scene with the benefit of hindsight; they effectively dismiss all or parts of Jesus’ words as his own and attribute them to Luke or his source. Why? Because Luke knows the outcome of the Jewish war against the Romans (AD 66–70) before writing his Gospel. But an impressive array of sayings about the destruction of the city lies in the Gospel of Mark before the city is leveled, underscoring the strong tradition that Jesus really does prophesy about those dim days to come (see Mark 13:2, 19–20; also Matt. 24:2, 21–22; John 2:19–20; D&C 45:18–21; JS–M 1:3, 12–20).<sup>127</sup> In fact, Jesus’ predictions are so clear that Christians abandon the city and its environs for safety, escaping the horrors of war that visit Jerusalem, long before Luke and the other Gospel writers put pen to paper (see Matt. 24:21–22; Mark 13:14–16).<sup>128</sup>

## IN THE TEMPLE (19:45–48)

(Compare Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–19; John 2:13–17)

### King James Translation

45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, 48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

### New Rendition

45 And after he had gone into the temple, he began to throw out those who were buying and selling, 46 saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of brigands.”

47 And he was teaching every day in the temple. But the chief priests and scribes sought to kill him, as did the chiefs of the people. 48 And they did not find what they might do, for all the people hung on him as they listened.

127. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1254–55.

128. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5.3; Schürer, *History*, 2:145–48; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, map 256.

## Notes

**19:45 *went into the temple*:** Jesus' entry signals the return of the Divine to God's house. Years earlier, of course, Zacharias receives a divine manifestation in the sanctuary (see 1:11), an appearance that starts the series of events that brings Jesus to this moment. There is a difference. Zacharias enters the sanctuary itself, as the Greek text indicates (see the Note on 1:9). Jesus goes into the outer area which surrounds the sanctuary (Greek *hieron*).<sup>129</sup> He does not go into the sanctuary until, in a spiritual sense, he penetrates the torn veil (see 23:45). The question remains, Through which gate do Jesus and his followers enter? We do not know. For Luke, it seems important to stress that Jesus enters the temple on this occasion, not the city. Because in Herod's renovation of the temple, he "erected . . . an unknown number [of gates] in the north" of the temple grounds, Jesus and the crowd probably enter one of these, approaching the north wall of the temple area about where Lions' Gate now opens (not there in Jesus' day).<sup>130</sup> Later Jewish tradition holds that a gate leads from the east directly into the temple area from the Mount of Olives, the Shushan Gate. But this tradition is insecure and not supported by archaeology.<sup>131</sup> For the same reason, any sketch that pictures the "Beautiful Gate" as an exterior gate on the east of the temple grounds is questionable.<sup>132</sup>

***began to cast out them that sold*:** It is Mark who captures the tremendous din that Jesus' actions create when he writes that "the scribes and chief priests heard it" (Mark 11:18). Modern scripture repeats the expression "to overthrow the moneychangers" (D&C 117:16), closely resembling the parallel accounts (see Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15). As all reports agree, merchants whose businesses help to meet the worship needs of pilgrims by supplying sacrificial animals and produce are allowed, presumably by the priests, to bring their kiosks and stalls within the temple grounds; in earlier days too, such businesses stand inside, setting a precedent (see Zech. 14:21).<sup>133</sup> In plain sight stands another miracle—the noninterference of the Roman soldiers who, at the times of festivals, stand atop the portico that

129. BAGD, 373; *TDNT*, 3:232–33, 235.

130. Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, 42.

131. *Mishnah Middoth* 1:3; Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, 39 (map), 42; Ederheim, *Temple*, 36–37.

132. Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, 55 (map); changed in Dan Bahat, "Jerusalem," in Meyers, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, 3:231 (map).

133. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 46–49; Marshall, *Luke*, 720.

runs around the entire temple complex, allowing them to see any sort of disturbance in the temple grounds.<sup>134</sup> Not incidentally, the garrison of soldiers that is stationed in Jerusalem is made up of auxiliary troops, primarily of hated Samaritans, a seeming calculation by the Romans to remind Jewish citizens of their suppressed status.<sup>135</sup>

**them that sold:** Luke’s description of those whom Jesus confronts on the temple grounds lacks the detail of other reports: “moneychangers” and dove sellers (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15), laborers carrying burdens and others who make the temple a shortcut (see Mark 11:16)<sup>136</sup> and, possibly, “those that sold oxen and sheep” (John 2:14). This observation naturally raises the question about how much he depends on the other accounts.

**therein, and them that bought:** This set of observations, preserved in the King James text, appears in some manuscripts but is suspect because it is missing in most of the reliable manuscripts.<sup>137</sup>

**19:46 My house is the house of prayer:** The quotation rests on Isaiah 56:7, a verse that stands within a series of temple promises that are available specifically to non-Israelites and to the physically imperfect (see Isa. 56:3–8). The puzzling omission is the line “of all nations,” a natural element to add to a Gospel aimed at a gentile audience (see Mark 11:17; the Notes on 2:31–32). The Joseph Smith Translation reads “a house of prayer,” agreeing with the Septuagint reading (see LXX Isa. 56:7), perhaps recognizing other functioning temples of the era (JST 19:45; see Hel. 3:9, 14; 3 Ne. 11:1). In modern scripture, the temple is characterized as “a house of order, . . . not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8, 18) as well as “a house of prayer” (D&C 88:119; 109:8).<sup>138</sup>

**a den of thieves:** The Greek expression mirrors exactly the language of LXX Jeremiah 7:11. Jeremiah’s verse sits amidst warnings to temple officials and worshipers who merely repeat “The temple of the Lord” when entering, as if this recitation excuses all crimes, and then pursue high-handed and rapacious activities (see Jer. 7:2–20) that oblige God to “cast [them]

---

134. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.12.1 (§224); 5.5.8 (§244); Schürer, *History*, 1:366; Marshall, *Luke*, 720; Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*, illustration on 46–47.

135. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.3.4 (§52), 2.4.2 (§58), 2.4.3 (§63), 2.12.5 (§236); Josephus, *A.J.* 19.9.2 (§365), 20.8.7 (§176); Schürer, *History*, 1:362–65.

136. Edersheim, *Temple*, 63–64.

137. Plummer, *Luke*, 454; Marshall, *Luke*, 721; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1267.

138. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 183–85.



out of my sight” and to allow his “fury . . . [to] be poured out upon this place [the temple]” (Jer. 4:15, 20). Not incidentally, Jeremiah’s words are reflected in Jesus’ warning (see 19:42–44) and in his actions (see 19:45), conferring a prophetic justification on the latter’s words and deeds.

**thieves:** The Greek word *lēstēs* points to persons guilty of major crimes, not mere thievery, including insurrection (see the Notes on 10:30 and 22:52; John 18:40).<sup>139</sup> In Jesus’ words, those who manage temple affairs and pursue their business within its walls, hiding behind the façade of the temple’s walls as if out of sight in a den or cave, carry a staining guilt into the temple that will surely bring God’s judgment.<sup>140</sup>

**19:47 he taught daily in the temple:** Jesus does not step away from the temple, as if avoiding the authorities, after tossing out “them that sold . . . and them that bought” (19:45). Instead, he makes the temple grounds, now purged of illicit practices, the headquarters for his last days in mortality. All of his teachings recorded in the next chapter take place here.

**the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people:** From this point on in the story, groups such as the Pharisees fade from prominence (last noted in 19:39), although the scribes will become linked to the Pharisees, perhaps a few years later.<sup>141</sup> The expression “the chief of the people” must point to the leading men of the city or council who may not be priests (Greek *prōtos*), a meaning that the term carries in the writings of Josephus.<sup>142</sup>

**the chief of the people sought to destroy him:** One suspects that the number of officials who join the conspiracy are only a few dozen at most. There is evidence that Joseph of Arimathea opposes the decision to seek Jesus’ death (see 23:51); he may well represent others. One major point for Luke is that the officials’ decision is already made, although he does not narrate the occasion when they come to agreement.<sup>143</sup> Another point has to do with the evidently quick, agreed-on response of authorities to Jesus’ noisy arrival in town. We get a sense that he and they have met before, on earlier occasions, on earlier turbulent trips to the city, such as those that John chronicles (see John 2:13–21; 5:1–16; 7:10–27; 11:17–18, 45–53; 12:12–13, 19). It seems apparent that this is not Jesus’ first visit to Jerusalem during his ministry, even though Luke and his fellow Synoptists recount only one,

139. *TDNT*, 4:257–58, 260–62.

140. Green, *Luke*, 693–94.

141. Schürer, *History*, 2:329; Brown, “Arrest,” 178–85.

142. Josephus, *A.J.* 4.6.9 (§140); 4.7.5 (§174); 10.10.5 (§213); 11.5.3 (§141); 18.1.1 (§7); etc.; *TDNT*, 6:866.

143. Marshall, *Luke*, 722.

this last one (see the Notes on 10:30, 38; 13:1, 34; 22:9; 23:5, 28, 50; 24:13; the Analysis on 22:7–13).<sup>144</sup>

**19:48 could not find what they might do:** Jesus’ temporary but palpable popularity stands in the way of authorities pursuing public action against him, as the last part of this verse indicates (see also 20:19). Hence, when Judas approaches them with an offer to deliver Jesus into their custody “in the absence of the multitude,” “they were glad” (22:6, 5).

**were very attentive to hear him:** In light of the emphasis on hearing Jesus’ words, a theme that he and Luke strike early and often (see 6:47, 49; 8:8, 12–15, 21; 14:35; 16:29, 31; 21:38; the Notes on 6:27; 8:8; 11:28; the Analysis on 8:4–15), we sense that Jesus’ audiences open their ears to hear day by day. In this context, the Greek verb *ekkremannumi* means “to hang on,” as to hang on every word from Jesus’ lips, a strong, vivid concept.<sup>145</sup> Naturally, we cannot know how many of these hearers will later join themselves to the Christian movement. But Jesus plants seeds that will later bear “fruit an hundredfold,” as he promises (8:8).

## Analysis

The Savior now controls the temple; he now holds Jerusalem in his hand; he now sets the agenda for his message; he now forges his destiny. No one dares to push him from the temple; no one is able to keep him from the city; no one drives him from his message; no one stands between him and the Atonement. In short, Jesus is master. And Luke stitches together this commanding tapestry by following Jesus directly into the temple where he takes charge (see 19:45), not insisting that he ride through part of the city on his way (see Matt. 21:10; Mark 11:11). By itself, Jesus’ direct entry into the sacred precinct elevates him above followers and detractors alike. From this metaphorically elevated place, he will become more direct and forthright in his pronouncements and teaching in an effort to reach people’s souls during his last days (see 20:19 and the Note on 20:16).

According to Luke’s reporting, Jesus returns to Jerusalem for the first time since his visit as a twelve-year-old youth. On that occasion, also a Passover (see 2:41), he spends time “sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions” (JST 2:46). In those days, he is a curiosity, a clever and bright curiosity to be sure, but a curiosity nonetheless. After all, he is from a poor family of Galilee and presents

144. Plummer, *Luke*, 290: “from a short visit to Jerusalem which Lk. does not mention.”

145. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 510; BAGD, 241; *TDNT*, 3:916, 921.

no challenge to temple and civic authorities. But all changes, of course, when he arrives as an adult, even in light of hints that he comes more than once as an adult (see the Notes on 10:30, 38; 13:1, 34; 22:9; 23:5, 28, 50; 24:13; the Analysis on 22:7–13).

That arrival pulls in the language of prophecy: “the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant” (Mal. 3:1). This language, of course, recalls prophecies about the “coming one” (see 13:35; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Acts 13:25; Mal. 3:1; Mosiah 3:9; D&C 133:2, 10, 17, 19, 66; the Notes on 3:16; 13:35; 19:38; 20:16; 21:8, 27; the Analysis on 3:7–20; 19:28–40; 22:39–46). More than this, Jesus’ appearance in the temple underscores his respect for the law of Moses whose apex is the temple, a dimension that appears elsewhere (see 16:16–17).<sup>146</sup> Further, he pulls a celestial presence into this holy place, a presence that the temple, here and now, does not fully possess on its own, as Jesus’ harsh actions remind us (see 19:45). In keeping with the temple’s degraded state, the authorities’ plotting that will take his life continues to ferment on its sacred grounds, seeking to seize him and grind him down (see 19:47; 20:1–2, 19–20; 22:2). But for the moment, during daylight hours, he is in charge. When he is ready, and only when he is ready, he will relinquish control to “the power of darkness” (22:53).

The question stands and discussion continues whether Jesus engages in two cleansing actions at the temple or one. The fourth Gospel reports that, early in his ministry, during a Passover festival, Jesus expels from the temple grounds “those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money” (John 2:14). The three synoptic Gospels narrate a cleansing that occurs only at the end of his ministry, as he begins his last week in Jerusalem. In the view of some, all four accounts go back to a single incident recorded with differing details.<sup>147</sup> For others, Jesus twice drives merchants from the temple, once at the beginning and once at the end of his ministry.<sup>148</sup> When we compare the accounts, particularly that of Mark, the earliest Gospel, and that of John, we are left with the impression that the two incidents are completely different. To be sure, in each case Jesus’ acts galvanize his

---

146. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 243–49.

147. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 315.

148. Plummer, *Luke*, 453; Morris, *Luke*, 308.

conspirators into action against him. But the differences overwhelm the similarities, leading us to see two cleansings, not one.<sup>149</sup>

The last question to face us concerns the relationship between Mark's report and Luke's narrative. In a word, the connections seem rather firm but differences are major. For instance, Luke writes that Jesus goes directly into the temple and creates havoc with merchants, taking control, whereas Mark holds that Jesus first rides into the city and only the next day visits and cleanses the temple (see 19:45; Mark 11:11, 15–16); Mark conserves important details missing in Luke's rehearsal such as Jesus driving out buyers as well as sellers, overturning the tables of moneychangers, and hindering those who walk through the temple grounds as a shortcut (see Mark 11:15–16); both essentially quote Isaiah 56:7—"My house is the house of prayer"—but only Mark adds the phrase "of all nations," a phrase that fits Luke's emphasis on the universal character of Jesus' ministry and is therefore an odd omission (see 19:46; Mark 11:17). In this light, it seems reasonable to conclude that the two reports are independent of one another even though they share a common stock of information about the temple's cleansing. Evidently, Luke is not copying from Mark's record.

---

149. Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 188–91.