

Luke 13:1 ¶ There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Luke 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

This chapter opens continuing in context from the previous chapter which ended talking about accountability and judgment. Some who were present brought up an incident in which Pilate had executed some men from Galilee who were offering sacrifices in the Temple. Although research produced no historical account of this particular incident, I did find several sources referencing a historical account in which Pilate had his soldiers kill a group of Jews who were demonstrating against his use of Temple funds to build an aqueduct. So, the incident related here would be in line with Pilate's treatment of the Jewish people.

Jesus understood that those relating the incident were connecting the fate of the people who were killed with accountability to God and His judgment. He basically said that there was no connection between their sin and what befell them and that those listening to Him would just as surely perish if they did not repent of their sins.

Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Jesus then brought up another incident in which 18 people were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them. He declared that those listening to him were just as vulnerable to suffer a similar fate if they did not repent.

I think the point Jesus is making is that bad things happen to people that are just the result of the actions of sinful men or from events that are out of their control and are a result of living in a fallen world. Those in His audience are just as likely to become victims of such a fate as those who were killed in these two instances. Not everything bad that happens can rightly be determined to be a judgment from God.

Luke 13:6 ¶ He spake also this parable; A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Luke 13:7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

Luke 13:8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

Luke 13:9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

At this point Jesus tells another parable. It tells of a man who had a fig tree planted in his vineyard that would not produce fruit. After three years he finally tells the keeper of the vineyard to cut it down so the ground can be used for something fruitful. The keeper of the vineyard intercedes for the tree and asks the owner to give him one more year to give it some special treatment and see if he can get it to produce. If it still doesn't bear fruit, then cut it down.

I can't help but wonder what the people understood about this parable. I believe they probably knew the Old Testament scriptures better than most in the church today. Surely they recognized a comparison between the fig tree and the Jewish people. In light of the previous verses, did they recognize that Jesus was warning that a lack of national repentance would end up bringing down God's hand of judgment upon them? If they were familiar with the writings of the prophet Isaiah, they should have.

Isaiah 5:1-7 "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

Did they recognize a comparison between Him and the keeper of the vineyard and God the Father as the owner of the vineyard? I think His disciples certainly should have.

Luke 13:10 ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.
Luke 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.
Luke 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.
Luke 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

"And" – Maybe the connection between this account and the previous is the fact that everyone, including this woman, is vulnerable to having "bad" things happen to them. In this situation, however, Jesus is going to intervene on behalf of the woman and heal her.

Luke tells us that Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath and notices a woman who is crippled. It became known (presumably after her healing) that

she had been crippled for 18 years. When Jesus saw her, He spoke to her and told her that she would no longer be crippled. He then placed His hands on her and immediately she was able to stand up straight. Her first reaction—to praise God.

Luke describes the woman's condition as "a spirit of infirmity." I do not think the reference is to demon possession because in other instances of demonic deliverance it is identified as such. Verse 16 does indicate that Satan had bound her, and I think her condition would be comparable to Job's when he suffered from the boils. Satan was allowed to cause the boils, but Job was not demon possessed. It could be that any disease could be rightly referenced as having Satan at its source since he was the one who tempted man to rebel against God and sin. Disease is just one of the consequences of sin's impact on creation.

I don't think Jesus had to touch her to heal her, but I think He was doing everything He could to encourage the people to recognize Him as the Messiah. It was *His* words, *His* touch that was able to make her whole.

Luke 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luke 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Luke 13:17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

As usual, the ruler of the synagogue gets mad because Jesus broke one of their traditions that twisted/corrupted God's command to honor the Sabbath day. Jesus immediately points out the hypocrisy of his anger. He relates how they allow for an owner to provide for the needs of their cattle, but don't allow for the same consideration to be shown to this woman, a daughter of Abraham—a being of far more value than cattle. At least in this instance those who had aligned themselves against Him had the sense to show shame in light of the comparison. The people of the congregation were all excited for the woman and rejoiced in all the good that Jesus did.

Luke 13:18 ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

Luke 13:19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

In light of the response of the ruler of the synagogue and the people, Jesus makes a comparison to a description of the kingdom of God. He compares it to a small mustard seed that when planted grows so large that that the birds come to make nests in it.

This description is of a mustard plant of abnormal growth; it is a lot bigger than normal. Though its beginning is normal, something happens as it is growing that makes it abnormal in size. In the scripture birds are often used to represent evil and/or the work of the enemy, Satan; e.g., the parable of the sower in chapter 4. So what is the kingdom of God? It is descriptive of those who profess to accept God's authority and live accordingly. Problem is—like the Pharisees, many who profess to believe and obey Him are living according to the traditions of men and their own twisted/corrupted versions of His word. They are like the birds; they come to make a home among true believers and cause an evil mutation in the perceived growth of the kingdom.

**Luke 13:20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?
Luke 13:21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.**

Jesus, as He often does, gives another illustration of the same truth. He compares the kingdom of God to how yeast permeates a loaf of bread. Special note is made that the woman hid the fact that she put yeast into the bread. Again, I think the Lord is comparing the actions of the Pharisees to the action of the yeast. They claim to be yielding to God as Lord; they hide their actions under the guise of obedience to God. In reality, they are feeding their own pride and seeking to increase their influence by their "righteous" actions—actions that are based on a corrupted teaching of God's word.

It really is true that "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The same tactics are being used today by those who profess to be Christians, but are really out to promote self and their own agendas by promoting a corrupted teaching of God's word.

Luke 13:22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Luke 13:23 ¶ Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

Luke 13:24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Luke 13:25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Luke 13:26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

Luke 13:27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Luke 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

At this point Luke points out that Jesus is on a mission; He is traveling throughout the cities and villages of Israel, but His destination is Jerusalem.

One of those travelling with Jesus voices his personal observation that few are being saved in the form of a question. He is wondering if his personal observation is accurate. Jesus responds with words of warning and encouragement. He warns that it will take work and struggle to enter the true kingdom of God because the gate is narrow, and many who are seeking entry will not be able to gain entrance.

He illustrates what He is saying by describing a master standing up to close the door to his house then finding that there are people outside begging Him to open the door and let them in. Even though they are addressing him as "Lord," he declares that he doesn't know them. As He is telling the story, Jesus changes the reference from a generic crowd to "you" and the reference to the master to Himself. He is basically declaring Himself to be the One controlling access to the kingdom. He wants them to make a personal application. He declares that "you" will say, we have fellowshiped with You and listened to Your teaching. Jesus is saying, that it takes more than just mingling with my disciples and giving token acknowledgment to my teaching (pointed reference to the Pharisees). When the door has been shut, it will be too late to change your destiny. You will have been identified as workers of sin.

Jesus goes on to point out that they (those in the crowd who are rejecting Him) will respond with tears and anger when they realize that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets are part of the kingdom of God, but "you" are not. This is a pointed reference to their prideful boasts that they are following in the steps of their founding fathers and the prophets, when in reality they are living in pride and rejection of the true teaching of God's word.

I think the main point of this story is that the time for attaining true salvation as part of God's kingdom is limited. The fact that it is described as a struggle is in reference to the lure and temptations of the world and the enemy that cause one to reject Jesus as Lord. The reference to many desiring to gain entrance but not able to get in speaks to man's teaching that there are many ways to attain salvation and gain entrance to the kingdom. Jesus is declaring that He is the only way as declared by His words recorded by John.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Luke 13:29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Luke 13:30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

Now to add insult to injury—Jesus declares that there will be people from all over the world, Gentiles, who will gain entrance to the kingdom of God, even though many Jews won't get in. In fact, some of those considered by men to be of least importance before God will be proven to be men and women of honor before Him, and those considered by men to be more honorable before God will be proven without honor.

Man's opinion of man is given great consideration in the times in which we live. It is God's opinion of man that truly matters. Those who gain the admiration of man today will find that it has no eternal benefit whatsoever. Those who choose to deny themselves and seek God's good opinion through faith and obedience will find that they will benefit from His reward and blessing for eternity.

Luke 13:31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

Luke 13:32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.

Luke 13:33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

For some reason Luke points out that the very same day He gave the previous teaching, Jesus was approached by a "certain" Pharisee warning Him to flee because Herod is going to kill Him. (I can't help but wonder if it was Nicodemus.) Jesus basically tells the man to go and tell the conniving Herod that He doesn't fear him. My paraphrase: Today I am busy casting out devils; tomorrow I will be performing miracles of healing; and the next day, the third, I will be perfected—I will complete My work.

At the same time, Jesus is acknowledging that He will die—but not before His work is completed. He is determined to get to Jerusalem because as a true prophet of God, He will die in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the recognized spiritual center of the nation. Most of the true prophets of God faced their greatest enmity and danger from the spiritual leaders, those who should have been quickest to respond in repentance and obedience. Instead, their response was often to get rid of those who would threaten their positions of power and influence.

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather her brood under her wings*, and ye would not!

Luke 13:35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

As the Lord Jesus declares His future and thinks about the prophets who so faithfully declared His truth, many of whom were killed for their obedience, He is sorrowful. It's like He is lost in His own thoughts and has lost the awareness of those around Him; He is speaking from His heart. I think it is important to

note that He is speaking of how “I” would have gathered you—under “My” protection and deliverance is the inference. He is identifying Himself with God the Father.

In light of the response of the people, however, Israel will be left desolate, the nation and the temple laid waste. Once He completes His work, Jesus will not return to establish His earthly kingdom and deliver His people until they call for Him to return in faith and repentance.

I believe that Zechariah prophesied of this time.

Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”