

'Luke' - Extra Teaching Points #24

Luke 13:1-9 (NASB95)

Luke 13:1-5

*"Now on the same occasion there were some present **who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.** ² And Jesus said to them, **"Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?"** ³ "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." ⁴ "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them **were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?"** ⁵ "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

The report of Romans slaughtering Galileans who were worshiping ([Vs. 1](#)), could have been an attempt to provoke Jesus into some kind of political action.

- Jesus was a Galilean, so people probably thought He would be particularly offended by the Roman abuse.
- No doubt, those who were informing Jesus of this atrocity were hoping that news of this would trigger the revolt they were expecting Jesus to lead.

Q: In [vs. 2 & 4](#), Jesus asks the crowd if these Galileans, and the ones killed when the tower fell in Siloam (which was in Jerusalem), were worse sinners than others. Why might this be?

- In [Luke 12:5](#), Jesus had warned them that God's judgment was coming against Israel like it did in the days of the prophets when God sent Babylon to destroy the city, and threw the carcasses of the rebellious into Gehenna ([see Luke ETP #20 for details](#)).
- Since Jesus is still talking about the coming judgment, it may be that some in the crowd saw this as the judgment against the wicked ones Jesus is warning them about.

Q: Why does Jesus tell them that, if they don't repent, they will die the same way these people did?

- Jesus was making it clear that judgment wasn't just coming against the worst sinners in Israel, but against *all those who don't repent!*
- "You shall likewise perish" is often interpreted as *going to hell*; but "likewise" actually means *in the same way*.
 - Jesus is not saying these people went to hell, and so will you.
 - These people didn't perish by going to hell; they perished at the hands of the Romans.
 - Many Jews were slaughtered by the sword – like the Galileans – when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD, and many more were killed by falling masonry when the walls were breached and the buildings destroyed (like those killed by the Tower in Siloam).
 - Jesus is saying this was going to happen to all those who didn't repent, and no doubt, some in that crowd met that fate in 70AD.

Q: What, specifically, is Jesus warning them they need to repent of?

- Not trusting Him!
 - Jesus was there to seek and save the lost by establishing the Kingdom of God.
 - Jesus was demanding a shift in loyalty and obedience to Him as King.

Luke 13:6-9

*“And He began telling this parable: “A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.”⁷ “And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! **Why does it even use up the ground?’**”⁸ “And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;”⁹ and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.”*

(This parable is only found in Luke. While we aren’t given an explanation of its meaning, it doesn’t seem too difficult to figure out.)

The fig tree is representative of Israel in the days of Christ.

- Israel has not been bearing the fruit God was looking for — *justice* and *righteousness* ([Is 5:1-7](#)).
- Jesus teaches this again when He cursed a fig tree outside Jerusalem ([Mark 11:20-21](#)).

The vineyard owner is representative of God.

- God was not willing to allow Israel to soak up His resources, and not produce fruit.

The vineyard-keeper is representative of Jesus.

- Jesus has been ministering to Israel, and pleads for one more year.

“3 years” could be a reference to the length of Jesus’ ministry, or it could be a reference to God’s patience.

- Fig trees usually produce fruit in 1 to 2 years. If it hasn’t produced fruit in 3 years, it’s not likely it ever will.
- The fact that God has waited this long, speaks to His patience.
- The fact that Jesus pleads for another year to fertilize and try to help Israel produce fruit, speaks to His patient care and support.
- The fact that both God and Jesus agree to one more year, means they were willing to wait twice or three times as long as normal to see the fruit they were waiting for.

“Cutting down the tree” represents clearing the way for a new tree that will bear the fruit God is looking for... (i.e., the Church.)

Q: Although this parable was specifically about Israel, what lessons can we learn about God, Jesus, the Church, and ourselves?

1. God is serious about His fruit! But He is also outrageously patient, and doesn’t give up quickly on His people.
2. Jesus is doing everything possible – digging and fertilizing – to help us be fruitful.
3. THE Church WILL bear God’s fruit.
 - a. Our church may or may not!
 - b. God removed Israel and stopped letting her soak up His soil.
 - c. If our church is unfruitful, like Israel (not producing justice and righteousness), we can expect to be cut down too... and God will get His fruit from someone else.
4. If we, (as individual Christians), are not bearing God’s fruit, God will still be patient, and Jesus will still give us His care and attention; but if we *still* aren’t fruitful... we will be cut down!

Follow Up Assignment

Q: Have you really repented the way Jesus requires?

- We all struggle with sin – *for, struggle is a sign of repentance* – but do you trust Jesus enough to truly obey Him and work for Him?

Q: Are you bearing the fruit of justice and righteousness, or are you just taking up space and resources?

Q: Is our church bearing the fruit God is looking for?

- What are you doing to help make our church fruitful?